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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable TIM SHEEHY, a Senator from the State of Montana.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, empower our Senators to make consistency a top priority. Lead them over life's mountains and through life's valleys with the spirit of faithfulness and trust in You. Help them to live their lives on an even keel, refusing to give in to despair. Whether in life's sunshine or shadows, may they be aware that You will walk beside them, making the crooked places straight. Keep them from making critical decisions without consulting You or succumbing to the temptation of taking the easy way out. Lord, infuse them with the spirit of gratitude for Your involvement in our Nation and world.

We pray in Your wonderful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer 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.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,

Washington, DC, February 27, 2025.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable TIM SHEEHY, a Senator from the State of Montana, to perform the duties of the Chair.

CHUCK GRASSLEY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. SHEEHY thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY RELATING TO "WASTE EMISSIONS CHARGE FOR PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS SYSTEMS: PROCEDURES FOR FACILITATING COMPLIANCE, INCLUDING NETTING AND EXEMPTIONS"—Resumed

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the following joint resolution, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (S.J. Res. 12) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Environmental Protection Agency relating to "Waste Emissions Charge for Petroleum and Natural Gas Systems: Procedures for Facilitating Compliance, Including Netting and Exemptions".

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, when Donald Trump and DOGE began their work, they kept saying the same thing. Donald Trump, Elon Musk, and DOGE said: This is about cutting waste; it is about efficiency; it is about meritocracy. Unfortunately, the truth has not been as advertised. It has been utter chaos.

Yesterday, the Department of Veterans Affairs said they were reversing course on canceling billions of dollars in contract work because, as it turns out, slashing billions in funding that helps veterans is extremely harmful for veterans. These VA cuts were lauded by DOGE as an example of eliminating waste. The VA Secretary claimed these contracts were for consultants "to make PowerPoint slides and write meeting minutes." That is not even close to the truth.

Let me read some examples of what DOGE was actually prepared to cut: Funding for chemotherapy and imaging services, those were going to be cut—hardly make-work, hardly writing meeting minutes. Funding for veterans with disabilities—cut—even funding to help veterans suffering from toxic exposure in burn pits. One contract would help over 20,000 veterans track down their military service records from DOD in order to prove their toxic exposure, as is required. Without these records, getting affordable treatment would not likely be possible, and DOGE said: Let's cut that, too.

Even if the VA reverses course, canceling these contracts and firing VA staff is still immediately damaging—very damaging. There is the risk that you can't rehire workers back in time because they have moved on to other jobs or contracts aren't available because they took their business elsewhere, and, by then, the damage is

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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done. Vital services and operations that serve veterans can't continue as before. It could take months—maybe even years—to build this back, which had been built up carefully to help veterans over the years, and many of us in Congress worked for those things; so to cut these services and then say “never mind” still ends up being very destructive. Sadly, this is only one example.

Yesterday, Elon Musk led his first Cabinet meeting of this administration. He admitted that DOGE's approach has led to many erroneous cuts to staff and programs that are not wasteful but, on the contrary, vital.

For example, he said:

With USAID, one of the things we accidentally cancelled very briefly was Ebola prevention.

Those are his words.

Are you kidding me? Cutting funds to stop one of the deadliest diseases in the world is reckless, especially when there is an Ebola outbreak in Uganda as we speak, and flights leave Kampala every day and go all over the world. When epidemics hit America, they often-times begin abroad, and U.S. funding is essential to prevent those diseases from reaching us here at all.

I should also note that the claims that Ebola funding is back online are false. Reports are out from last night that 95 percent of all USAID funding is now being cut. So we are not sure where it all is.

What DOGE is doing is not what efficiency looks like. If DOGE actually cares about efficiency and meritocracy, then it is failing, in many ways, its own test. It would be better to look at these programs, see which might be wasteful, see which are needed, and then make the cuts to the wasteful programs, not take a meat-ax or a blowtorch—call it what you will—cut everything, and then say we will restore some of the things that we shouldn't have cut, because once you make those cuts, it is very hard to put the pieces back together.

TAXES

Mr. President, on Republican taxes, last month, consumer confidence took its biggest nosedive in 4 years—the biggest nosedive in 4 years. This is how confident consumers, average Americans, feel about the economy. Inflation is trending back up. The price of eggs is sky high. The threat of a trade war looms over our country, and Americans are fearful that things are not going to get any better anytime soon. And what are Republicans doing about all of this? They are trying to cut taxes for billionaires—trying to cut taxes for billionaires—and make the American people pay for it.

The Republican agenda is quickly taking shape. Under Donald Trump's Republican Party, billionaires win; American families lose.

It doesn't matter if Republicans go with 1 bill or 2 bills or 50 bills. That is what they are debating right now. Their endgame—House and Senate Republicans—has always been cutting

taxes for billionaires and forcing American families to pick up the tab.

Of course, Senate Republicans know that cutting Medicaid by over \$800 billion to lower taxes for billionaires is wildly unpopular. They know that increasing the deficit by up to \$5 trillion to help the ultrarich contradicts everything the so-called party of fiscal responsibility stands for. They say they have to cut all this stuff to reduce the deficit, and then, with their tax breaks for billionaires, they increase the deficit, no matter what sleight-of-hand accounting method they use.

What are Republicans doing about fiscal responsibility? Are they admitting that their plans would be a disaster for the deficit? No. Instead, Senate Republicans are engaged in budgetary hocus-pocus to hide the true cost of their tax cuts for the ultrarich, and there may be signs that House Republicans are going along.

Instead of admitting the truth about the consequences of their plans, they are pursuing a gimmick called “current policy baseline”—a gimmick, if there ever was one—which is essentially an attempt to magically turn \$5 trillion of deficit spending into zero dollars of deficit spending. Well, that can't happen and doesn't happen, and the economy will realize it doesn't happen. Any junior high school math student could tell you this is a bunch of bunk. You can't pass \$5 trillion to cut taxes for the rich and pretend like it doesn't affect the deficit.

The issue isn't complicated. Republicans are trying to hide the true cost of their billionaire tax cuts from the American people. Meanwhile, they are getting ready to eviscerate funding for healthcare that serves over 80 million Americans—kids, seniors, rural communities. These cuts to Medicaid will dramatically hurt rural America, people with disabilities, and more.

The only people who seem to be opposing this is the hard-right Freedom Caucus, because they seem to really care about the deficit. Let's hope they stay strong for the sake of the economy and this country.

Of course, the American people are not going to take these Medicaid cuts lying down.

Last night, I got on a Zoom. Over 3,000 New Yorkers, worried about the attacks from Republicans on healthcare, got on the Zoom, many more than we expected. These were rank-and-file folks, healthcare advocates, union members, and concerned citizens from all walks of life. They were all upset about the cuts to Medicaid and putting those cuts in place in order to give tax breaks for billionaires.

It was a great call. It was an energizing call. I urge my colleagues to do the same, as many of them are. It is a stark reminder of what is at stake but also a reminder that the American people don't like these cuts.

We heard from New Yorkers who are in danger of having their Medicaid cov-

erage taken away if Republicans proceed with their actions, on this Zoom of over 3,000 people. But we also talked about taking action.

I urged participants to call their Members of Congress. I urged them to mobilize online and to organize in their communities. We urged everyone to make their voices heard, like we are seeing in the townhall meetings.

I reminded folks that organizing is not easy, but it works. It changes things, and it is going to make a difference in making sure Medicaid is protected.

NOMINATION OF LINDA MCMAHON

Mr. President, on our Education Secretary nominee, today, the Senate will vote on whether to advance the nomination of Linda McMahon as Secretary of Education.

Mrs. McMahon's nomination comes as President Trump has been clear about cutting funding for education and abolishing the Department of Education entirely.

Is Mrs. McMahon going to go along? I hope not.

Cutting education is not what the American people want. The American people don't want a radical, out-of-touch billionaire slashing funding for public schools. When you slash Federal funding for education, guess what happens. Since so many of our school districts—urban, suburban, rural—depend on this Federal money, it leads to higher property taxes for people back home.

If you eliminate the Department of Education as a whole, that means local communities are forced to pick up the tab to fund the schools. It means that families in these communities will pay in the form of higher property taxes to make up the loss of Federal funding. But communities will also be forced to slash other programs to make room for funding for schools.

Again, this is not what the American people want. This is not what they voted for.

Mrs. McMahon, in my judgment, is not qualified to lead America's public education. She seems not to care very much about it. But that is precisely why President Trump nominated her. She is the perfect choice to bring our public education system burning to the ground.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The majority leader is recognized.

ENERGY

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, this week, the Senate is focused on unleashing American energy. As I have

said before, our country is facing some serious energy challenges. We need more power, or we face the possibility of a future defined by unreliable and unaffordable energy, which is why President Trump declared an energy emergency on his first day in office—to produce more energy, build more infrastructure, and ultimately bring energy prices down.

But our Democrat colleagues made it clear, yesterday, they don't believe such an emergency exists. The Senator from Virginia called it a "sham." Our colleague from New Hampshire said it was "an emergency declaration in search of an emergency."

Every Senate Democrat voted to deny the emergency that our country faces. I guess they haven't seen the reports of the precarious state of American energy.

Last year, a Washington Post headline read:

Amid explosive demand, America is running out of power.

A recent report from the North American Electric Reliability Corporation warns of "mounting resource adequacy challenges" in the next decade.

Whether Democrats want to acknowledge it or not, the signs of a rapidly approaching energy crisis are clear. There is a threat of blackouts, not enough power to meet demand, heightened prices for gas and utilities. Apparently, Democrats don't think these are cause for alarm. But whether they are willing to acknowledge it or not—and yesterday's vote, I think, made clear that they are not—we have a serious problem, and if we don't do something about it, we face a future with an unreliable and unaffordable energy supply.

Republicans are taking action. This week, the Senate is working to prevent two of the Biden administration's anti-energy policies from going into effect.

On Tuesday, the Senate passed Senator KENNEDY's resolution to stop the Biden administration's marine archeology rule. Offshore oil and gas producers have long been required to submit an archeological report before drilling if their project area was thought to include things like shipwrecks, settlements, or other archeological sites. But last year, the Biden administration decided to require archeological reports for all offshore projects, even when there is nothing to suggest the project will be near an archeological site. It is just another way to slow down production and heap more costs on producers—costs that consumers eventually pay. And it is another part of the Biden administration's efforts to close off America's waters to conventional energy production.

Under President Biden, offshore permits dropped to a two-decade low. The administration's offshore leasing plan included only 3 possible leases, down from 47 in an earlier draft from the first Trump administration.

And, of course, there was President Biden's last-minute ban on oil and gas

production in 625 million acres of America's waters. Why we would so severely limit the use of our natural resources is beyond me. Under Republican leadership, we will be leveraging assets to restore American energy dominance.

Later today, the Senate will also vote on a resolution to block the \$6 billion natural gas tax that was included in the Democrats' so-called Inflation Reduction Act. This tax would increase costs for energy producers and limit energy production, leading to higher utility bills for many Americans.

Under the Biden administration's implementation of this tax, it would hit smaller operations the hardest. On top of that, the tax puts tens of thousands of jobs at risk, including in natural gas-rich States like Pennsylvania, New Mexico, Texas, and North Dakota.

The Senate will vote later today to stop implementation of this tax on energy producers. I appreciate Senator HOEVEN's leadership on this issue. Thanks in substantial part to his efforts, energy producers will not have to worry about this unnecessary natural gas tax, and the American people won't have to worry about it driving up their utility bills.

It would be nice if Democrats would join us in our efforts, if not to avoid our rapidly approaching energy crisis, at least to promote more affordable prices for Americans. I have recently been hearing our Democrat colleagues express newfound interest fighting inflation. If they are serious about that, they should be joining us in blocking these anti-energy policies that are driving prices up.

But with Democrats or without, Republicans will keep working to build a more secure and more affordable energy future.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, before coming to the floor each day, I try to make sure I go through the morning newspapers, and today I found in the Washington Post an interesting column: "Multi-car pileup as electric vehicles collide with reality."

"Multi-car pileup as electric vehicles collide with reality."

And the reality is the Democrat electric vehicle mandate is a failure. It failed the American people, failed the taxpayers, and just plain failed.

For years, President Biden and Democrats tried to force Americans to buy electric vehicles. They tried to do it by banning gas-powered cars. They tried to do it by bribing people with taxpayer subsidies.

President Trump has, rightly, promised to pull the plug on Joe Biden's unpopular electric vehicle mandate. People are delighted. President Trump fulfilled that promise on day one in office. He ended the Biden ban on gas-powered vehicles. In my home State of Wyoming and the Presiding Officer's home State of Montana, that is welcome relief.

The next step is for Congress, for this body, to end the subsidies on electric vehicles, and I have introduced legislation to do just that. My bill ends the \$7,500 subsidy for EVs. It also closes the Biden loophole that funnels taxpayer moneys, believe it or not, to communist China. Finally, it ends the subsidies for the EV charging stations.

The EV subsidies were, in essence, a Biden giveaway. He wanted to give money away to the coastal elites who drive electric vehicles, and it was connected to Biden's unpopular climate dreams.

The aggressive push for EVs began with Democrats' reckless tax-and-spending bill. It included a \$7,500 handout for anyone who bought an electric vehicle, while not a single Republican in the House or Senate voted for that reckless tax-and-spending bill.

The Joint Committee on Taxation looked at the cost of these EV subsidies because there was going to be a mandate attached; you were going to have to buy an electric vehicle at some point or other. So originally they said it might cost \$14 billion. That is a lot of money. When they redid the math a year later, they said the cost estimated would be \$100 billion. Outside analysts estimated the cost even higher. Goldman Sachs said that the EV subsidies could cost taxpayers as much as \$394 billion, which is 28 times as much as the original thought that it would be when the Joint Committee on Taxation looked at it.

These subsidies—this is for a vehicle that most Americans can't afford, don't want, and doesn't work for them. It doesn't work in my home State of Wyoming. It doesn't work in the Presiding Officer's home State of Montana. Most Americans know that EVs are luxury items with severe limitations. They certainly can't be the primary source of transportation for most Americans.

The average cost of an EV: \$62,000. Well, that is \$16,000 more than the cost of most gas-powered vehicles. The dealers I have talked to in my home State of Wyoming tell me that it takes significantly longer to sell an EV than a gas-powered vehicle. And the EVs that they are able to sell, they end up selling for a loss. The nationwide sales of EVs is also stalling. They actually lost market share in 2024.

Despite endless subsidies, EVs account for less than 10 percent of all car sales in America. Most of these are sold to wealthier Americans, people who don't need a subsidy from the government to begin with. This is social engineering to benefit the liberal elite. It is

a transfer of money from hard-working American families to the wealthy.

Every time a wealthy liberal in San Francisco gets a government subsidy when they go and buy an electric car, a working-class family in Sheridan, WY, ends up paying in their taxes.

My legislation ends all of that. EVs are a bad investment for American people and for American automakers. This month, Ford projected that, in 2025, it would lose over \$5.5 billion on its electric vehicles. In 2024, Ford sold only 21,000 EVs. It lost \$5 billion. That is a loss of \$60,000 for each and every electric vehicle that they were able to sell. Now, Ford isn't alone. Major car companies—General Motors and others—are also losing money on EVs.

The transition to EVs is also estimated to kill hundreds of thousands of jobs, including in the Midwest, manufacturing jobs of gas-powered vehicles. It is already sending thousands of American workers from the assembly line to the unemployment line.

Ending subsidies for EVs is about saving taxpayer money, protecting American jobs, but it is also about protecting our national security. Initially, only EVs made in America were supposed to be eligible for this \$7,500 subsidy. But before leaving office, Joe Biden made it easier for those tax credits on EVs to go for those made with parts from China. It wasn't supposed to happen that way, but Biden and the Democrats, so desperate to force EVs onto the American public, they created a leasing loophole specifically designed to help China.

This is how it works. It allows customers who lease EVs instead of buying them—but who lease EVs—made with Chinese parts, they could still fully receive the subsidy. Well, since 80 percent of the EV batteries come from China, they had noted a major problem because they weren't going to be able to get the subsidies. That is why they came up with this leasing loophole.

Because in 2022, before they had the loophole, only 7 percent of new EVs were leased. Because of this Biden gimmick, that number jumped to 45 percent—almost half of all the EVs in America then being leased rather than bought.

The American taxpayers are subsidizing technologies controlled by communist China. It is wrong. My bill ends that.

Republicans are focused on what matters: lowering prices, unleashing American energy, creating American jobs, and putting Americans back in the driver's seat.

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. WHITEHOUSE. 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.

H.J. RES. 35

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am here today in opposition to the measure that we are about to vote on, which would undo a rule that regulates the release of methane into the atmosphere.

Let's just start with the most basic simple proposition that methane is dangerous, it is poisonous, it is explosive. And for those reasons alone, it is something that the fossil fuel industry should not be leaking. The fossil fuel industry should be responsible about taking care of its leaks of a gas that is dangerous, poisonous, and explosive.

But in addition to that immediate danger, methane is also a really, really potent greenhouse gas. If you look at the effect over a 20-year period, methane in the atmosphere is 80 times—80—times more dangerous than carbon dioxide. So we talk all the time about carbon emissions, carbon limits, carbon pollution. Methane is actually 80 times more dangerous.

So there are two reasons why the fossil fuel industry should not be leaking large amounts of methane. First, it is dangerous, poisonous, and explosive. And, second, it is an 80 times worse greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide over a 20-year period.

So how much methane is industry leaking, and why did we do this measure in the first place?

Well, industry told the EPA for years that it was leaking about 8 million tons—8 million tons—of methane, which all by itself is a pretty big number, but it turned out that the industry was not telling the EPA the truth.

It turns out that once independent sources got a chance to spot methane leaks using, for instance, satellites—this is a satellite image of a methane plume that is being released from a leak site—when they could find that—and satellites can now do that so we are beginning to know how much methane is actually being leaked and particularly when you backstop the satellite information with information from aircraft where the readings can be more sensitive than from a satellite—it turns out that what they were actually leaking was more like 32 million tons. They were only disclosing a quarter of what they were leaking, and even that 8 million that they disclosed was a pretty bad number. When you go to 32 million tons, that is a great deal of leakage of a gas that is dangerous, poisonous, explosive, and 80 times more powerful a greenhouse gas over a 20-year period than carbon dioxide.

Now, you would think that, as an attribute of basic human decency, these companies that are leaking methane would go and clean it up. It is the decent thing to do, but they didn't, obviously. They didn't even disclose truthfully and accurately what they were leaking. So, when we were confronted with a 32-million-ton annual leak of poisonous, dangerous, explosive methane, and its greenhouse effects on top of that, we tried to do something about it.

So what did we do?

Well, we did two things: a little bit of carrot, a little bit of stick.

The carrot was \$1.5 billion—1.5 billion taxpayer dollars—in flatout corporate welfare to the leaking oil and gas companies so that they could use taxpayer money to clean up the mess they were making to deal with the pipes and the valves and the wells that they weren't properly maintaining and that were leaking, it turned out, 32 million tons of methane.

Now, one could argue that that was a pretty poor use of taxpayer money; that a basic tenet of corporate responsibility should be: You clean up your own mess. You take care of your own equipment. That is a basic tenet of human responsibility. I don't know why it shouldn't be a basic tenet of corporate responsibility, but the measurement of 32 million tons of leakage shows that, obviously, those companies were not meeting that basic corporate tenet of responsibility.

So along comes the \$1.5 billion of free taxpayer money—corporate welfare—to polluters and leakers for taxpayers to pay them to clean up the problem that they were causing. I didn't love that, to tell you the truth, but it came with an incentive as well, and the incentive was, if you are still leaking methane after a certain period and if you are still leaking methane above a certain level—you had to be a big leaker yourself. It had to be a big leak, like 300 tons per leak, and you had to be in the worst sector of the oil and gas industry. If those things were true—if you had big leaks and you were a big leaker and you were in the worst performing sector of your industry—then you would be assessed a fee for the leakage, which would be an incentive, in addition to the free \$1.5 billion the industry got to go out there and fix the darned pipes and valves and wells and stop the leaking.

What we are doing today is saying to this industry: You can keep the \$1.5 billion. We gave you that whether you used it to clean up or not. I don't know that. I don't think the jury is back on that, but they did get the \$1.5 billion. But the part where you have to pay if you are still polluting, after all of this, beyond industry standards—that is what we are stripping out today. This Congressional Review Act measure specifically helps the segment of the oil and gas industry that is not even meeting oil and gas industry standards for controlling leaks.

I think it is a pretty reasonable test to impose on industry leakers that they at least meet their own industry standard for leaking. This isn't some arbitrary standard that government has imposed. This isn't something that came out of the Green New Deal. This is the industry's own standard for responsibility about leaks, and you pay this fee if you don't meet your own industry standard for taking care of your equipment properly and avoiding leaks of a dangerous, explosive, poisonous

greenhouse gas 80 times more dangerous than carbon dioxide.

So that is where we are, and that is where we are at today. Today's vote only protects those worst industry performers who have not cleaned up their act and met their own industry standards. If there were ever an undeserving group for Congress's solicitude, that is the group. They are not even meeting their own industry standards. They are comfortable with dangerous levels of leakage beyond what even their own industry recommends as a standard, and on they go.

This is just a little bit of a piece with the recent designation by the Trump administration of what "energy" is. The Trump administration just put out a definition of "energy" that doesn't include solar or wind. Most of what came online and is slated to come online in 2025 has been solar and wind. It is the booming part of our energy economy. It is where the growth is and the jobs are and the innovation is. It is also a leading energy source in red States. If you look at who is best on solar and who is best on wind, you see States like Texas; you see Iowa; you see Wyoming. They have considerable investments in solar and wind, but the Trump administration won't even call solar and wind energy.

So we are in this bizarre circumstance in which the fossil fuel industry, which drives so much behavior in this body after \$100 million spent on the Trump campaign that we know of—probably hundreds of millions more secretly—has gained two big things: one, a completely false definition of "solar energy" and "wind energy" as not being energy despite the fact that it is fully operational, producing electrons, and was the largest source of new additions to the grid for 2025, and they just decree: This is not energy.

Why the fossil fuel industry would want that is a pretty strong signal of how low that industry will go in using its power over Congress. They will basically press the Trump administration to claim that solar energy and wind energy aren't even energy. It is a spectacularly foolish and false proposition, but bending the knee to the wishes of the fossil fuel industry appears to have no limits.

This vote is the second expression of that subservience to fossil fuel because of all the things that you could do, of all the things that would help grow America's energy markets, of all the things you could do to help take care of people who live near energy facilities or people who are being subjected to harm from climate change—of all the things you could do, probably the worst one would be to take the worst performers at leaking, which shouldn't happen in the first place, who leak so badly they don't even meet their own industry standards, who for years have been falsely saying that they leaked only a quarter of what they have actually been leaking, and they are the people whom we are going to come to the rescue of.

They had two choices here so that they didn't have to pay the fee for being among the worst leakers and not meeting their own industry standards. One is, clean up your darned equipment. Fix your pipes. Fix your valves. Fix your wells. Stop the leaking or at least reduce it to your own industry standard. If you do that, you don't pay this fee—or come to Congress. Use your power, the force of your dark money, of your influence, of your super PACs, of your political control, and get that requirement removed so that you can continue to leak, continue to leak methane—a dangerous, explosive, and poisonous substance—into your communities, continue to add this far more dangerous greenhouse gas to the atmosphere, and continue to meet no reasonable standard of corporate responsibility for taking care of your own gear and quitting the leaking.

And you know what they chose; they chose to come here and get a free pass—a hall pass from Republicans in Congress, a hall pass from the Trump administration—so that they can continue to leak to their hearts content, never mind their culpability of not meeting their own industry standards, never mind the harm that it causes.

This is an industry that lives off a pollute-for-free business model. If this industry were not allowed to pollute for free—if it had to compete, head-to-head, with hydro, geothermal, solar, wind, without the free right to pollute—we would have a very different energy mix, and they know that. So they insist on protecting their right to pollute for free, but of all the little quadrants of the industry whose pollution-for-free we should be coming to the floor to defend, those worst leakers who aren't taking care of their own equipment even to industry standards are at the bottom of any reasonable person's priority list, and yet they are the ones we are here to serve today.

The backdrop to this is, of course, "climate change," a term that the fossil fuel industry has so ingratiated itself with the Trump administration that it is able to excise the term—a language attack—excise the term from official documents, a little bit like saying that "energy" is everything except solar and wind. That is obviously false—provably false, in fact, and a preposterous assertion—but when serving the fossil fuel industry, that is the stuff they make you do, and here you go with saying that climate change isn't real when Exxon scientists talked about its being real 30 years ago. We are driving down a path of polluter-funded falsehood that ends in very dangerous places.

We have a pretty good idea of where it ends because scientists have been telling us where this goes for decades now, scientists in our major universities. I do not believe that there is a single State university, a State university with the name of the State in its name—University of Rhode Island, for instance. I don't think there is a single

State university in this country that does not teach climate change. That is how well-established climate change is as a factual proposition, and what it is going to do has been known for a long, long time.

The predictions are astonishingly accurate. Here in the Senate, we heard all those predictions. The first hearing on those warnings was actually by Republican Senator John Chafee of Rhode Island in his role then as chairman of the Environmental Public Works Committee. He had a senior scientist from NASA, John Hanson, come over and describe what the science was, what we knew about what was going on.

So there is a long, clear, indisputable scientific record warning us of what is coming—preview of coming attractions.

But then it came here, and, here, the fossil fuel industry butted in with enormous political force, turbocharged after the Citizens United decision allowed that industry to spend unlimited amounts of money. And in the enforcement—or nonenforcement—of that decision, allowed that industry to spend those unlimited amounts of money secretly from behind front groups and through Super PACs and from other devices where the public was denied the knowledge of who was trying to influence them. The basic right of citizenship is to know who is doing what to whom on the field of politics American citizens are supposed to police with their votes. That knowledge was denied them, and that flood of industry pressure came into this Chamber. And before you knew it, climate change was suddenly a partisan issue. If you wanted to be a Republican, you had to deny climate change. It was pretty much as simple as that.

Ask Bob Inglis from the House of Representatives what happened if you tried to break that grip of the fossil fuel industry on the House leadership, the fossil fuel industry grip on the House leadership on the Republican side.

So the science was right all along. We failed at the politics because of improper fossil fuel industry influence, probably the most maligned and large-scale political influence campaign in American history. We yielded to it. We allowed ourselves to not heed the warnings and take the steps that would have put us on a pathway to safety.

Now, having heard the scientific warnings, having failed at taking appropriate safety steps, we are now entering the third era, the era of consequences, when the stuff starts to hit the fan. And the warnings are coming from all over.

Just about 2 weeks ago, the chair of the Federal Reserve testified to the Senate Banking Committee that in 10 to 15 years, it will be impossible to get a mortgage in entire regions of the country. How does that relate to climate change? That relates to climate change because climate change is creating changes in weather patterns that

make it impossible for the insurance industry to predict risk. That is why insurance rates are quadruple the national average in Florida, which is first and worst into this insurance crisis because of its storm and flooding risk, because it is on the path of so many hurricanes, because the Gulf of Mexico is warming so fast that it is powering worse storms, more heavily laden storms, with rain onto Florida's coasts. And when you can't get insurance on your home, and you go to sell it, you have got a problem because the buyer can't get a mortgage if your home is uninsurable.

What the chief economists of Freddie Mac warned, the mortgage giant, is that the climate risk creates an insurance crisis, which rolls over into a mortgage crisis, which drives down property values so badly that it creates a 2008-style national economic crisis.

Those aren't the only warnings. Reinsurers look at this climate mess as a business proposition. The insurance industry has to get the future right in order to do its business, and it knows that what the fossil fuel industry is saying about what is going to happen in the future is a whole pack of lies. So they are raising their rates. The reinsurance companies are looking and saying, wow, this is getting way more dangerous. We are not going to reinsure without getting a lot more money.

Reinsurance rates have more than doubled since 2017. They were up as much as 40 percent in 2023 alone in some markets.

So it is not just the voice of the Fed; it is not just the voice of the chief economists of Freddie Mac; it is the reinsurance industry.

Go below the reinsurance industry to the insurance industry and look at the first and worst place, Florida. All the major insurers are out—pulled the plug. Gone. Done. Pop-up insurers have come to fill the gap. Twelve to fifteen of them have gone bankrupt already. And when they go bankrupt, they don't pay claims, and Floridians are left stuck behind an insurer that was not solvent.

Florida has had to stand up its own homeowners insurance company, which now has a huge share of the market and an even bigger share of the risk because they have allowed the other insurers to come in and cherry-pick out the lowest risk properties. So Florida is carrying a liability right now on homeowner's insurance that is greater than its entire State debt.

If you want to look at the solvency of a State, look at what Florida's risk is for its property insurance companies, citizens' property insurance, and its backup fund that comes in when the pop-up insurance companies go bust and somebody else has to come in and pay the claims.

The insurance industry, which has to look accurately at the future is also telling us this is deadly, deadly serious.

There is an international Financial Stability Board whose job is to look at

the world banking industry, the world banking sector, and warn of risks to the banking sector. They just put out a comprehensive report on the danger that climate change poses to the banking sector.

It comes in a couple of ways. One is the one I just described. When banks can't issue mortgages, they lose a huge revenue proposition. So they get hurt in the "insurance to mortgage to market value to economic crash" cascade.

But, also, as those values fall—let's say you went from carrying a \$4,000 carrying cost for your property insurance to a \$20,000 carrying cost. The present value of \$20,000 every year into the future as long as you are going to own that home, diminishes the value of that home. It doesn't just diminish it for you and for the next buyer, it diminishes it for the bank that holds your mortgage. It is really important to banks that they have enough collateral to back their loan. Their loan-to-value ratio is what helps determine their solvency. So the International Financial Stability Board is warning banks around the world: Look out. The climate crisis is coming at you and for your solvency.

This was, perhaps, said best by The Economist magazine in April, which led with a cover article warning of the next housing disaster and saying that "the severe weather brought about by greenhouse-gas emissions is shaking the foundations of the world's most important asset class"—real estate.

The number that they put to that risk that is shaking the foundations of the world's largest asset class is \$25 trillion. A \$25 trillion hit to the world's largest asset class.

In the United States, a new report by First Street, which is a technical firm that looks at flooding risk for a whole variety of corporate clients but also publishes as well—they just published a report that climate change could erase \$1.4 trillion in real estate value by 2055—i.e., in the 30-year mortgage period—a \$1.4 trillion hit to real estate values here in the United States. While \$25 trillion dollars was The Economist's global number; First Street's is \$1.4 trillion here in the United States.

Trillions are big, big numbers. And when it is hitting people in their most prized and valuable family asset—their homes—it is a very, very dangerous proposition.

Here is what The Economist said:

The impending bill—

For climate harms—

is so huge, in fact, it will have grim implications not just for personal prosperity—

i.e., the homeowner—

but also for the financial system.

Hence the report from the International Financial Stability Board about the need to shore up the international financial system.

Here is how it goes down, they say:

If the size of the risk suddenly sinks in, and borrowers and lenders alike realize the collateral underpinning so many trans-

actions is not worth as much as they thought, a wave of repricing will reverberate through financial markets.

Punch line:

Climate change, in short, could prompt the next global property crash.

Instead of dealing with this—even as Americans are already seeing their property insurance prices rise and double, are getting more and more non-renewal notices to get them off the company—what are we doing? We are helping out the absolutely worst offenders at climate leakage.

Here is Deloitte. I will close with this. Deloitte is a corporate consultancy. This is not Green New Deal. This is a corporate consultancy:

If we allow climate change to go unchecked, it will ravage our global economy. For the United States, the damages to 2070—

Which was their prediction date—

are projected to reach \$14.5 trillion, a lifetime loss of nearly \$70,000 for each working American.

And we are not even talking about that seriously. We are here, instead, to let off the hook that segment of the oil and gas industry that is the worst polluters, that doesn't even meet their own industry standards, and that can get away from the fee that we will be voting down now by simply meeting industry standards. This is a shameful moment for the Senate.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for a little more than a minute.

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

H.J. RES. 35

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, every American should be paying close attention to what is about to happen on the floor. In just a few moments, the Senate will vote on a Republican resolution that is straight from the wish list of Big Oil and Big Gas.

Instead of spending floor time pushing legislation that will lower costs for American families, Republicans are bowing to Big Oil and Gas billionaires by trying to reverse the methane waste emissions charge which Democrats passed in the Inflation Reduction Act. Donald Trump and DOGE claim to care about efficiency, but Republicans are undoing a measure to reduce oil and gas waste and are making prices for the consumer go up—prices going up—when they are saying they want prices to go down. The rule we passed has been one of our most important tools to lower energy prices, to hold Big Oil and Big Gas accountable, to keep excessive and harmful levels of methane

out of our atmosphere, which my friend Mr. WHITEHOUSE, who has done such a good job on this issue, tells me is 80 times as poisonous as CO₂. Without this safeguard, Big Oil and Gas can waste as much natural gas as they like and then pass the cost on to consumers.

Why are Republicans doing this? Well, it is simple. They are putting the needs of Big Oil and Gas companies over the needs of the American people, over the health of the American people and the health of our environment, our climate, our globe. And the consequences for the American people, for their health and their energy bills, are going to be very harmful.

I urge my colleagues to think carefully, one last time, before voting to overturn it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, all time has expired.

The clerk will read the title of the joint resolution for the third time.

The joint resolution was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading and was read the third time.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY RELATING TO "WASTE EMISSIONS CHARGE FOR PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS SYSTEMS: PROCEDURES FOR FACILITATING COMPLIANCE, INCLUDING NETTING AND EXEMPTIONS"

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to the Congressional Review Act, the clerk will report H.J. Res. 35 by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 35) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Environmental Protection Agency relating to "Waste Emissions Charge for Petroleum and Natural Gas Systems: Procedures for Facilitating Compliance, Including Netting and Exemptions".

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the title of the joint resolution for the third time.

The joint resolution was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

VOTE ON H.J. RES. 35

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The joint resolution having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the joint resolution pass?

Mr. TILLIS. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER).

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 97 Leg.]

YEAS—52

Banks	Grassley	Mullin
Barrasso	Hagerty	Murkowski
Blackburn	Hawley	Paul
Boozman	Hoeben	Ricketts
Britt	Husted	Risch
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Capito	Johnson	Schmitt
Cassidy	Justice	Scott (FL)
Collins	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Lankford	Sheehy
Cotton	Lee	Sullivan
Crapo	Lummis	Thune
Cruz	Marshall	Tillis
Curtis	McConnell	Tuberville
Daines	McCormick	Wicker
Ernst	Moody	Young
Fischer	Moran	
Graham	Moreno	

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	Lujan	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	

NOT VOTING—1

Cramer

The joint resolution (H.J. Res. 35) was passed.

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 Linda McMahon, of Connecticut, to be Secretary of Education.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 770

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I speak with senior citizens all over Vermont and, in fact, in many parts of the country. Just last night, we held a telephone townhall in Vermont, and in our small State, 34,000 people were on the line. I think the reason for that is there is a great deal of anxiety among people in general and seniors in particular regarding the Republican budget proposal that was passed the other day in the House. Seniors and Americans all over this country have reason to be concerned.

At a time of massive income and wealth inequality, the Republican budget would give over \$1 trillion in tax breaks to the top 1 percent—that is billionaires and the wealthiest people in our country. In Vermont and all over this country, seniors are asking: Well, how are they going to pay for

that trillion-dollar gift to the 1 percent? The answer is not complicated. They have made it clear. Republicans will be making massive cuts in healthcare, nutrition assistance, affordable housing, and education. These are precisely the programs that working families and kids and the elderly and the sick and the poor most depend upon. The Republican budget would cut Medicaid by \$880 billion. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities has estimated that if these cuts are implemented, up to 36 million Americans, including millions of children, would have their health insurance taken away from them.

Let's be clear. When we have Republicans in the House passing a budget to make massive cuts to Medicaid, we are not just talking about throwing millions of kids off of the healthcare they need; we are also talking about massive cuts to community health centers, where some 32 million Americans receive the primary healthcare they need and where community health centers receive 43 percent of their funding from Medicaid. So a massive cut to Medicaid is a cut to community health centers and is a cut to the services that 32 million Americans receive, including many, many seniors.

At a time when we have a major crisis in nursing home availability in Vermont and all over this country, let us understand that Medicaid provides for two out of every three seniors who live in nursing homes. A massive cut to Medicaid is a massive cut to nursing homes and the people who utilize those homes. How many seniors would be thrown out of nursing homes if the Republicans cut Medicaid by \$880 billion? Nobody knows, but it would be a disaster for working families and their parents. That is for sure.

But it is not just Medicaid cuts that seniors are worried about. Today, nearly 22 percent of people over 65 years of age are trying to survive on an income of less than \$15,000 a year. That is an unbelievable and horrific reality. Imagine anyone in America, in any part of this country—let alone a senior citizen—trying to survive on \$15,000 a year or less. I don't know how anybody can possibly do that, especially seniors who have healthcare needs and need prescription drugs and who need to heat their homes more than the general public. And it is not just seniors trying to get by on \$15,000; half of our Nation's seniors are trying to get by on less than \$30,000 a year.

The bottom line is that in the richest country in the history of the world, you have millions and millions of seniors today—people who helped build this country, people who raised us—who are barely getting by in the year 2025.

According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the OECD, the United States now has the dubious distinction of not only having one of the highest rates of childhood poverty in the industrialized

world, we also have one of the highest rates of senior poverty—senior poverty—compared to other wealthy nations.

In America today, according to the latest OECD estimates, 23 percent of seniors are living in poverty compared to just 4.1 percent in Norway, 6.1 percent in France, 9.5 percent in Ireland, and 14.9 percent in the United Kingdom. That is a dubious distinction. That is something we should not be proud of. That is a crisis we should be addressing.

In addition to the poverty that millions of seniors in America are experiencing today, about half of older workers—these are people in the workforce right now, people between the ages of 55 and 64—have no retirement savings at all. You are 60 years old. You have worked your entire life. Half of the people in that situation—from 55 to 64—have no retirement savings at all.

As bad as all of that is, many of my Republican colleagues have proposed making a bad situation—a tragic situation—even worse by cutting Social Security. Some want to cut benefits. Others want to raise the retirement age. Then there are some who simply want to privatize Social Security and give it over to Wall Street.

Well, I strongly disagree. At a time when millions of seniors are struggling to keep their heads above water, I don't believe that now is the time—in fact, never is the time—to cut Social Security benefits. Instead of cutting Social Security and giving tax breaks to billionaires, Congress must expand Social Security so that every senior in America can retire with the dignity and the respect that he or she deserves. Further and importantly to the younger generation, we must also make Social Security solvent for generations to come.

So that is the goal. The goal is to say to seniors all over this country, in the richest country on Earth: We are going to address the fact that many of you can't quite figure out how to buy the food you need, heat your homes, get the prescription drugs you need. You are struggling. You helped build this country. You are our parents and our grandparents. We stand with you.

That is why I have introduced legislation today with 10 of my colleagues—Senators WARREN, MERKLEY, WELCH, PADILLA, SMITH, VAN HOLLEN, MARKEY, BOOKER, GILLIBRAND, and WHITEHOUSE—to accomplish both of those goals. This legislation would make Social Security solvent for the next 75 years. It would lift millions of seniors out of poverty, and it would expand benefits for seniors and people with disabilities by \$2,400 a year.

Now, I know that in the world here in Washington where the government is now run by billionaires, \$2,400 doesn't seem like a whole lot of money, but if you are trying to get by on \$15,000 a year and can't afford to heat your house and can't afford to buy a prescription drug that you need, \$2,400 is something that will help.

How do we do this? What does this legislation do? Well, at a time of massive income and wealth inequality, when billionaires pay an effective tax rate lower than the average worker, this legislation demands that the wealthiest people in America, the billionaires and others, start paying their fair share of taxes.

Today, absurdly and unfairly, a billionaire pays the same amount of money into Social Security as someone who makes \$176,000 a year. A billionaire pays the same amount into Social Security as somebody who makes \$176,000 a year. That is because there is a cap on the Social Security payroll tax.

What does that mean? It means, if you make up to \$176,000 a year, you pay 6.2 percent of your income in Social Security taxes, but if you make 10 times more—\$1.7 million a year—you pay just 0.62 percent of your income in Social Security taxes. If you make \$1 billion a year, you pay nothing more into the Social Security fund than someone making \$176,000.

Now, that may make sense to somebody—probably to the billionaire class—but it does not make sense to me. This legislation applies the Social Security payroll tax to all income—including capital gains and dividends—for those who make over \$250,000 a year. Under this bill, 91 percent of households in our country would not see their taxes go up by one single penny—not one penny for the bottom 91 percent.

Not only is this legislation good public policy, it also happens to be precisely what the American people want. According to a Data for Progress poll, 81 percent of the American people, including 79 percent of Independents and 75 percent of Republicans, support expanding Social Security benefits. So in passing this legislation, it is not only good policy, it is precisely what Democrats, Republicans, and Independents want.

Therefore, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 770, which was introduced earlier today; that the bill be considered read three times and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I rise today to discuss Senator SANDERS' request for unanimous consent for the Senate to pass his Social Security Expansion Act. Before I do so, I want to respond to a couple of points that were made.

The accusation was once again made that Republicans are trying to cut taxes for billionaires. The reality is, Republicans are trying to stop a tax increase on all Americans. The TCJA, or 2017 tax bill, is going to expire at the end of this year, and if it is not stopped from expiring, every American will get

a tax increase, and those in the lower income categories and middle-income categories will share \$2.6 trillion of that tax increase. That is what the tax fight is about.

Then, continuing what I call the politics of fear in the face of the reforms that we are bringing, the attack was, well, we are going to cut Medicaid, we are going to stop financing for community health centers, and we are going to do all of these terrible things. I have not seen such a bill in this Congress, in the House or the Senate. We are debating how to get rid of fraud, waste, and abuse. We are not looking at how to cut benefits in Medicaid. I believe that is very clear. Today was the first time on the floor that I heard we were looking at community health centers. I wasn't aware of that either.

The bottom line here is we are trying to pay attention to our \$37 trillion national debt by weeding out waste, fraud, and abuse. We will have disagreements about how to do that, but it is definitely not going to be all the things that are being brought up, that have been accused in order to stir people up and scare them and tell them that we should not pay attention to our national debt.

With regard to Social Security, we can all agree on the importance of Social Security, which provides monthly benefits to millions of seniors, individuals with disabilities, and their families.

I also agree with my colleagues on the other side that Congress must act to preserve and strengthen Social Security to ensure that it is there for current beneficiaries and future beneficiaries.

According to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, if no action is taken, the combined Social Security trust funds will be exhausted within the next 10 years, meaning the program will not be able to pay the full amount of benefits currently promised.

However, I disagree with my colleagues' approach here today, and they have disagreed with our approaches. We have competing ideas about how we should address this issue.

Addressing Social Security's solvency will require thoughtful discussion about a variety of policy options that culminates in a bipartisan solution, not a cramdown of a different solution that we haven't even had the opportunity to have a discussion in the Finance Committee about.

Instead, my Democrat colleagues are pursuing a live UC of a bill that has not received consideration before the full committee and has never had a Republican cosponsor in the House or the Senate.

This bill would also raise taxes on certain workers making less than \$400,000—something my Democratic colleagues have previously promised not to do.

For these reasons, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Michigan.

NOMINATION OF LINDA MCMAHON

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I rise today in opposition to Linda McMahon's nomination to serve as the Secretary of the Department of Education.

All across America, from small towns like Grand Marais to cities like Grand Rapids, public schools serve as the bedrock of our communities.

As a product of Michigan public schools, the son of a public school teacher, and having watched my own three children attend public schools, I know firsthand the importance of public education.

Education is the cornerstone of academic achievement, career development, and lifelong learning in our society. A strong public education system is critical to not only our Nation's economy but community safety, social mobility, and the health of our democracy.

We need a Secretary of Education who values and respects public education and the millions of teachers and faculty who support the system.

We need a Secretary of Education who will support critical funding streams like Head Start for early education, IDEA for students with disabilities, and the school meal program that ensures that no student—no student—goes to class hungry.

That is why we cannot allow Mrs. McMahon to run our Department of Education. Instead of working to protect funding for the programs that support our students, improve classrooms, and help recruit the hard-working teachers that we so desperately need today, Mrs. McMahon has made it clear that she has, well, other priorities.

During her committee hearing, she blatantly supported efforts to dismantle our education system, including taking funding away from our public schools and using it to make investments in private schools. Mrs. McMahon and others have tried to sell this as "school choice," but we know—we know—that it is basically a voucher program that will ultimately give private schools the ability to hand pick students and close their doors to everyone else. Private schools have no requirement to serve students with disabilities, students with mental health needs, or homeless students.

We have already seen private school voucher programs fail in States that have actually implemented them, like Louisiana—Louisiana, where students who accepted vouchers experienced significant declines in their academic performance, worse than the learning loss caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and Hurricane Katrina.

So-called school choice does not meet the needs of our students, and American voters overwhelmingly agree. A 2024 poll found that less than a quarter of Americans support increasing funding for school vouchers. Meanwhile, 68 percent of Americans want to boost public school funding to better support

teachers and give our opportunities and children the education and career opportunities that they certainly deserve.

Under Mrs. McMahon's plan, we would be letting private schools decide who is educated and who is not. But, unfortunately, we know that these private institutions will always prioritize their bottom line, and the needs of students and families will be second.

If confirmed as Secretary of Education, the quality of our American education will certainly decline, and our children will ultimately suffer the consequences.

I would urge my colleagues to vote no on Mrs. McMahon's nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, over the last few months, there has literally been more than 10,000 Californians who have made it a point to reach out to me by phone calls, by letters, by emails to say one thing loud and clear: Stand up for public education.

There are students throughout California, teachers throughout California, parents throughout California, and I am sure beyond in all of our States who are afraid that Donald Trump is going to decimate Federal funding for public schools. And from what we have seen, they have every right to be concerned.

You see, only 1 month into office, the richest President in our history has teamed up with the richest man in the world to slash public funding across the board, including in education.

They have already terminated nearly \$1 billion in contracts with the Education Department alone. They have fired or placed on leave Education Department staff. These are hard-working Americans dedicated to everything from protecting the civil rights of students to special education, to student aid. And they are making it clear that this is just the beginning.

President Trump has bragged that he actually wants to eliminate the Department of Education, threatening the quality of education of 80 percent of students who go to public schools.

Colleagues, that is the situation. That is the context in which we find ourselves today as we consider the nomination of Linda McMahon to serve as Education Secretary.

We could talk about Linda McMahon's qualifications, or, frankly, lack thereof, but I am not shocked because President Trump isn't looking for someone with the background or the commitment to strengthen education in America. He is looking for someone to destroy it. President Trump has said publicly that he wishes that Mrs. McMahon would "put herself out of a job." And it is clear that she is ready to do it. And to justify it, I know I have heard of her countless accusations of Department of Education overreach or that the Department is just too big. Now, if we are saying this because of the budget cuts Republicans

are starving for to underwrite the tax rate for the wealthy, let me remind us all that the Department of Education is the smallest Agency in the Cabinet by a lot.

The Department is responsible, though, for promoting equal access to education; ensuring protections and support for students with special needs; defending the civil rights of tens of millions of students; and, yes, managing the student loans and Pell grants that students need to afford an education, just like I did when I was graduating from San Fernando High School, trying to figure out how I was going to be able to pay for college.

Yet Linda McMahon and Republicans in Congress will try to sell us on the idea that education should be left to States and to local communities.

Tell that to the young student who is struggling to read by the fourth grade but whose school doesn't have the resources they need to help them catch up. Tell that to the parents of an eighth grader who is behind in math who fear that their child will never be able to make up the time that they lost during the pandemic.

While it is true that State and local communities play the primary role in education, it is actually the Federal Government that helps close the gaps. That is part of what makes our country strong—the idea that no matter where you live, no matter who your parents are, or what tax bracket your family is in, you have the right to a good education because, after all, it is the surest path to achieve your American dream.

And, yes, it is personal for me. As I mentioned, I am a proud product of public education, a graduate of San Fernando High School—go Tigers. Upon completion of my high school education, I was accepted and had the blessed opportunity to attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where I earned my degree in mechanical engineering. That led to a better life and more opportunities—exactly what my parents worked so hard and sacrificed for. That is the American dream. And I know that, by far, I am not alone.

That is why I find it outrageous that Mrs. McMahon and Republicans can so callously plan to take a chain saw to the American dreams of so many current and future students.

But, today, we are here to say that tens of millions of public school students are not line items on your chopping block. They deserve better. Our country is better than this.

I urge all of my colleagues to reject President Trump's attempts to abolish the Department of Education and to reject Linda McMahon's nomination or any nominee who is willing to carry out his wishes.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I rise today deeply concerned about the state of public education in our country.

Public education is foundational. It allows people to get ahead. As simple as that, it is foundational.

I have spoken before on the floor about the power of public education in my own life. As an immigrant from Japan, I arrived in this country speaking no English.

I started off by trying to learn how to count from 1 to 10—very humble beginnings. But it was the public education I received at schools like Koko Head Elementary and Kaimuki High School that enabled me, an immigrant from very humble beginnings, to learn English and to go on to college, law school, and, ultimately, the U.S. Senate.

We should all agree on the importance of a strong public education system for every student in our country. An educated citizenry helps grow the middle class and drive economic success in red and blue States alike.

Support for public schools should not be a partisan issue. There are millions of kids who are attending public schools in every single State in our country, so it shouldn't be a partisan issue. But just weeks into the Trump administration, public education is under attack. Already, chain saw-wielding Elon Musk—it is really hard to get rid of that image because he takes such delight in wielding that chain saw and willy-nilly cutting all kinds of government programs that we rely on. But Elon Musk and his minions have started unilaterally canceling contracts at the Department of Education without any transparency or accountability whatsoever, and Donald Trump has made no secret of his desire to eliminate the Department of Education entirely, as part of his quest to cut government services we rely on to give trillions in handouts to his billionaire buddies.

While only Congress has the power to eliminate the Department of Education in its entirety, that is not stopping Trump from using every means available to weaken Federal support for education. And as you heard from my colleague just previously, there is a lot of support for public education in our country. Why? Because most of the people in our country have to go to public schools.

The person who will help him do this, meaning totally weaken our public school system and eliminate the Department of Education, is billionaire Linda McMahon. As Trump's Secretary of Education, she will dismantle the Department of Education from the inside out.

President Trump told her that he wants her to "put herself out of a job" by eliminating this Department. Since President Trump only nominates people who are 100 percent loyal to him, we can expect Linda McMahon will comply with putting herself out of a job, which leads us to wonder why we are even giving her this job in the first place.

A nominee tasked to end the very Department that she is supposed to be

leading does not need to have much by way of experience in leading or running such a Department, which is the case with Linda McMahon. In her confirmation hearing, Mrs. McMahon could not name a single requirement of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the main Federal law that supports K through 12 education.

She couldn't say whether teaching African-American history courses violated Trump's Executive order on radical indoctrination. Teaching the history of our country is considered radical indoctrination by this President. Think about that for a minute.

She couldn't even answer a simple yes-or-no question about whether schools receiving taxpayer dollars should be allowed to discriminate against children with disabilities.

Mrs. McMahon is totally unqualified to oversee the education of our Nation's children, but Donald Trump doesn't care about that. Linda McMahon will carry out President Trump's dangerous agenda to dismantle the Department of Education, privatize the Nation's public schools, and strip educational opportunities from millions of students across the country.

In doing so, she will be 100-percent loyal to Donald Trump above all else. She will execute the plans laid out in Project 2025 to eliminate funding for title I schools, which support low-income students. We are talking about funding for 49,000 title I schools throughout the country, including 170 schools in my State of Hawaii, 2,091 title I schools in Florida, 7,500 title I schools in Texas, and so many more. Every single State has title I schools. There are 49,000 title I schools throughout our country.

Project 2025, Trump's blueprint, will have the Secretary of Education dismantle civil rights protections for students and weaponize the Office of Civil Rights to advance Trump's hateful, far-right political agenda. Then the Secretary will come after funding for programs that help provide childcare, afterschool care, school meals, and more. Think about it: school meals. For many children, that would mean taking away access to the only meal a day they can count on.

Why? Not because she thinks these decisions will improve outcomes or benefit students. No. These attacks on the Department of Education are about one thing and one thing only: finding money to pay for massive giveaways to billionaires like McMahon, Elon Musk, obviously the President, and their ilk.

Republicans are robbing our children's futures to line the pockets of their billionaire buddies, and they are robbing our country of future doctors, innovators, leaders, and more.

A strong public education system is the foundation of a strong democracy, a strong economy, and a strong middle class. That is why Democrats are committed to strengthening our schools and ensuring every child has the opportunity to get ahead, regardless of dis-

ability, income, or background. That starts with our rejecting Linda McMahon's troubling nomination to lead the Department of Education, a Department that she is going to start dismantling and, indeed, working herself out of a job.

On behalf of students, teachers, and families in Hawaii and all across our country, I urge my colleagues to think about it and to oppose this nomination. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I rise today to speak on the importance of the Department of Education and my grave concerns about the nomination of Linda McMahon to be the Secretary of Education.

President Trump has made it clear what his directive is for Linda McMahon. It is to dismantle the Department of Education. And despite President Trump's stating that he has never read Project 2025 and Mrs. McMahon repeatedly stating that she is not familiar with Project 2025's proposals on higher education, it is abundantly clear that this administration is following Project 2025 to a tee.

Project 2025 lays out a blueprint for ending the Federal Government's role in public education, starting with dismantling the Department of Education, so that they can find the money they need to provide tax breaks for their billionaire friends. You heard me right: cutting public education dollars so that the richest can get richer.

Eliminating the Department of Education would be absolutely devastating for students, for teachers, and parents in Wisconsin and across America. Wisconsin stands to have \$235 million in title I funding ripped away. Wisconsin stands to have over \$270 million in IDEA funding, which is critical for special education, ripped away.

What this means is Wisconsin teachers stand to have needed resources for their classrooms ripped away. Parents stand to have in- and out-of-classroom support for their children ripped away. And of course, our children—our children—stand to lose out on the public education and opportunity to learn that they deserve, regardless of their ZIP code.

Look, we know we are facing a challenging time in the American education system. We know that, as a nation, we must turn the tide and ensure that America is a global leader in educating our children, and I am committed to working with parents, teachers, principals, and school districts to do just that. But we also know what won't help our children get a good education, and that is slashing the education budget. And we know what will help turn the tide: critical, data-driven investment in our public education system to support our children, our teachers, our schools, and our communities.

It is clear that Mrs. McMahon is being nominated for this role not to help children but to do Mr. Trump's

bidding. She comes to this role with very little experience in education, but she has a wealth of experience in Trump world. She has never been a teacher, but she did donate over \$20 million to Trump's campaign and organizations that are backing him. She has never been a school administrator, but she does sit on the board of directors for Trump Media & Technology Group.

In this critical time, we need to be providing our students and schools with more support, not less, and I urge my colleagues to join me in voting no on her nomination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. RES. 103

Mr. GALLEG0. Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 103, which was submitted earlier today; further, that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. GALLEG0. Mr. President, 3 years ago, when Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine, many people, including experts, believed Putin would crush Ukraine's democracy in days. They were wrong.

About 1 month before the war broke out, I traveled to Ukraine with a bipartisan coalition of House Representatives to meet with Ukrainian soldiers. Those soldiers we met there knew they were up against one of the strongest militaries in the world, but they refused to back down when it came to fighting for their families, their freedom, and their future. These soldiers are the reason why—against all odds—Ukraine still stands strong.

Over 3 years, the scrappy little country of Ukraine has grinded down the second most powerful military in the world. Ukraine is holding the line for democracy, and they are doing it with our support. But Monday's vote at the U.N. undermined that and was a betrayal of Ukraine, America's allies, democracy, and everything we have stood for as a country.

Let's be clear on this: This is a war that Russia started. Ukraine did not ask for it. They did not ask to go to war with a nuclear superpower, and they did not ask for their cities to be reduced to rubble. They didn't ask for their children to be displaced and families to be torn apart. If Ukraine had its way, this war would have ended years ago.

What happened at the U.N. puts us on the same side as Russia and North Korea. That is not just embarrassing; it is dangerous. It sent a message to

our allies and every other country that relies on the U.S. to stand up to bullies and defend freedom that America cannot be relied on to rightfully call out unprovoked aggression. It told them that they are on their own; that America's words mean nothing.

If we can't stand up against these criminals, if we can't stand up against pariah states like Russia, how can we expect the world to take us seriously as leaders of democracy?

This is why I am introducing this resolution. I urge my colleagues to correct the mistake we made at the U.N. this week. Stand with our allies, and condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine. America does not stand with dictators, and we never will, and we shall never.

With that, I ask for consent and vote on my resolution.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, was there a unanimous consent request?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. No, there wasn't.

Mr. GALLEG0. I ask unanimous consent—

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, what was the consent request?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Can the Senator repeat the request, please.

Mr. GALLEG0. I withhold my request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. President, "I urge you to beware the temptation of . . . label[ing] both sides equally at fault—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Time has expired, Senator.

Mr. SCHIFF. May I have consent to speak for 2 minutes?

Ms. ERNST. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Objection is heard.

Mr. PAUL. Two minutes? If it is going to take longer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion to invoke cloture—

Mr. PAUL. If we can be done in 2 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Senator ERNST, you objected.

Ms. ERNST. Withdrawn.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Withdrawn.

The Senator from California is recognized for two minutes.

Mr. SCHIFF. I thank my colleagues for their courtesy to speak on this resolution.

I urge you to beware the temptation of . . . label[ing] both sides equally at fault, [the temptation] to ignore the facts of history and the aggressive impulses of an evil empire.

My colleagues, these are not my words; they are, of course, the words of Ronald Reagan almost 42 years ago to the day.

Imagine if he could see his party now turning its back on our ally and fellow democracy, Ukraine; sponsoring a U.N. resolution that would whitewash the start of the war; engaging in the most immoral equivalence and failing to assign responsibility to Russia for its in-

vasion and ruthless aggression; voting with Russia and North Korea against our longtime friends and allies in Europe and around the world; and abandoning and insulting our allies as Putin seeks to remake the map of Europe.

What is this resolution in the United Nations about that we helped defeat? The United States has used its influence and its vetoes in the Security Council many times, but this resolution was offered by dozens of our close allies on the third anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. What was in it that was so objectionable to split the United States from its friends?

The resolution made clear that Russia started this war. It reaffirmed the sovereignty and independence of Ukraine. It deplored Russian aggression on women and children. It raised concerns with North Korean troops fighting alongside Russian forces. It noted the threat to nuclear safety. It called for an end to the war and a just and lasting peace and the withdrawal of Russian forces from Ukrainian lands.

None of this is in dispute—none. This was the resolution that the United States, the leader of the free world, blocked at the United Nations. Can any Member of this body point to a single problematic word in that resolution? Of course not.

The Senate should stand by that resolution, even as we must stand by Ukraine.

Today, the White House and Kremlin seek to rewrite the history of this war with falsehood and slander, calling Zelenskyy the dictator, Ukraine the instigator, and Putin the hero. We need to do more than say something; we need to do something.

"Slava Ukraini."

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MORENO). The majority whip.

WAIVING MANDATORY QUORUM CALL

Mr. BARRASSO. I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum call with respect to the McMahon 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 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. 24, Linda McMahon, of Connecticut, to be Secretary of Education.

John Thune, Cindy Hyde-Smith, James E. Risch, Katie Britt, Tommy Tuberville, James Lankford, Markwayne Mullin, Marsha Blackburn, Tom Cotton, John R. Curtis, Bernie Moreno, Tim Sheehy, Mike Rounds, Joni Ernst, Roger F. Wicker, David McCormick, 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 Linda McMahon, of Connecticut, to be Secretary of Education, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) would have voted "yea."

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 51, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 98 Ex.]

YEAS—51

Banks	Graham	Moran
Barrasso	Grassley	Moreno
Blackburn	Hagerty	Mullin
Boozman	Hawley	Murkowski
Britt	Hoeben	Paul
Budd	Husted	Ricketts
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Risch
Cassidy	Johnson	Rounds
Collins	Justice	Schmitt
Cornyn	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Crapo	Lee	Sheehy
Cruz	Lummis	Sullivan
Curtis	Marshall	Thune
Daines	McConnell	Tillis
Ernst	McCormick	Tuberville
Fischer	Moody	Wicker

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	Lujan	Smith
Cortez Masto	Markey	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warnock
Fetterman	Murray	Warren
Gallo	Ossoff	Welch
Gillibrand	Padilla	Whitehouse
Hassan	Peters	Wyden
Heinrich	Reed	

NOT VOTING—2

Cramer	Young
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The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 51, the nays are 47.

The motion is agreed to.

The majority leader.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all postcloture time on the McMahon nomination be expired; further, that the Senate vote on confirmation of the nomination at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, March 3; finally, if confirmed, the motion 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.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate re-

sume legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

RECOGNIZING THE JOLIET EMS/FIRE DEPARTMENT PROGRAM

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, earlier this month, I had the pleasure of meeting with leaders from Joliet, IL—including Mayor Terry D'Arcy, city manager Beth Beatty, fire chief Jeff Carey, deputy chief of health services Aaron Kozlowski, emergency management coordinator Dr. John Lukancic, and Sister Mary Francis Seely.

I take dozens of meetings every week in my office here in Washington, but I was struck by the remarkable work underway in Joliet. Joliet is the third-largest city in Illinois, and like all communities, it faces its share of challenges. But over the past few years, Joliet has launched an incredible program to address mental health and addiction among its residents.

Starting in 2020, Joliet noticed that mental and behavioral health calls accounted for a growing percentage of the 9-1-1 calls. The fire department was spending less time putting out fires—and more time responding to people in mental health crisis. Some residents were dialing 9-1-1 regularly—several times a week—because they were facing underlying mental health needs. This cost the city money. It strained resources. But most of all, it meant residents of Joliet were suffering. So they decided to do something about it.

Joliet began by training 200 firefighters and paramedics in "crisis first aid," to be able to respond appropriately to callers in mental health distress. You see, after experiencing trauma—like witnessing a shooting or seeing their home destroyed by a fire—people can suffer. Exposure to trauma can harm the brain, changing the way people see and interact with the world.

We know that young people who experience trauma have a shorter life expectancy, are more likely to misuse drugs, attempt suicide, commit violence, or not graduate from high school. By providing Joliet firefighters with the tools to help individuals facing trauma, these first responders are able to recognize the signs of stress, and plant the seeds of a healthier tomorrow. It also helps the firefighters understand their own mental health needs from the strains of the job, so we can keep them healthy, too.

Additionally, after being dispatched to one of these serious calls, the Joliet Fire Department pays a follow-up visit within 48 hours. These visits help to show residents that someone cares and is looking out for them; it helps calm them down and can help provide referrals to additional services the residents may need.

In less than 3 years, the Joliet Fire Department has provided more than

2,000 Joliet residents with these mental health services. Think about this for a moment: Rather than just throwing up their hands and saying, "Sorry, we just fight fires," Joliet is taking ownership of the community's needs and preventing future 9-1-1 calls.

But they are not stopping there. Of course, not every patient's mental health needs can be addressed by first responders; some individuals require specialized treatment from a professional. But in Joliet, like most places across the country, there is a shortage of counselors and psychologists, causing waitlists that can last for months until the next available appointment. And what Joliet had realized was that, if a patient couldn't see a mental health provider, they were resorting to calling 9-1-1 and taking an ambulance to the emergency room.

It is similar to a problem that the University of Illinois Hospital in Chicago was seeing: where 48 individuals accounted for more than 776 visits to the emergency room in a single year. The reason? They were homeless. That hospital realized they could save money and better treat these patients, by paying for supportive housing.

Joliet is applying a similar lesson. They have partnered with the local hospital and a mental health company to offer free mental health services with a clinician, usually within 24 hours. Whatever insurance won't cover, the city has set up a fund to pay the co-pays and other out-of-pocket expenses for the mental health care of its residents.

What has been the result of this effort? Well, in the year before the program launched, Joliet area high schools experienced 12 teenage suicides. But in the last 2 school years, there have been zero teen suicides. Across all ages, citywide suicides have decreased by 50 percent. That is life-saving work. It is being recognized, too. Joliet recently received the Congressional Fire Service Award for Excellence.

I hope to support this effort in any way I can. Illinois recently received Federal approval to use Medicaid to cover preventive mental health services in the community, which can reduce costs down the line. And with Senator CAPITO, I have worked on Federal legislation to increase funding for trauma-informed care in schools and with first responders, to help break the cycle of mental health challenges.

I applaud the city of Joliet's efforts, which are serving as a new national model for emergency medical services and using first responders to address the root causes of suffering in the community. I look forward to working with them to identify additional Federal resources and opportunities to grow this project.

But to do that, my Republican colleagues need to understand a few things: We must fund the Federal Government and the critical programs that pay our first responders—and not allow

Elon Musk to decide what he thinks is worthwhile spending; and Medicaid is the insurance program that pays the largest share of mental health services; we cannot slash the Medicaid program to pay for billionaire tax breaks.

These may sound like distant debates in Washington, but when it comes to preventing suicides in Joliet, IL, it is a critical investment. And I will work every day to defend these programs.

U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS RULES OF PROCEDURE

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, consistent with Standing Rule XXVI, I ask unanimous consent that the rules of procedure of the Committee on Appropriations for the 119th Congress be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE RULES—119TH CONGRESS

I. MEETINGS

The Committee will meet at the call of the Chairman.

II. QUORUMS

1. Reporting a bill. A majority of the members must be present for the reporting of a bill.

2. Other business. For the purpose of transacting business other than reporting a bill or taking testimony, one-third of the members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum.

3. Taking testimony. For the purpose of taking testimony, other than sworn testimony, by the Committee or any subcommittee, one member of the Committee or subcommittee shall constitute a quorum. For the purpose of taking sworn testimony by the Committee, three members shall constitute a quorum, and for the taking of sworn testimony by any subcommittee, one member shall constitute a quorum.

III. PROXIES

Except for the reporting of a bill, votes may be cast by proxy when any member so requests.

IV. ATTENDANCE OF STAFF MEMBERS AT CLOSED SESSIONS

Attendance of staff members at closed sessions of the Committee shall be limited to those members of the Committee staff who have a responsibility associated with the matter being considered at such meeting. This rule may be waived by unanimous consent.

V. BROADCASTING AND PHOTOGRAPHING OF COMMITTEE HEARINGS

The Committee or any of its subcommittees may permit the photographing and broadcast of open hearings by television and/or radio. However, if any member of a subcommittee objects to the photographing or broadcasting of an open hearing, the question shall be referred to the full Committee for its decision.

VI. AVAILABILITY OF SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

To the extent possible, when the bill and report of any subcommittee are available, they shall be furnished to each member of the Committee thirty-six hours prior to the Committee's consideration of said bill and report.

VII. AMENDMENTS AND REPORT LANGUAGE

To the extent possible, amendments and report language intended to be proposed by

Senators at full Committee markups shall be provided in writing to the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member and the appropriate Subcommittee Chairman and Ranking Minority Member twenty-four hours prior to such markups.

VIII. POINTS OF ORDER

Any member of the Committee who is floor manager of an appropriations bill is hereby authorized to make points of order against any amendment offered in violation of the Senate Rules on the floor of the Senate to such appropriations bill.

IX. EX OFFICIO MEMBERSHIP

The Chairman and Ranking Minority Member of the full Committee are ex officio members of all subcommittees of which they are not regular members but shall have no vote in the subcommittee and shall not be counted for purposes of determining a quorum.

U.S. SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON BORDER MANAGEMENT, FEDERAL WORKFORCE, AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS RULES OF PROCEDURE

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, Senate Standing Rule XXVI requires each committee to adopt rules to govern the procedure of the committee and to publish those rules in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD not later than March 1 of the first year of each Congress. On February 27, 2025, a majority of the members of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs' Subcommittee on Border Management, Federal Workforce, and Regulatory Affairs adopted subcommittee rules of procedure.

Consistent with Standing Rule XXVI, today I ask unanimous consent that a copy of the Rules of Procedure of the Subcommittee on Border Management, Federal Workforce, and Regulatory Affairs be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

119TH CONGRESS—RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON BORDER MANAGEMENT, FEDERAL WORKFORCE, AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS OF THE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS AS ADOPTED

(February 27, 2025)

(1) SUBCOMMITTEE RULES. The Subcommittee shall be governed, where applicable, by the rules of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and the Standing Rules of the Senate.

(2) QUORUMS. For public or executive sessions, one Member of the Subcommittee shall constitute a quorum for the administering of oaths and the taking of testimony in any given case or subject matter. One-third of the Members of the Subcommittee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business other than the administering of oaths and the taking of testimony, provided that one Member of the minority is present. Proxies shall not be considered for the establishment of a quorum.

(3) TAKING TESTIMONY. In any hearings conducted by the Subcommittee, the Chair or the Chair's designee may swear in each witness prior to their testimony.

(4) SUBCOMMITTEE SUBPOENAS. Subpoenas for witnesses, as well as documents and records, may be authorized and issued by the Chair, or any other Member of the Sub-

committee designated by him or her, with the approval of the Ranking Minority Member of the Subcommittee, provided that the Chair may subpoena attendance or production without the approval of the Ranking Minority Member where the Chair or a staff officer designated by him or her has not received notification from the Ranking Minority Member or a staff officer designated by him or her of disapproval of the subpoena within two calendar days excluding Saturdays and Sundays, of being notified of the subpoena. If the subpoena is disapproved by the Ranking Minority Member as provided herein, the subpoena may be authorized by a vote of the Members of the Subcommittee.

A written notice of intent to issue a subpoena shall be provided to the Chair and Ranking Minority Member of the full Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, or staff officers designated by them, by the Subcommittee Chair, or a staff officer designated by him or her, immediately upon such authorization, and no subpoena shall be issued for at least two calendar days, excluding Saturdays and Sundays, from delivery to appropriate offices, unless the Chair and Ranking Minority Member of the full Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs waive the two-calendar day waiting period or unless the Subcommittee Chair certifies in writing to the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member of the full Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs that, in his or her opinion, it is necessary to issue the subpoena immediately.

U.S. SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON DISASTER MANAGEMENT, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, AND CENSUS RULES OF PROCEDURE

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, Senate Standing Rule XXVI requires each committee to adopt rules to govern the procedure of the committee and to publish those rules in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD not later than March 1 of the first year of each Congress. On February 27, 2025, a majority of the members of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs' Subcommittee on Disaster Management, District of Columbia, and Census adopted subcommittee rules of procedure.

Consistent with Standing Rule XXVI, today I ask unanimous consent that a copy of the Rules of Procedure of the Subcommittee on Disaster Management, District of Columbia, and Census be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

119TH CONGRESS—RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON DISASTER MANAGEMENT, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, AND CENSUS OF THE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS AS ADOPTED

(February 27, 2025)

1. Subcommittee rules. The Subcommittee shall be governed, where applicable, by the rules of the full Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and the Standing Rules of the Senate.

2. Quorums.

A. Transaction of routine business. One-third of the membership of the Subcommittee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of routine business, provided

that one Member of the Minority is present. For the purpose of this paragraph, the term "routine business" includes the convening of a meeting and the consideration of any business of the Subcommittee other than reporting to the full Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs any measures, matters, or recommendations.

B. Taking testimony. One Member of the Subcommittee shall constitute a quorum for taking sworn or unsworn testimony.

C. Proxies prohibited in establishment of quorum. Proxies shall not be considered for the establishment of a quorum.

3. Subcommittee subpoenas. The Chair of the Subcommittee, with the approval of the Ranking Minority Member of the Subcommittee, is authorized to subpoena the attendance of witnesses or the production of memoranda, documents, records, or any other materials at a hearing, provided that the Chair may subpoena attendance or production without the approval of the Ranking Minority Member where the Chair or a staff officer designated by the Chair has not received notification from the Ranking Minority Member or a staff officer designated by the Chair of disapproval of the subpoena within 2 calendar days, excluding Saturdays and Sundays and legal holidays in which the Senate is not in session, of being notified of the subpoena. If a subpoena is disapproved by the Ranking Minority Member as provided herein, the subpoena may be authorized by vote of the Members of the Subcommittee.

Immediately upon authorization of the issuance of a subpoena under these rules, a written notice of intent to issue the subpoena shall be provided to the Chair and Ranking Minority Member of the full Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs, or staff officers designated by the Chair and Ranking Minority Member for the full Committee, by the Subcommittee Chair or a staff officer designated by the Chair, and no subpoena shall be issued for at least 2 calendar days, excluding Saturdays and Sundays, from delivery to the appropriate offices, unless the Chair and Ranking Minority Member of the full Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs waive the 2-calendar day waiting period or unless the Subcommittee Chair certifies in writing to the Chair and Ranking Minority Member of the full Committee that, in the opinion of the Chair, it is necessary to issue a subpoena immediately.

When the Subcommittee or its Chair authorizes subpoenas, subpoenas may be issued upon the signature of the Chair or any other Member of the Subcommittee designated by the Chair.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO AMBER MORGAN

• Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I am honored to recognize Amber Morgan of Nashua as February's Granite Stater of the Month. Amber's flower shop Fortin Gage Flowers sells a special floral arrangement every month and donates the proceeds to a local community group.

Amber is an active member of the Nashua community. She sits on the city's citizen advisory committee and has built relationships with many local organizations. In the 2 years that she has owned Fortin Gage Flowers, Amber has often donated bouquets for charity events.

Amber's new Flowers for Good Campaign spotlights a different organiza-

tion every month with a unique bouquet. Amber donates proceeds from the sale of the arrangement to the organization and the recipient of the bouquet can learn about the group from an information card included with the flowers. Amber sees the campaign as a way to spread awareness of groups in the area that are helping Granite Staters in a fun and creative way.

Amber's passion for uplifting local organizations is a wonderful example of the Granite State spirit of going the extra mile to support your community. Her commitment to lifting up others is why I am proud to name her February's Granite Stater of the Month. •

TRIBUTE TO RICK BARNES

• Mr. SCHMITT. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Rick Barnes of Doolittle, MO, for his service to his neighbors and the State by a simple act of kindness.

On March 8, 2024, Stella Typaldos and her two young children were on the way to St. Louis to attend a family gathering. As Stella was driving eastbound on I-44, near Fort Leonard Wood, she hit a massive pothole that popped her tire and left her and her children stranded. Rick Barnes, a firefighter with the Doolittle Rural Fire Protection District, was driving west on I-44 when he saw Stella's car stranded on the other side of the highway. Barnes didn't hesitate to turn around and stop to help her. He drove Stella and her children to a nearby auto shop to purchase a new tire and help install it. Barnes began his firefighting career 7 years ago when he was 60 years old, and his desire to help his fellow Missourians when they are in need is inspirational.

Rick Barnes is truly a Champion of Missouri. He went above and beyond to support his fellow Missourians, and I am grateful for his commitment to helping our community. I wish him the best as he continues to serve at the Doolittle Rural Fire Protection District. •

TRIBUTE TO DEPUTY MARKUS BURNS

• Mr. SCHMITT. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Deputy Markus Burns of Benton County, MO, for his selfless act of bravery and continued service to the State.

As heavy storms came on April 29, 2024, Benton County Sheriff's Deputy Markus Burns responded to reports of a woman crying for help inside Deer Creek. Without knowledge of her whereabouts or regard for his own safety, Deputy Burns quickly shed his gear and entered the chest-deep water. Following the screams, Deputy Burns discovered a woman clinging to a tree for dear life. Deputy Burns quickly convinced the woman to let go of her anchor, allowing the current to safely bring the woman to his position. Thanks to Deputy Burns' quick think-

ing and rapid response, another Missourian made it home safe.

Deputy Burns is truly a Champion of Missouri. The selfless actions taken by Deputy Burns on that fateful day demonstrate not only a dedicated officer, but a true, American hero. For that, we are forever thankful. I wish him the best as he continues to grow in his career in the Benton County Sheriff's Office. •

TRIBUTE TO DANA BYERLEY

• Mr. SCHMITT. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Officer Dana Byerley of Sparta, MO, for her timely and heroic act of service to save the life of an infant.

The Short family welcomed their youngest daughter Bristol in July 2022. They soon discovered that she had cystic fibrosis (CF) and would need various medications every day to help her breathe and give her as normal a life as possible. The Short family is dedicated to creating as many life-giving memories as they can, so they attended the Persimmons Day Festival at the Roller Park in Sparta, MO, in October 2024. While at the festival, Bristol's mother Miranda noticed that her lips were turning blue and her body was going limp. They urgently searched for help among the crowd and reserve officer Dana Byerley quickly came to their aid. Officer Byerley performed mouth-to-mouth until Bristol was revived and the emergency medical services could arrive to bring her to the nearest hospital. The doctors and nurses at Mercy Hospital were able to attend to Bristol and treat her so she was well enough to travel to her CF hospital in Columbia, MO, where she remained and made a full recovery.

Dana Byerley is truly a Champion of Missouri. Her willingness to help and quick thinking kept little Bristol alive; now, she is a thriving and happy toddler. I commend Officer Byerley for her service to her fellow Missourians and wish her all the best with the Sparta Police Department. •

RECOGNIZING THE ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY TECHNOLOGY MANAGERS ANNIVERSARY

• Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Intellectual Property, I rise to celebrate the Association of University Technology Managers' 50th anniversary.

The Society of University Patent Administrators, known as SUPA, was first formed in 1975 to focus on how best to advance discoveries from university labs into the marketplace. In the decades since, SUPA was renamed the Association of University Technology Managers and now is known as AUTM. They championed the 1980 Bayh-Dole Act, which allowed universities and inventors to retain the intellectual property rights of discoveries made using Federal funding and helped technology transfer blossom.

Technology transfer has had a profound effect on the American economy and is estimated to have created more than 19,000 startup companies, up to 6.5 million jobs, and \$2 trillion in economic impact since 1996. Technology transfer, via AUTM and the many inventors that they assist, help ensure that the United States remains the world leader in innovation. Therefore, on behalf of myself and Senator CHRIS COONS—my longtime partner on the IP Subcommittee—I recognize AUTM's 50th anniversary and commend the many technology transfer professionals on their successes to make our Nation safer, more vibrant, and healthier.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Hanley, one of his secretaries.

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGES

REPORT OF THE CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY THAT WAS ORIGINALLY DECLARED IN EXECUTIVE ORDER 13692 OF MARCH 8, 2015, WITH RESPECT TO THE SITUATION IN VENEZUELA—PM 10

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with the accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13692 of March 8, 2015, with respect to the situation in Venezuela is to continue in effect beyond March 8, 2025.

The situation in Venezuela continues to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13692 with respect to the situation in Venezuela.

DONALD J. TRUMP.
THE WHITE HOUSE, February 27, 2025.

REPORT OF THE CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY THAT WAS ORIGINALLY DECLARED IN EXECUTIVE ORDER 13660 OF MARCH 6, 2014, WITH RESPECT TO UKRAINE—PM 11

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13660 of March 6, 2014, which was expanded in scope in Executive Order 13661, Executive Order 13662, and Executive Order 14065, and under which additional steps were taken in Executive Order 13685 and Executive Order 13849, is to continue in effect beyond March 6, 2025.

The actions and policies of persons that undermine democratic processes and institutions in Ukraine; threaten its peace, security, stability, sovereignty, and territorial integrity; and contribute to the misappropriation of its assets, as well as the actions and policies of the Government of the Russian Federation, including its purported annexation of Crimea and its use of force in Ukraine, continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13660 with respect to Ukraine.

DONALD J. TRUMP.
THE WHITE HOUSE, February 27, 2025.

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:04 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Alli, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following joint resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.J. Res. 35. 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 "Waste Emissions Charge for Petroleum and Natural Gas Systems: Procedures for Facilitating Compliance, Including Netting and Exemptions".

At 11:40 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Alli, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 250. An act to direct the Joint Committee on the Library to procure a statue of Benjamin Franklin for placement in the Capitol.

H.R. 469. An act to provide for the creation of a Congressional time capsule in commemoration of the semiquincentennial of the United States, and for other purposes.

H.R. 695. An act 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.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 250. An act to direct the Joint Committee on the Library to procure a statue of Benjamin Franklin for placement in the Capitol; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

H.R. 469. An act to provide for the creation of a Congressional time capsule in commemoration of the semiquincentennial of the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

H.R. 695. An act 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; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

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-474. A communication from the Board Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Farm Credit Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Administration's Fiscal Year 2024 Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) and Privacy Management Report received in the Office of the President pro tempore; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-475. A communication from the Board Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Farm Credit Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Administration's Fiscal Year 2024 Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) and Privacy Management Report; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-476. 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 "Notice: Guidance Related to Health Coverage Reporting Required by Sections 6055 and 6056" (Notice 2025-15) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 26, 2025; to the Committee on Finance.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. CRUZ for the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

*Steven Bradbury, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of Transportation.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, for the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation I report favorably the following nomination list which was printed in the RECORD on the date indicated, and ask unanimous consent, to save the expense of

reprinting on the Executive Calendar that this nomination lie at the Secretary's desk for the information of Senators.

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

*Coast Guard nomination of Samuel B. Hafensteiner, to be Lieutenant Commander.

By Mr. CASSIDY for the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

*Lori Chavez-DeRemer, of Oregon, to be Secretary of Labor.

By Mr. PAUL for the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

*James Bishop, of North Carolina, to be Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

*Troy Edgar, of California, to be Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security.

By Mr. GRASSLEY for the Committee on the Judiciary.

Todd Blanche, of Florida, to be Deputy Attorney General.

Abigail Slater, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Attorney General.

*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.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

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 Mrs. BLACKBURN (for herself and Ms. ROSEN):

S. 762. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to deny immigration benefits to aliens who carried out, participated in, planned, financed, supported, or otherwise facilitated the October 2023 attacks against Israel; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself and Ms. CORTEZ MASTO):

S. 763. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend the exemption for telehealth services from certain high deductible health plan rules; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BENNET (for himself and Mr. HICKENLOOPER):

S. 764. A bill to provide for the designation of certain wilderness areas, recreation management areas, and conservation areas in the State of Colorado, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. ROSEN (for herself, Mr. HUSTED, and Mr. RICKETTS):

S. 765. A bill to prohibit the use of DeepSeek by the executive agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Ms. ERNST:

S. 766. A bill to require an annual report of taxpayer-funded projects that are over budget and behind schedule; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. KELLY (for himself, Mrs. CAPITO, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 767. A bill to amend the Office of National Drug Control Prevention Act of 1998 to include new requirements for assessments and reports, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. CORTEZ MASTO (for herself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. WARNOCK, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. COONS, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. KELLY, Mr. YOUNG, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 768. A bill to establish a grant program to provide assistance to local law enforcement agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself and Mr. PADILLA):

S. 769. A bill to amend the Research and Development, Competition, and Innovation Act to clarify the definition of foreign country for purposes of malign foreign talent recruitment restriction, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. SANDERS (for himself, Ms. WARREN, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. WELCH, Mr. PADILLA, Ms. SMITH, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. BOOKER, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 770. A bill to enhance Social Security benefits and ensure the long-term solvency of the Social Security program; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. RISCH (for himself, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. DAINES, Ms. LUMMIS, and Mr. SHEEHY):

S. 771. A bill to terminate the Shelter and Services Program of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. WARNER (for himself and Mr. THUNE):

S. 772. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make the exclusion for certain employer payments of student loans under educational assistance programs permanent; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. HASSAN (for herself and Mr. LANKFORD):

S. 773. A bill to amend section 324 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to incentivize States, Indian Tribes, and Territories to close disaster recovery projects by authorizing the use of excess funds for management costs for other disaster recovery projects; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN (for herself, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, and Mr. CRUZ):

S. 774. A bill to prohibit the use of funds to seek membership in the World Health Organization or to provide assessed or voluntary contributions to the World Health Organization until certain conditions have been met; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. GRAHAM (for himself and Mr. LUJÁN):

S. 775. A bill to amend the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 to prohibit the slaughter of equines for human consumption; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. COONS (for himself and Mr. MORAN):

S. 776. A bill to provide the President with authority to enter into a comprehensive trade agreement with the United Kingdom, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BUDD (for himself, Mr. KELLY, and Mr. SCOTT of Florida):

S. 777. A bill to require the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of State to monitor efforts by the People's Republic of China to build or buy strategic foreign ports, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Ms. ROSEN (for herself and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 778. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to require a lactation space in each medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. PADILLA (for himself, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. KAINE, and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 779. A bill to amend title XIX of the Public Health Service Act to provide for prevention and early intervention services under the Block Grants for Community Mental Health Services program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. SMITH, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. BOOKER, and Ms. BALDWIN):

S. 780. A bill to amend the Truth in Lending Act to address certain issues relating to the extension of consumer credit, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. MURPHY):

S. 781. A bill to reauthorize Long Island Sound programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. LUJÁN (for himself and Ms. ERNST):

S. 782. A bill to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to amend regulations to allow for certain packers to have an interest in market agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 783. A bill to amend the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act to provide additional assistance to rural water, wastewater, and waste disposal systems, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. OSSOFF (for himself and Ms. COLLINS):

S. 784. A bill to expand and modify the grant program of the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide innovative transportation options to veterans in highly rural areas, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 785. A bill to extend the Alaska Native Vietnam era Veterans Land Allotment Program; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Ms. SMITH, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. MARKEY, and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 786. A bill to fully fund the Prevention and Public Health Fund and reaffirm the importance of prevention in the United States healthcare system; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. CASSIDY (for himself and Ms. HIRONO):

S. 787. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to establish a commission to review operations at the Veterans Health Administration and submit to Congress reports with respect to that review, and for other programs; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Mr. KING, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. GALLEGO, Mr. SANDERS, and Mr. KELLY):

S. 788. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to impose an excise tax on the failure of certain hedge funds owning excess single-family residences to dispose of such residences, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Mr. WARNER, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, and Mr. KING):

S. 789. A bill to require reports on critical mineral and rare earth element resources around the world and a strategy for the development of advanced mining, refining, separation, and processing technologies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. LUMMIS (for herself and Mr. BARRASSO):

S. 790. A bill to redesignate the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center in Casper, Wyoming, as the “Barbara L. Cubin National Historic Trails Interpretive Center”; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. VAN HOLLEN (for himself and Ms. ALSOBROOKS):

S. 791. A bill to establish the Justice Thurgood Marshall National Historic Site in the State of Maryland as an affiliated area of the National Park System, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. LEE:

S. 792. A bill to require the National Telecommunications Information Administration to estimate the value of electromagnetic spectrum assigned or otherwise allocated to Federal entities; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. WARNER (for himself and Mr. BOOZMAN):

S. 793. A bill to amend the Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act of 2019 to modify and reauthorize the Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs; to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

By Mr. LEE:

S. 794. A bill to require the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information to audit Federal spectrum; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. ROUNDS (for himself, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. THUNE, Mr. HOEVEN, and Mr. MARSHALL):

S. 795. A bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to exclude prior converted cropland from the definition of “navigable waters”, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. DAINES, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. RICKETTS, Mr. RISCH, and Ms. LUMMIS):

S. 796. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the corporate alternative minimum tax; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. DUCKWORTH (for herself, Mr. WELCH, Ms. WARREN, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. COONS, and Mr. KAINE):

S. 797. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to protect and expand access to fertility treatment under the health insurance program carried out under chapter 89 of that title, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 798. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for the indexing of certain assets for purposes of determining gain or loss; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself and Mr. KAINE):

S. 799. A bill to establish and implement a multi-year Legal Gold and Mining Partner-

ship Strategy to reduce the negative environmental and social impacts of illicit gold mining in the Western Hemisphere, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. MORAN (for himself and Mr. KING):

S. 800. A bill to modify the Precision Medicine for Veterans Initiative of the Department of Veterans Affairs; to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

By Mr. LEE:

S. 801. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide for fiscal accountability, to require institutions of higher education to publish information regarding student success, to provide for school accountability for student loans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. WICKER, Ms. BALDWIN, and Ms. BLUNT ROCHSTER):

S. 802. A bill to amend title 14, United States Code, to make appropriations for Coast Guard pay in the event an appropriations Act expires before the enactment of a new appropriations Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Appropriations.

By Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. COONS, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. REED, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. SMITH, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WELCH, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 803. A bill to regulate large capacity ammunition feeding devices; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. WELCH, and Mr. SCHIFF):

S. 804. A bill to terminate authorizations for the use of military force and declarations of war no later than 10 years after the enactment of such authorizations or declarations; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. BOOKER (for himself, Mr. KAINE, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. SANDERS, and Mr. WARNOCK):

S. 805. A bill to establish in the Department of State the Office to Monitor and Combat Islamophobia, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. LUJÁN (for himself and Mr. HEINRICH):

S. 806. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to increase the accountability of the Office of Special Counsel in enforcing certain provisions of that title vigorously, consistently, and without regard to the political affiliation, career status, or personal characteristics of individuals subject to those provisions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. LEE (for himself, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. DAINES, Mr. WARNOCK, Mr. RISCH, Mr. JUSTICE, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. CRAMER, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. MORAN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. 807. A bill to provide for the crediting of funds received by the National Guard Bureau as reimbursement from States; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself, Mr. PETERS, Mr. SHEEHY, and Ms. SLOTKIN):

S. 808. A bill to prohibit the importation of certain minerals from the Russian Federation; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. LEE (for himself and Mr. SCOTT of Florida):

S. 809. A bill to amend the Right to Financial Privacy Act of 1978 to preserve the confidentiality of certain records, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MARKEY:

S. 810. A bill to ensure that there are no reductions in funding for critical education programs for fiscal years 2025, 2026, and 2027, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. RISCH, Mr. WELCH, Mr. BUDD, Mr. CURTIS, and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 811. A bill to express findings relating to the recreational trails program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. RICKETTS (for himself and Mr. BUDD):

S.J. Res. 28. A joint resolution disapproving the rule submitted by the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection relating to “Defining Larger Participants of a Market for General-Use Digital Consumer Payment Applications”; 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. GRAHAM (for himself, Mr. FETTERMAN, and Mrs. BRITT):

S. Res. 101. A resolution affirming the threats to world stability from a nuclear weapons-capable Islamic Republic of Iran; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. BENNET (for himself and Mr. HICKENLOOPER):

S. Res. 102. A resolution to recognize and celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Denver International Airport; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. GALLEGO (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. BENNET, and Mr. SCHIFF):

S. Res. 103. A resolution condemning the rejection by the United States of a United Nations resolution condemning the illegal invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. BOOKER):

S. Res. 104. A resolution designating February 27, 2025, as “Rare Disease Day”; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 9

At the request of Mr. TUBERVILLE, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mrs. MOODY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 9, a bill to provide that for purposes of determining compliance with title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 in athletics, sex shall be recognized based solely on a person’s reproductive biology and genetics at birth.

S. 121

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the names of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. HUSTED) and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) were added as cosponsors of S. 121, a bill to extend the statute of limitations for violations relating to pandemic-era programs to be 10 years.

S. 292

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 292, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a credit against tax for charitable donations to nonprofit organizations providing education scholarships to qualified elementary and secondary students.

S. 317

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 317, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify and extend the deduction for charitable contributions for individuals not itemizing deductions.

S. 345

At the request of Mr. LEE, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 345, a bill to provide that silencers be treated the same as firearms accessories.

S. 363

At the request of Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 363, a bill to impose sanctions with respect to foreign governments that resist efforts to repatriate their citizens who have unlawfully entered the United States and foreign governments and foreign persons that knowingly facilitate unlawful immigration into the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 364

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 364, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to remove silencers from the definition of firearms, and for other purposes.

S. 435

At the request of Mr. SULLIVAN, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BANKS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 435, a bill to improve the missile defense capabilities of the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 522

At the request of Mr. HAGERTY, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 522, a bill to amend the Federal Credit Union Act to modify the frequency of board of directors meetings, and for other purposes.

S. 525

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mrs. BRITT) 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. 556

At the request of Mr. SULLIVAN, the names of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN), the Senator from Florida (Mrs. MOODY), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. HAWLEY), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BANKS), the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT) were added as cosponsors of 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.

S. 567

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. WARNOCK) was added as a cosponsor of S. 567, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the First Rhode Island Regiment, in recognition of their dedicated service during the Revolutionary War.

S. 583

At the request of Mr. LEE, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 583, a bill to amend chapter 9 of title 5, United States Code, to reauthorize the executive reorganization authority of the President and to ensure efficient executive reorganization, and for other purposes.

S. 599

At the request of Mr. WELCH, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. SLOTKIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 599, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to increase the mileage rate offered by the Department of Veterans Affairs through their Beneficiary Travel program for health related travel, and for other purposes.

S. 627

At the request of Mr. SCHMITT, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 627, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make certain provisions with respect to qualified ABLE programs permanent.

S. 679

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 679, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to improve the Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act of 2004 and provisions relating to the carrying of concealed weapons by law enforcement officers, and for other purposes.

S. 680

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 680, a bill to prohibit funding for the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change until China is no longer defined as a developing country.

S. 685

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the names of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. SCHMITT) and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. MORENO) were added as cosponsors of S. 685, a bill to ensure State and local law enforcement officers are permitted to cooperate with Federal officials to protect our communities from violent criminals and suspected terrorists who are illegally present in the United States.

S. 706

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 706, a bill to amend the Justice for United States Victims of State Sponsored Terrorism Act to clarify and supplement the funding sources for United States victims of state-sponsored terrorism to ensure consistent and meaningful distributions from the United States Victims of State Sponsored Terrorism Fund, and for other purposes.

S. 720

At the request of Mr. PADILLA, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 720, a bill to establish an Office of Environmental Justice within the Department of Justice, and for other purposes.

S. 761

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the names of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) were added as cosponsors of S. 761, a bill to establish the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies in the United States, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 86

At the request of Mr. RISCH, the names of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) and the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 86, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2758 (XXVI) and the harmful conflation of China's "One China Principle" and the United States' "One China Policy".

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. PADILLA (for himself, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. KAINE, and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 779. A bill to amend title XIX of the Public Health Service Act to provide for prevention and early intervention services under the Block Grants for Community Mental Health Services program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, I rise to introduce the bipartisan Early Action and Responsiveness Lifts Youth Minds Act. This legislation would increase access to early intervention and prevention initiatives in children's mental health.

Our bipartisan bill would allow States to use up to 5 percent of their community mental health services block grant funding for prevention and early intervention activities. The community mental health services block grant, MHBG, administered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, is currently limited to funding services for those with severe, diagnosed mental illnesses.

The bill would also require the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, HHS, to provide reports to Congress detailing States' efforts to promote early intervention. HHS would report to Congress every 2 years regarding States' efforts to promote early intervention, including comprehensive information on activities undertaken and outcomes achieved.

Over 20 percent of youth have reported seriously considering suicide in the previous year, with 18 percent having developed a suicide plan, which is one of the most significant risk factors that precipitates an actual attempt. Over 40 percent of teens reported persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness, with a shocking 57 percent of girls reporting this. These statistics regarding suicidality and hopelessness are considerably poorer than ten years ago. The evidence is clear: There is a youth mental health crisis, and it is getting worse. Yet many of these youth in distress do not yet have a diagnosed mental health condition, meaning that MHBG funds can't be used to help them and prevent their symptoms from worsening.

Research shows that intervening early with people who are experiencing mental health challenges can help prevent those challenges from turning more serious—and more costly to treat.

States should have the flexibility to use up to 5 percent of mental health block grant funds for prevention and early intervention activities if they so choose. Without this adjustment, the mental health block grant is missing a valuable opportunity to intervene early and save lives.

I would like to thank Senators TILLIS, KAINE, and MURKOWSKI for co-leading this legislation, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to enact this bill as soon as possible.

Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. CASIDY, Mr. DAINES, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. RICKETTS, Mr. RISCH, and Ms. LUMMIS):

S. 796. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the corporate alternative minimum tax; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 796

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 "Book Minimum Tax Repeal Act".

SEC. 2. REPEAL OF CORPORATE ALTERNATIVE MINIMUM TAX.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 55 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by striking "There" and inserting "In the case of a taxpayer other than a corporation, there", and

(B) by striking "plus, in the case of an applicable corporation, the tax imposed by section 59A" in paragraph (2), and

(2) by striking subsection (b) and inserting the following:

"(b) TENTATIVE MINIMUM TAX.—

"(1) AMOUNT OF TENTATIVE MINIMUM TAX.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—The tentative minimum tax for the taxable year is the sum of—

"(i) 26 percent of so much of the taxable excess as does not exceed \$175,000, plus

"(ii) 28 percent of so much of the taxable excess as exceeds \$175,000.

The amount determined under the preceding sentence shall be reduced by the alternative minimum tax foreign tax credit for the taxable year.

"(B) TAXABLE EXCESS.—For purposes of this subsection, the term 'taxable excess' means so much of the alternative minimum taxable income for the taxable year as exceeds the exemption amount.

"(C) MARRIED INDIVIDUAL FILING SEPARATE RETURN.—In the case of a married individual filing a separate return, subparagraph (A) shall be applied by substituting 50 percent of the dollar amount otherwise applicable under clause (i) and clause (ii) thereof. For purposes of the preceding sentence, marital status shall be determined under section 7703.

"(2) ALTERNATIVE MINIMUM TAXABLE INCOME.—The term 'alternative minimum taxable income' means the taxable income of the taxpayer for the taxable year—

"(A) determined with the adjustments provided in section 56 and section 58, and

"(B) increased by the amount of the items of tax preference described in section 57.

If a taxpayer is subject to the regular tax, such taxpayer shall be subject to the tax imposed by this section (and, if the regular tax is determined by reference to an amount other than taxable income, such amount shall be treated as the taxable income of such taxpayer for purposes of the preceding sentence)."

(b) APPLICATION TO GENERAL BUSINESS CREDIT.—Section 38(c)(6)(E) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended to read as follows:

"(E) CORPORATIONS.—In the case of a corporation, this subsection shall be applied by treating the corporation as having a tentative minimum tax of zero."

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) Section 11(d) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking "the taxes imposed by subsection (a) and section 55" and inserting "the tax imposed by subsection (a)".

(2) Section 12 of such Code is amended by striking paragraph (5).

(3) Section 53 of such Code is amended by striking subsection (e).

(4) Part VI of subchapter A of chapter 1 of such Code is amended by striking section 56A (and the item related to such section in the table of sections for such part).

(5) Section 59 of such Code is amended by striking subsections (k) and (l).

(6) Section 860E(a)(4) of such Code is amended by striking "section 55(b)(1)(D)" and inserting "section 55(b)(2)".

(7) Section 882(a)(1) of such Code is amended by striking "55".

(8) Section 897(a)(2)(A)(i) of such Code is amended by striking "section 55(b)(1)(D)" and inserting "section 55(b)(2)".

(9) Section 6425(c)(1)(A) of such Code is amended by striking clause (ii) and by redesignating clause (iii) as clause (ii).

(10) Section 6655(e)(2) of such Code is amended by striking "adjusted financial statement income (as defined in section 56A)" each place it appears in subparagraphs (A)(i) and (B)(i).

(11) Section 6655(g)(1)(A) of such Code is amended by striking clause (ii) and by redesignating clauses (iii) and (iv) as clauses (ii) and (iii), respectively.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2024.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. WELCH and Mr. SCHIFF):

S. 804. To terminate authorizations for the use of military force and declarations of war no later than 10 years after the enactment of such authorizations or declarations; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 804

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 "Accountability for Endless Wars Act of 2025".

SEC. 2. TERMINATION OF AUTHORIZATIONS FOR THE USE OF MILITARY FORCE AND DECLARATIONS OF WAR.

(a) FUTURE AUTHORIZATIONS FOR THE USE OF MILITARY FORCE AND DECLARATIONS OF WAR.—Any authorization for the use of military force or declaration of war enacted into law after the date of the enactment of this Act shall terminate on the date that is 10 years after the date of the enactment of such authorization or declaration.

(b) EXISTING AUTHORIZATIONS FOR THE USE OF MILITARY FORCE AND DECLARATIONS OF WAR.—Any authorization for the use of military force or declaration of war enacted before the date of the enactment of this Act shall terminate on the date that is 6 months after the date of such enactment.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 101—AFFIRMING THE THREATS TO WORLD STABILITY FROM A NUCLEAR WEAPONS-CAPABLE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

Mr. GRAHAM (for himself, Mr. FETTERMAN, and Mrs. BRITT) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 101

Whereas numerous officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran have repeatedly made statements against the United States, Israel, and their allies and partners, including—

(1) the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who stated—

(A) “As long as America continues its wickedness, interference, and savagery, the Iranian nation will not abandon ‘Death to America’.”;

(B) “The Zionist regime is a deadly, cancerous growth and a detriment to this region. It will undoubtedly be uprooted and destroyed”;

(C) “We will definitely do everything necessary to prepare the Iranian nation for confronting the Arrogant Powers, whether militarily, in terms of armament, or politically. Our officials are already working on this”;

(D) “The United States of America and the Zionist regime will definitely receive a crushing response for what they do against Iran and the Resistance Front”;

(2) an adviser to the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kamal Kharrazi, who stated, “We have no decision to build a nuclear bomb but should Iran’s existence be threatened, there will be no choice but to change our military doctrine”;

(3) former foreign ministry spokesperson of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Nasser Kanani, who stated, “This action of the three European countries [France, Germany and the United Kingdom] is the continuation of the hostile policy of the West and economic terrorism against the people of Iran, which will face the appropriate and proportionate action of the Islamic Republic of Iran”;

Whereas the Islamic Republic of Iran is directly responsible for the death and injury of United States servicemembers, including—

(1) between 2005 and 2011, when the Quds Force, a branch of Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, provided explosively formed penetrators to Iranian-backed fighters in Iraq and killed 195 United States troops and wounded nearly another 900 United States troops;

(2) since the October 7, 2023, attack on Israel, where Iranian-backed proxies have attacked United States troops in the region more than 170 times; and

(3) on January 28, 2024, when an Iranian-backed proxy launched a drone that killed 3 United States troops and wounded nearly another 40 United States troops stationed at Tower 22 in Jordan;

Whereas the United States Government has reported—

(1) “Iran’s annual financial backing to Hizballah — which in recent years has been estimated at \$700 million — accounts for the overwhelming majority of [Hizballah’s] annual budget”;

(2) “ Hamas has received funding, weapons, and training from Iran”;

(3) “Iran also provides up to \$100 million annually in combined support to Palestinian terrorist groups, including Hamas”;

Whereas the Islamic Republic of Iran’s support to the Houthis, including through the provision of ballistic and cruise missiles and unmanned weapons systems, has allowed the Houthis to carry out attacks against United States partners;

Whereas, since the Iranian Revolution in 1979, the Islamic Republic of Iran has engaged in acts of international terrorism and continuously threatened the United States, Israel, and their partners and allies;

Whereas, on January 19, 1984, the United States designated the Islamic Republic of Iran as a state sponsor of terrorism for repeatedly providing support for acts of international terrorism;

Whereas, on April 11, 2006, the Islamic Republic of Iran announced that it had enriched uranium for the first time to a level close to 3.5 percent at the Pilot Fuel Enrichment Plant in Natanz, Iran;

Whereas, on December 23, 2006, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1737 (2006), which imposed sanctions with respect to the Islamic Republic of Iran for its failure to suspend enrichment activities;

Whereas the United Nations Security Council subsequently adopted Resolutions 1747 (2007), 1803 (2008), and 1929 (2010), all of which targeted the nuclear program of, and imposed additional sanctions with respect to, the Islamic Republic of Iran;

Whereas, on February 3, 2009, the Islamic Republic of Iran announced that it had launched its first satellite, which raised concern over the applicability of the satellite to the ballistic missile program;

Whereas, in September 2009, the United States, the United Kingdom, and France revealed the existence of the clandestine Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant in the Islamic Republic of Iran, years after construction started on the plant;

Whereas, on January 28, 2017, the Islamic Republic of Iran conducted a test of a medium-range ballistic missile, which traveled an estimated 600 miles and provides the Islamic Republic of Iran the capability to threaten United States military installations in the Middle East;

Whereas, in 2018, Israel seized a significant portion of the nuclear archive of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which contained tens of thousands of files and compact discs relating to past efforts at nuclear weapon design, development, and manufacturing by the Islamic Republic of Iran;

Whereas, on September 27, 2018, Israel revealed the existence of a secret warehouse housing radioactive material in the Turqez Abad district in Tehran, and an inspection of the warehouse by the International Atomic Energy Agency (referred to in this preamble as the “IAEA”) detected radioactive particles, which the Government of Iran failed to adequately explain;

Whereas, on June 19, 2020, the IAEA adopted Resolution GOV/2020/34, which expressed “serious concern . . . that Iran has not provided access to the Agency under the Additional Protocol to two locations”;

Whereas, on April 17, 2021, the IAEA verified that the Islamic Republic of Iran had begun to enrich uranium to 60 percent purity;

Whereas, on August 14, 2021, the former President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Hassan Rouhani, stated, “Iran’s Atomic Energy Organization can enrich uranium by 20 percent and 60 percent and if . . . our reactors need it, it can enrich uranium to 90 percent purity”;

Whereas, on April 17, 2022, the Islamic Republic of Iran confirmed the relocation of a production facility for advanced centrifuges from an aboveground facility at Karaj, Iran, to the fortified underground Natanz Enrichment Complex;

Whereas, on April 19, 2022, the Department of State released a report stating there are “serious concerns” about “possible undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran”;

Whereas, on May 30, 2022, the IAEA reported that the Islamic Republic of Iran had achieved a stockpile of 43.3 kilograms (95.5 pounds) of 60 percent highly enriched uranium, roughly enough material for a nuclear weapon;

Whereas, on June 8, 2022, the Islamic Republic of Iran turned off surveillance cameras installed by the IAEA to monitor uranium enrichment activities at nuclear sites in the country;

Whereas, on July 14, 2022, in The Jerusalem U.S.-Israel Strategic Partnership Joint Declaration, which was signed between President Biden and Israel, the United States stressed its commitment “never to allow

Iran to acquire a nuclear weapon, and that [the United States] is prepared to use all elements of its national power to ensure that outcome”;

Whereas, on July 27, 2022, the head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, Mohammad Eslami, announced that the Islamic Republic of Iran is building a new nuclear reactor at the Isfahan Nuclear Technology Center, which will be one of the largest nuclear facilities in Iran;

Whereas, on December 2, 2022, IAEA Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi stated, “Iran informed us they were tripling . . . their capacity to enrich uranium at 60 percent, which is very close to military level, which is 90 percent”;

Whereas, on January 25, 2023, Director General Grossi stated, “One thing is true: [the Islamic Republic of Iran has] amassed enough nuclear material for several nuclear weapons”;

Whereas, on February 27, 2023, the IAEA reported that the Islamic Republic of Iran had enriched uranium to 83.7 percent, which is just short of the 90 percent threshold for weapons-grade fissile material;

Whereas, on September 4, 2023, an IAEA report estimated the total uranium stockpile of the Islamic Republic of Iran to be 3795.5 kilograms (8367.65 pounds) and that the Islamic Republic of Iran has enough fissile material, that if further enriched, would be sufficient to produce several nuclear weapons;

Whereas, on October 18, 2023, United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231 (2015) lapsed and many proliferation-related penalties and restrictions were lifted, allowing the Islamic Republic of Iran to test or transfer ballistic missiles, which may contribute to the further development of a nuclear weapon delivery system;

Whereas, on December 28, 2023, the governments of the United States, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom jointly declared, “The production of high-enriched uranium by Iran has no credible civilian justification. These decisions demonstrate Iran’s lack of good will towards de-escalation and represent reckless behavior in a tense regional context . . . Iran must fully cooperate with the IAEA to enable it to provide assurances that its nuclear program is exclusively peaceful.”;

Whereas, on February 27, 2024, a spokesperson for the Department of State stated, “We remain seriously concerned about Iran’s continued expansion of its nuclear program in ways that have no credible civilian purpose, including its continued production of highly enriched uranium”;

Whereas, on June 3, 2024, Director General Grossi stated, “Many countries have said if Iran gets nuclear weapons, they will do the same. Adding nuclear weapons to the cauldron of the Middle East is a very bad idea.”;

Whereas, on June 5, 2024, by a vote of 20 to 2, the United States joined other nations in formally censuring the Islamic Republic of Iran for advances in their nuclear program and failure to cooperate with the IAEA;

Whereas, on June 18, 2024, it was reported that intelligence agencies of the United States and Israel were looking into information that the Islamic Republic of Iran may have developed a computer model that could be used for research and development of nuclear weapons;

Whereas, on July 23, 2024, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence published an assessment, in accordance with Iran Nuclear Weapons Capability and Terrorism Monitoring Act of 2022 (22 U.S.C. 8701 note; Public Law 117-263), which stated, “Iran continues to increase the size of its uranium stockpile, increase its enrichment capacity,

and develop, manufacture, and operate advanced centrifuges. Tehran has the infrastructure and experience to quickly produce weapons-grade uranium, at multiple facilities”;

Whereas, on November 28, 2024, the Islamic Republic of Iran informed the IAEA that it planned to start enriching uranium with thousands of advanced centrifuges at its Fordow and Natanz plants, while also installing more uranium-enriching centrifuges at those locations;

Whereas, on December 5, 2024, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence published another assessment, in accordance with Iran Nuclear Weapons Capability and Terrorism Monitoring Act of 2022 (22 U.S.C. 8701 note; Public Law 117-263), which stated—

(1) “Iran’s 20-percent and 60-percent enriched uranium stockpiles are far greater than needed for what it claims it will use the uranium for and Iran could produce more than a dozen nuclear weapons if its total uranium stockpile were further enriched”;

(2) “Iran probably will consider installing or operating more advanced centrifuges, further increasing its enriched uranium stockpile, enriching uranium up to 90 percent, or threatening to withdraw from the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons”;

Whereas, on December 9, 2024, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom released a joint statement that—

(1) condemns “Iran’s latest steps . . . to expand its nuclear programme to significantly increase the rate of production of uranium enriched up to 60 percent”;

(2) expresses extreme concern “to learn that Iran has increased the number of centrifuges in use and started preparations to install additional enrichment infrastructure”;

(3) “strongly urge[s] Iran to reverse these steps, and to immediately halt its nuclear escalation”;

Whereas, on February 26, 2025, the IAEA reported that the Islamic Republic of Iran had increased its total stockpile of 60 percent highly enriched uranium to 274.8 kilograms (605.83 pounds), which, if further enriched, would be sufficient to produce 6 nuclear weapons: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) affirms that the Islamic Republic of Iran’s continued pursuit of a nuclear weapons capability is—

(A) a credible threat to the United States; and

(B) an existential threat to Israel and other allies and partners in the Middle East;

(2) asserts all options should be considered to address the nuclear threat the Islamic Republic of Iran poses to the United States, Israel, and our allies and partners;

(3) demands the Islamic Republic of Iran to immediately cease engaging in any and all activities that threaten the national security interests of the United States, Israel, and our allies and partners, including—

(A) enriching uranium;

(B) developing or possessing delivery vehicles capable of carrying nuclear warheads; and

(C) developing or possessing a nuclear warhead.

SEC. 2. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.

Nothing in this resolution may be construed to authorize the use of military force or the introduction of United States Armed Forces into hostilities.

SENATE RESOLUTION 102—TO RECOGNIZE AND CELEBRATE THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DENVER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Mr. BENNET (for himself and Mr. HICKENLOOPER) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

S. RES. 102

Resolved, That the Senate recognizes and celebrates February 28th, 2025, as the 30th anniversary of the Denver International Airport.

SENATE RESOLUTION 103—CONDEMNING THE REJECTION BY THE UNITED STATES OF A UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTION CONDEMNING THE ILLEGAL INVASION OF UKRAINE BY THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Mr. GALLEGRO (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. BENNET, and Mr. SCHIFF) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 103

Whereas the Russian Federation first invaded Ukraine illegally in 2014 and further expanded that illegal invasion in 2022: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate condemns the rejection by the United States of United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/ES-11/L.10 (2025), titled “Advancing a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine”, condemning the illegal invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation.

SENATE RESOLUTION 104—DESIGNATING FEBRUARY 27, 2025, AS “RARE DISEASE DAY”

Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. BOOKER) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 104

Whereas a rare disease or disorder is a disease or disorder that affects a small number of patients;

Whereas, in the United States, a rare disease or disorder is defined as affecting fewer than 200,000 individuals;

Whereas, as of the date of adoption of this resolution, more than 30,000,000 individuals in the United States are living with at least 1 of the more than 10,000 known rare diseases or disorders;

Whereas children with rare diseases or disorders account for a significant portion of the population affected by rare diseases or disorders in the United States;

Whereas many rare diseases and disorders are serious and life-threatening;

Whereas 2025 marks the 42nd anniversary of the enactment of the Orphan Drug Act (Public Law 97-414; 96 Stat. 2049), a landmark law enabling tremendous advances in the research and treatment of rare diseases and disorders;

Whereas programs such as the Accelerating Rare Disease Cures Program of the Food and Drug Administration (referred to in this preamble as the “FDA”) aim to drive scientific and regulatory innovation and en-

gagement to accelerate the availability of treatments for patients with rare diseases;

Whereas 26 of the 50 novel drugs approved by the Center for Drug Evaluation and Research of the FDA in 2024—

(1) were approved to prevent, diagnose, or treat a rare disease or condition; and

(2) received an orphan-drug designation;

Whereas, although the FDA has approved more than 882 drugs and biological products with 1,300 orphan indications as of the date of adoption of this resolution, approximately 95 percent of rare diseases still do not have a treatment approved by the FDA for their condition;

Whereas financing life-altering and life-saving treatments can be challenging for individuals with a rare disease or disorder and their families;

Whereas individuals with rare diseases or disorders can experience difficulty in obtaining accurate diagnoses and finding physicians or treatment centers with expertise in their rare disease or disorder;

Whereas the National Institutes of Health support innovative research on the treatment of rare diseases and disorders;

Whereas Rare Disease Day is observed each year on the last day of February; and

Whereas Rare Disease Day is a global event that was first observed in the United States on February 28, 2009: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates February 27, 2025, as “Rare Disease Day”; and

(2) recognizes the importance of, with respect to rare diseases and disorders—

(A) improving awareness;

(B) encouraging accurate and early diagnosis; and

(C) supporting national and global research efforts to develop effective treatments, diagnostics, and cures.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I have nine 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 ARMED SERVICES

The Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 27, 2025, at 9:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing on a nomination.

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 27, 2025, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

The committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 27, 2025, at 10 a.m., to conduct an executive session.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR,
AND PENSIONS

The Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is authorized to meet in executive session during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 27, 2025, at 9:30 a.m., to consider a nomination.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR,
AND PENSIONS

The Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 27, 2025, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on a nomination.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 27, 2025, at 9 a.m., to conduct a business meeting.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 27, 2025, at 9 a.m., to conduct an executive business meeting.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC FORCES

The Subcommittee on Strategic Forces of the Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 27, 2025, at 11:45 a.m., to conduct a closed briefing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SURFACE TRANSPORTATION,
FREIGHT, PIPELINES, AND SAFETY

The Subcommittee on Surface Transportation, Freight, Pipelines, and Safety of the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 27, 2025, at 10:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for my intern Ellie White to have privileges of the floor.

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

PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND
GIRLS IN SPORTS ACT OF 2025—
Motion to Proceed

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 2, S. 9.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 9) to provide that for purposes of determining compliance with title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 in athletics, sex shall be recognized based solely on a person's reproductive biology and genetics at birth.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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 motion to proceed to Calendar No. 2, S. 9, a bill to provide that for purposes of determining compliance with title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 in athletics, sex shall be recognized based solely on a person's reproductive biology and genetics at birth.

John Thune, Eric Schmitt, Marsha Blackburn, Joni Ernst, Ted Budd, Katie Britt, David McCormick, Bernie Moreno, Rick Scott of Florida, Tommy Tuberville, James Lankford, Markwayne Mullin, Jim Justice, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Cynthia M. Lummis, John Barrasso, Mike Rounds.

AUTHORIZING EXPENDITURES BY
COMMITTEES OF THE SENATE
FOR THE PERIODS MARCH 1, 2025,
THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2025,
OCTOBER 1, 2025, THROUGH SEP-
TEMBER 30, 2026, AND OCTOBER 1,
2026, THROUGH FEBRUARY 28, 2027

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 16, S. Res. 94.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 94) authorizing expenditures by committees of the Senate for the periods March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025, October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, and October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. THUNE. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 94) was agreed to.

(The resolution is printed in the RECORD of February 25, 2025, under "Submitted Resolutions.")

RARE DISEASE DAY

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 104, which was submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 104) designating February 27, 2025, as "Rare Disease Day".

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to; the preamble be agreed to; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 104) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

UNANIMOUS CONSENT
AGREEMENT—S.J. Res. 12

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that S. Res. 12 be indefinitely postponed.

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

ORDERS FOR MONDAY,
MARCH 3, 2025

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 3 p.m. on Monday, March 3; 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 and resume consideration of Executive Calendar No. 24, the McMahon nomination, under the previous order; finally, that following disposition of the McMahon nomination, the Senate proceed to legislative session and resume consideration of Calendar No. 2, S. 9; and that the Senate vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed.

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.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT
AGREEMENT—S.J. RES. 12

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, let me just restate: I ask unanimous consent that S.J. Res. 12 be indefinitely postponed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Duly noted.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

NOMINATION OF LINDA MCMAHON

Mr. REED. Mr. President, as we celebrate Public Schools Week, Senate Republicans are preparing to confirm Linda McMahon, another of President Trump's billionaire patrons, as Secretary of Education, and I oppose such nomination.

During her confirmation hearing, Mrs. McMahon demonstrated little knowledge of public education or the basic programs and functions of the Department of Education. Clearly, the choice of this nominee is not based on merit.

But that does not matter because Mrs. McMahon was selected to be a front, as the Agency she hopes to lead is being dismantled by Elon Musk and DOGE. Indeed, while Mrs. McMahon was at her confirmation hearing, claiming that she would work to improve the Department of Education, Elon Musk's DOGE minions were at work firing people, taking back grants, compromising sensitive data, and laying the groundwork to eliminate the entire Agency.

And on Valentine's Day, President Trump's Department of Education threatened to cut Federal funding from public schools, as well as colleges and universities, if they did not eliminate any program that the Trump administration deems as promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion.

During her confirmation hearing, Mrs. McMahon seemed unsure whether this edict meant that schools can't celebrate or teach classes on African-American history or host clubs like Special Olympics or Girls Who Code.

As a reminder, by law, the Secretary of Education may not interfere with the content that schools teach, nor the academic standards that they set. Mrs. McMahon doesn't seem to know that.

By the way, while Mr. Musk has been tearing the Department of Education apart from the inside, Republicans in Congress have passed punitive blueprints that will cut trillions from government services to the American people, including education, all to pay for tax cuts for the richest Americans and Big Business.

In the Senate, the Republicans are calling for an unspecified \$9 trillion in cuts. In the House, the Education and Workforce Committee must provide a minimum of \$330 billion in cuts from education and job training programs. It is no wonder that educators, students, and families from across the country feel under siege.

We know what this looks like because we see how teachers, students, and military families are reacting with dismay as our world-class Department of Defense schools are laboring under another Secretary intent on politicizing its Department and promoting an indoctrination agenda authorized by President Trump.

I would like to take a moment to first thank all educators, school staff, family volunteers, and all community members who tirelessly work to equip our students for the future. We owe you a debt of gratitude and so much more than that. We need to recommit to strengthening our public schools and to investing in them.

In the first part of the 20th century, it was the high school movement that broadly expanded educational attain-

ment, preparing young Americans for success in a changing world and evolving economy. This movement featured professional educators and engaged families and communities. It was about general knowledge and practical application.

This movement launched the United States as a world economic power. It was essential to our national defense, and it created the conditions for the success of the largest expansion of postsecondary education through the GI bill. The high school movement meant that soldiers returning from World War II already had high school diplomas and were ready for postsecondary education.

Head Start, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and the Higher Education Act are some of our Federal laws that work to ensure that opportunities to learn and advance are not limited by income, race, ethnicity, or disability.

The expansion of public education is a great American story. Yet, today, it sometimes seems to have been forgotten. Some argue that we do not need public schools, that we can offer vouchers or education savings accounts or homeschooling instead. Today, instead of freedom of inquiry and inclusion, we see policing of what schools can teach, what students can read, what they can discuss, and how they should think. This is a recipe for stifling creativity and the development of the skills needed for an ever-changing knowledge economy.

We politicize and neglect public schools at our peril. They educate nearly 50 million students—our future. It is time that we treat public education as the priority it must be if we want a brighter future for our children and our grandchildren and our country.

We should embark on a new public school movement—one that will strengthen and support the education profession, one that will ensure that all communities can provide modern, state-of-the-art facilities, one that will ensure that all students have the right to read—with evidence-based reading instruction, school libraries, books at home, diverse materials, and the freedom to choose what to read.

Today, we are failing our public schools because we are not investing in them. For example, the average age of our public school facilities is 49 years. The GAO found that over half of our school districts in our country needed to replace or update major systems in more than half of their buildings.

As a nation, we should commit to modernizing our school facilities. That is why I will be reintroducing the Rebuild America's Schools Act to invest \$130 billion in our school facilities in the communities with the greatest need.

We know there is a crisis in the education profession. Too many school districts struggle to hire and retain teach-

ers. Too often, a career in teaching means financial struggles and little support to meet student needs.

Additionally, we need a national focus on literacy. In 2024, the percentage of eighth graders reading below the basic level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress was the largest in the assessment's history, and the percentage of fourth graders who scored below the basic level was the largest in 20 years.

Adults are not doing any better. Recent results of the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies show that overall scores in literacy and numeracy have decreased for U.S. adults, with adults scoring at the lowest level of proficiency in literacy, increasing from 19 percent in 2017 to 28 percent in 2023.

This is a crisis. Eliminating the Department of Education does nothing to solve it. Instead of gutting educational funding and eliminating the Department of Education to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy, Congress should address the acute literacy crisis for both adults and children across the Nation.

We should be increasing funding for adult education—at least doubling it. We should increase resources for schools to provide evidence-based reading instruction by fully funding title I, increasing funding for the Comprehensive Literacy Development State Grant Program and for Innovative Approaches to Literacy grants.

We should double the Pell grant and restore its purchasing power so students do not have to rely mostly on loans to pay for college.

Sadly, none of this is on Mrs. McMahon's agenda.

I urge my colleagues to join me in ushering in a new public education movement—a movement to ensure that this generation, as well as future ones, has the foundation to achieve their full potential and build a prosperous future. This nominee is not the person to lead such an effort. All indications are that she will actively work against it. So I encourage my colleagues to vote no on her confirmation.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— S. 348

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I rise today to seek unanimous consent for my STABLE Trade Policy Act with Senator Kaine, an act that would prevent any President from imposing tariffs on a U.S. ally or a free-trade agreement partner without congressional consent.

I will make that motion in just a moment, but let me, first, just explain what this is and why I am doing it.

Next week, President Trump has announced plans to impose 25-percent tariffs on products coming into the United States from Mexico and Canada, our No. 1 and No. 2 trading partners.

These tariffs will be disastrous for our economy and our national security. These tariffs will cost the average American household about \$1,200 a year. They will raise costs for avocados, appliances, diesel fuel, dog toys, car parts, Christmas tree lights, tomatoes, and tequila. I could go on.

Our economies are so closely integrated—the United States, Canada, and Mexico—that it will increase the cost of a GM pickup truck about \$10,000.

Even if these tariffs, at the last minute, are delayed, businesses are hurt by the uncertainty, which continues to increase costs.

President Trump plans to follow those tariffs with reciprocal tariffs on the EU, which includes many of our critical NATO allies and closest partners.

Imposing tariffs on our allies and partners diminishes our standing in the world and makes our neighbors less likely to help us in the future.

It is no surprise that Americans think this is a terrible idea. Barely a quarter of Americans think imposing tariffs on Canada is a good idea. More than double that disapprove.

President Trump has already declared an economic emergency to justify imposing these tariffs on Mexico and Canada, but my bill with Senator KAINE would prevent him from abusing long-established national security authorities to follow through on further tariff threats against our allies and FTA partners.

The U.S. Constitution in the Commerce Clause, article I, section 8, gives Congress jurisdiction over trade policy. It is time that we take ownership back of controlling the ability to impose tariffs willy-nilly on our trusted partners and allies by passing this bill and reining in President Trump's costly and damaging ideas.

So I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be discharged from further consideration of S. 348 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; 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. Is there objection?

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I rise to discuss some issues with Senator COONS' request for unanimous consent for the Senate to pass S. 348, the STABLE Trade Policy Act.

Senator COONS is a good friend and a great ally, and, reluctantly, I stand to

oppose this motion on this particular procedure.

First, Senator COONS and I agree about much on trade policy, including the need for the United States to have more high-standard free-trade agreements, like the United States-Mexico-Canada trade agreement, or USMCA. We should ensure that the commitments in those agreements are respected.

The last administration not only refused to negotiate new trade agreements but undermined U.S. rights under them when it waived our intellectual property rights under the WTO TRIPS Agreement and without informing Congress, attempting to remove the rights of American investors under the USMCA.

Second, I also agree that we should not undertake tariff actions lightly on our allies or free-trade agreement partners.

We should, however, take care before we say that all options are completely off the table. In fact, all of our free-trade agreements provide exceptions for when parties can remove economic benefits, including on national security grounds.

I don't recall anyone suggesting that the Biden administration could not impose sanctions on Nicaragua last year because it was a CAFTA party. Instead, we recognized that legitimate national security grounds, including Nicaragua's human rights abuses, warranted the economic pressure.

Third, it was only yesterday that we confirmed Jamieson Greer as the U.S. Trade Representative to serve as the principal adviser on trade issues. He told the Finance Committee that he wants to work closely with Congress.

There are a lot of good things we can do together. For instance, we can negotiate new agreements and reinvigorate congressional executive partnerships on trade.

The STABLE Trade Policy Act is, accordingly, too blunt of an instrument when nuance is called for, including the option of tariffs in some instances.

With that, I object to Senator COONS' request.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BUDD). The objection is heard.

The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I understand that Senator CRAPO, the chairman of the Finance Committee, a supporter of President Trump, has blocked this bill today. I hope to find ways to work with him on improving market access and on elevating the quality and the capabilities of U.S. trade engagement with our partners. But I really don't understand why President Trump seems so intent on harming one of his signature accomplishments, the USMCA.

I am disappointed because Congress gave the President authority to impose tariffs in the event of a national security crisis. Congress did not grant this power to pursue petty grudges against trusted neighbors.

Honestly, how can anyone be angry with Canadians? They are the nicest people in the world. Yet here they are, working with us, pleading with us to not impose ruinous tariffs that would harm their economy and ours.

I will briefly, then, just make, again, a few simple points. I am disappointed that President Trump isn't doing more to reduce costs. He was elected, in no small part, because of high inflation and promised it would come down on day one.

These tariffs, if imposed, will make inflation worse and hit the lowest income Americans the hardest. It will impact American business, American families, and American communities.

So I hope that working together with my friends and colleagues here in the Senate, we can find ways to lower costs on pharmaceuticals and automobiles and microchips. But imposing reciprocal tariffs on trusted friends and allies and sparking tariff wars in our region and around the world is not the way to do that.

Two-thirds of Americans already think that President Trump isn't doing enough to lower costs. Blocking this bill will only accelerate that if President Trump continues to act unwisely and bully and threaten our closest and most trusted partners.

We must find a better way forward together.

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

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

UKRAINE

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize a very painful milestone. This week marks the third anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Over the past 3 years, the world has witnessed the incredible bravery and resolve of the Ukrainian people as they have stood up to Russia's unspeakable brutality and destruction.

We have seen—and, indeed, the United States should take great pride in having led—an impressive coalition of nations coming together to support Ukraine in this fight to preserve its democracy.

At the same time, an alarming convergence of authoritarian states—Russia, China, Iran, Belarus, and North Korea—have banded together to enable Russia's illegal war of choice.

As we mark this milestone, we are faced with another frightening set of developments. President Trump has set his sights on negotiations with Vladimir Putin to win the war. But before reaching the negotiating table, Mr. Trump has appeared so eager to reach

a deal that he has been willing to acquiesce to Russian demands for essentially nothing in return. Even worse, he has deliberately excluded Ukraine and Europe from the discussion.

We have seen this playbook before, most recently in Afghanistan. In 2020, President Trump, eager to achieve a quick deal, negotiated directly with the Taliban and excluded the Afghan Government from the negotiating table. He capitulated to Taliban demands, including the release of over 5,000 Taliban fighters, and blindly agreed to a 1-year withdrawal timeline, even as evidence mounted that the Taliban was not holding up the meager demands in the agreement. I fear President Trump has not learned any new negotiating skills in the 5 years since.

The tenets of his approach to Ukraine and Europe appear to be the same: Exclude and criticize American allies, capitulate to our enemies, and withdraw support without any assurance of success.

Earlier this month, Munich was the scene of another capitulation, when Vice President Vance and Defense Secretary Hegseth kicked off Trump's giveaway campaign to President Putin.

The historical irony is unmistakable, since Munich is a place that has inauspiciously become a shorthand for the "appeasement" of tyrants.

In 1932, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain left his meeting with Adolf Hitler in Munich. And after surrendering Czechoslovakia in exchange for a peace pledge, when he returned to England, Chamberlain waved about a piece of paper with Hitler's promise and declared, "Peace in our time." In reality, it was the beginning of the capitulation that would lead inextricably to the greatest war in history.

Hopefully, this administration's rush to appease Vladimir Putin will not lead to the carnage like that of World War II. But it well may cost Ukraine its sovereignty and independence while also undermining the international order—the very same order that America and her allies created from the ashes of World War II.

Let's review the bidding so far. To begin, Defense Secretary Hegseth's speech in Brussels at the Ukraine Defense Contact Group set a shameful tone for the American delegation in Europe.

Ukraine Defense Contact Group, or UDCG, was created by the United States under the Biden administration. It has organized and led the international efforts to support Ukraine, which has enabled Ukrainians to significantly repel the Russian invasion and continue the fight to protect their homeland.

The United States has led this effort throughout the war. I regret that Secretary Hegseth's first appearance marked the retreat of our role as leader of the UDCG.

In his remarks, he said:

[W]e must start by recognizing that returning to Ukraine's . . . 2014 borders is an unrealistic objective.

He further stated:

[T]he United States does not believe that NATO membership for Ukraine is a realistic outcome of a negotiated settlement.

In essence, Secretary Hegseth conceded away our most important leverage against Russia. His statements, echoed by President Trump and Vice President VANCE, have already badly weakened and undermined our negotiating position by gifting the Russians with several unilateral concessions. All of these forfeits were made without any apparent consultation with the Ukraine or our NATO allies.

Again, the shortsightedness of President Trump's, Hegseth's, and VANCE's statements are alarming.

NATO has been the bulwark against Russian aggression in Europe since 1949. The alliance has more than doubled its membership since its founding. Central to the enlargement is NATO's open-door policy, enshrined in article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty, which affirms a core NATO tenet that any European nation that demonstrates a willingness to contribute to our collective security and the values and obligation of the NATO alliance may seek membership.

Vladimir Putin does not get to dictate who may or may not become a member of the NATO alliance, just as his Soviet predecessors could not stop the membership prospects of Poland or Hungary or Germany. To preemptively surrender admission to NATO is national security malpractice and only benefits Vladimir Putin.

Finally, Secretary Hegseth declared that Europe and NATO are no longer priorities of the Trump administration.

In his words:

We're . . . here today to directly and unambiguously express that stark strategic realities prevent the United States . . . from being primarily focused on the security of Europe.

Further:

The United States faces consequential threats to our homeland. We must—and we are—focusing on security of our own borders.

I agree that the security of America's homeland is our No. 1 national security mission, but I reject Secretary Hegseth's myopic view that the American national security establishment is so fragile and so constrained that it must shift the entirety of its focus to the border security mission, at the expense of other national security imperatives.

Moreover, border protection is a civilian law enforcement mission. Deploying large numbers of military forces to support the Border Patrol is a gross misallocation of forces and raises numerous legal issues.

The administration's shameful claims have been a shock to Ukraine, NATO, Europe, and the democratic world at large. They have provided great comfort to Putin and autocrats everywhere.

In addition to Secretary Hegseth's speech, Vice President VANCE took the stage in Munich and further eroded our

status in the world. He castigated European allies for his perceived grievances with their domestic politics and alleged movements away from "democratic values," while at the same time remaining silent on the brutal dictators in Russia and Belarus who have never had a free or fair election in the course of their tenure.

President Trump gave his tip of the hat to autocracy last week when he attempted to revise history by alleging that Ukraine, not Russia, started the war and that President Zelenskyy was the "dictator" in this situation. These categorically false statements are either a product of deliberate deceit or historical delusion.

President Trump even directed the Acting U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations to vote against a U.N. resolution condemning Russia's war against Ukraine. The United States instead voted in a bloc with Russia, Iran, North Korea, and other authoritarian nations, which is a stunning reversal of decades of American foreign policy.

This toxic revisionist history has now pervaded his political nominees as well. Throughout the week, his political appointees have contorted themselves in order to avoid acknowledging the fact that Russia was responsible for starting the war in Ukraine. This is something straight out of North Korea, where "facts" are the sole purview of the Dear Leader.

We must also note the deafening silence from many of my Republican colleagues. Many Republicans claimed for years to be unapologetic supporters of Ukraine who were outraged by the perception that President Biden was not sending enough U.S. support to Ukraine. But now they appear to be standing by silently as facts are erased, as the pipeline of aid to Ukraine peters to a halt, as the Trump administration disbands Federal task forces established to seize the assets of Russian oligarchs and guard against foreign election interference and disinformation campaigns.

Silence is complicity. We cannot allow this to continue. If we are going down the path of negotiation with Russia, we must act to strengthen our hand in these negotiations.

Ironically, Russia is in a very weak negotiating position. Let us briefly review Putin's situation.

Over the course of 3 years, Ukraine has inflicted a staggering cost on Russia. Putin has lost 200,000 soldiers, and many hundreds of thousands more were wounded. He has lost hundreds of billions of dollars of military equipment and weapons. Indeed, Russia's weapons and logistical stocks are perilously diminished. Their closest ally in the war—Iran—is weaker than it has been in decades due to Israeli and U.S. actions. North Korean soldiers, sent to reinforce flagging Russian forces, are suffering severe casualty rates. Russia has been ousted from Syria, and its Wagner mercenaries in Africa are struggling to reorganize. The Russian economy is afloat but stagnant.

Any shrewd negotiator should recognize that Russia is on the ropes. Now is not the time to appease Putin. This is a time to exert maximum pressure to bring him to the negotiating table hat in hand.

There are three things we must do now.

First, we must continue to pressure Russia economically. This means strengthening existing sanctions, identifying secondary sanctions, and bolstering sanctions enforcement and anti-evasion efforts. At the top of the effort to control the evasion of sanctions, we should be working with allies to combat the illicit oil trade, including efforts to go on the offensive against the so-called ghost fleet of aging tankers Russia employs to facilitate the export of oil and other sanctioned goods.

Second, we must work with our European partners to impound and leverage Russia's frozen assets.

Finally, we must ensure in both word and deed that Ukraine has our support and commitment to working with them to establish a just and lasting peace.

However, instead of taking action to strengthen the negotiating hand on any of these fronts, the administration has shifted focus to the signing of a deal to exploit Ukraine's natural resources. Much remains to be seen about the shape of this agreement, but we do know it will take years, if not decades, to see substantial returns.

A large number of Ukraine's rare earth deposits are actually located in Ukrainian territory that is currently contested or occupied by Russia. I am not sure how one is to square this agreement with Secretary Hegseth's comments about the forfeiture of Ukraine's sovereign territory.

Furthermore, the deal includes no security guarantees from the United States, which the Ukrainians have—rightly, I believe—insisted upon. Security guarantees are essential to assure Ukraine that the United States is not simply interested in an enrichment scheme but is committed to the pursuit of a just and lasting peace.

Indeed, a just and lasting peace must be the final outcome. That is a United States national security imperative, one that has—at least until recently—enjoyed robust and vocal bipartisan support.

We support Ukraine because we know that the war in Ukraine is not just a regional war; it is the most visible demonstration of the larger existential threat Russia poses to our national security.

We support Ukraine to ensure that Vladimir Putin cannot achieve his goals, which are counter to our own national interests. We must be clear-eyed about this. If Putin succeeds in Ukraine, it will be the first piece in his long-stated promise to recreate the Soviet empire. If that happens, if we fail to learn from history and to see brutal and craven authoritarians for what they are and the threat they represent,

we may again find America's sons and daughters sent overseas to fight on foreign shores.

I urge my Republican colleagues and my Democratic colleagues—all my colleagues—to speak up and stand with Ukraine as they have done for so many years. Let us continue.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise today with my colleagues in strong opposition to the firings of scientists, medical researchers, and more at the Department of Health and Human Services.

HHS is in charge of everything from preventing disease outbreaks to making sure that our kids are healthy to ensuring that seniors can live with dignity.

It directly touches more lives than any other Cabinet Agency. That is why the administration's mass firings of thousands of HHS employees are deeply troubling.

When a new CEO comes in and wants to see a new direction for a company, they look at it, they look at all the divisions, they figure out their direction. They maybe cut a division; they maybe make changes to it. They look at the merits of certain employees; they move some employees to different divisions. And they figure out, thoughtfully, what is the right way and what is the best way for their company.

This is the entire government, but that is not what is happening here. They are firing people across the board, without regard to merit, without regard for function. They are firing some of the newest employees who are eager and excited to have their jobs. They are firing some people who are simply up for promotion which puts them in a probationary status.

They are not looking at what these people are doing or the value they bring to the workforce and to the American people. They are just doing it and getting on TV with a chain saw.

These are people who went into public service for a reason. They are people, in the case of Health and Human Services, who keep us healthy and save lives, who work every day to keep America at the forefront of medical breakthroughs and innovation.

It has been our secret sauce. It has given the world the most incredible, credible, lifesaving drugs and medical devices—like the pacemaker in my State.

That didn't just come out of one company. That came out of a lot of ideas, and that came out of a lot of universities, and that came out of people doing clinical trials, and that came out of a devotion by our country to moving forward. That is how we have gotten these lifesaving cures.

That is how we mapped the human genome, so that we are now starting to

offer personalized medicine, drugs that fit people, things that work, things that cure diseases we never thought were possible to cure. That is how our economy has been so strengthened, and we have led across the world.

You know, I have worked for years to cut redtape, and I know there is more to do. I know there is more we can do to make our government effective. But we can do that together and take the ideas from the administration. We can work on it in the next budget. We can make some changes. I support permitting reform—all kinds of things that we could do.

But these mass firings in the area of medical research? This makes no sense.

The Department of Health and Human Services is also tasked with implementing Medicare drug price negotiation, which I fought for years to pass into law, along with my colleague Senator WELCH from Vermont, when he was in the House, and Senator SANDERS here in the Senate.

This is expected—we finally passed it. It was part of the Inflation Reduction Act, and it actually says: Hey, this sweetheart deal that pharma had with Medicare, in which they can't negotiate at all and that the prices are locked in and so our country—people are paying twice as much as they do in places like Canada, for the drug. Yet it is our taxpayers that put in the money for the research or the VA, which works so well for our veterans. They are able to negotiate and get better prices, but not 50 million seniors?

So what did we do? We finally ended the sweetheart deal, and we passed a law. I would have been more aggressive about how many drugs we could negotiate because I understand they start with a group of drugs, and pretty soon that is going to help people who aren't seniors, as we did with the insulin cap. That insulin cap, at 35 bucks a month, was only for seniors, but Merck and other companies offered it to nonseniors, as well, because we got it going with the biggest prescription drug buying group in the country, and that would be our seniors.

So this Medicare negotiation has ramifications for everyone in this country. However, even though we only did 10 drugs at first, the Biden administration picked blockbuster drugs—big drugs that so many people take, like Januvia and Jardiance and Xarelto and Eliquis. Combined, in 1 year—just 1 year, when this starts next year; no one has refuted these statistics—9 million seniors will save \$1.5 billion in out-of-pocket costs in the first year alone and save taxpayers over \$100 billion in the next decade. That is just 10 drugs.

They have now come up with 15 more drugs, including Ozempic and those weight-loss drugs, and they have passed that torch now—or the voters have—onto the next administration. So now, it is on them to negotiate these 15 and then pick 15 more and 15 more. Imagine how much money we can save, not just for the seniors—that is obvious—but also for the taxpayers because

we are footing part of this bill. And then, ultimately, it will bring down drug prices, like they have in other countries.

But firing the men and women who carry out these price negotiations put those savings totally at risk. You cannot take on some of the world's biggest companies—the pharmaceutical companies—with band-aids and a skeleton crew. That is not going to work. I think we all know that. We all know this is really hard work.

On top of this, the firings threaten healthcare for the 170 million Americans who get coverage through Medicare, Medicaid—which is so many of our seniors when they are in assisted living with their long-term care, and people's parents and grandparents—as well as coverage under the Affordable Care Act, including over 2 million Minnesotans. In fact, Medicaid actually provides healthcare for 20 percent of my rural residents in my State. You will see similar numbers all across the country. And more than half of all nursing home residents in our State are on Medicaid.

I remember when my dad was in assisted living. He got late-onset Alzheimer's. I found a place for him and found the next place when he needed a little more help, and I knew, as his savings were running out, what that day was. I knew the exact month that he was going to run out of his savings, and then he would go onto Medicaid. And that was a safety net. I actually knew I couldn't keep him at the same place, but I knew a place I could have him go to.

He ended up dying a year before that date happened. But there are so many people in our country that know the exact date when their parent or their grandparent is going to be able to have that safety net of Medicaid because they have actually run through all their savings.

Nationwide, Medicaid provides coverage for two-thirds of all nursing home care. And these cuts—what we are seeing out of the House budget, where they have put targets on the exact program that includes Medicaid—these cuts will be particularly disastrous for people with chronic conditions, including millions of veterans who become sick or disabled as a result of their service.

What is this all about? It is about funding giant tax breaks for billionaires. Yes, over 2 trillion of that money goes to people who are wealthy, people making over \$400,000 a year.

I am all for keeping in these tax cuts for people making under \$400,000 a year, but I do not know why, when you are facing the debt that our country has and when you are dealing with people's needs with Medicaid and the like, you would decide to add tax cuts and make permanent tax cuts for people who are making over \$400,000 a year.

We actually had a vote on this, late at night about a week ago, where we asked our Republican colleagues: OK.

Well, how about for people making over \$10 million a year? That was Senator WARREN's amendment. She said: OK. How about if they are making over 10 million? Could we at least agree we shouldn't cut their taxes?

And, unfortunately, our Republican colleagues, for that amendment, yelled out: No.

Then we said—Senator KELLY got up there and said: OK. How about if they are making over \$100 million? Then we should add more tax cuts?

Our colleagues voted against that amendment, which said we should not add more tax cuts for people making over \$100 million when our country is facing the debt it has, when you have got the needs for people in nursing homes and the needs for people with childcare and the like.

So then they tried one more time. Senator ANGUS KING, Independent of Maine, said: OK. How about for people making over \$500 million? Then, at least, you can agree with us—right?—that we shouldn't add more tax cuts for those people making over \$500 million a year. And, sadly, our colleagues voted no.

Instead of cutting costs for regular people and their prices and groceries, they are cutting Medicaid, which provides healthcare for 7.2 million seniors, almost 40 million children, nearly two-thirds of nursing home residents, and millions of people with rare diseases.

But this isn't just the numbers. There are moms and dads, brothers and sisters, friends and neighbors. I heard from one Minnesotan who, at 4 years old, was diagnosed with Duchenne muscular dystrophy, which causes rapid muscle weakness, making it harder to complete most physical tasks. But this Minnesotan, who is now 26, has been able to thrive because he has Medicaid coverage. He got an education. He got a job. He graduated with a master's degree in public policy. He is paying taxes. In his words, Medicaid gave him the affordable health coverage he needed to manage his rare condition.

For him and millions more, the cuts at the Department of Health and Human Services put their lives and livelihood at risk.

This week is rare disease week. I have met with many rare disease patients. I am the cochair of that caucus. And they are in town right now to convene and collaborate with Federal medical researchers, Ph.D. students, other families affected, drug and device reviewers and advocates.

Many of these rare disease patients were looking forward to attending the rare disease event that was supposed to be today. And this year it was going to be a collaboration between NIH and the FDA because of all that integral work that goes on with drugs being approved for people with rare diseases, but that annual event was canceled because the people carrying that out—these people here with very difficult, rare diseases—that was canceled because the people doing the event were fired.

The mission of the Department of Health and Human Services, which the thousands of Americans who were fired work every day to uphold, is enhancing the health and well-being of all Americans. These mass firings are a direct affront to that mission.

The building that houses the Department of Health and Human Services is named for Minnesota's "Happy Warrior," Vice President Hubert Humphrey. It has been that way through Democrat and Republican Presidents. He was a champion for expanding access to healthcare. Inscribed in the entrance hall of that building are words from Humphrey's final speech in 1977. By the way, he was someone who was loved right here in this Chamber by Democrats and Republicans. Some of the most conservative Republicans mourned his loss, and they loved the guy. And this is what he said in his final speech here:

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; and those who are in shadows of life, the sick.

And he added, given he had a child in his own family with Down syndrome, and those with disabilities.

The firing of those who care for kids and seniors and those who work on rare diseases and those who are bringing together our people who work on drugs that are supposed to solve and are solving the problems for these rare disease families and those that are doing the approvals and those that are doing the research and the families that want to talk to them about it—they were all here, and they canceled it because, just like that, Elon Musk came in with his chain saw.

Those families are not going to tolerate this much longer.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, I want to speak about the extreme cuts that have affected the Department of Health and Human Services, the Federal Drug Administration, the National Institutes of Health, and the Centers for Disease Control.

First of all, the DOGE operation starts out with a premise that it is attacking waste, fraud, and abuse. And I am for that. Anyplace that we can save taxpayers money by responsible assessment of what programs are working or aren't, anytime we can uncover waste or certainly fraud and abuse, I want to do that, and I want that to be done across the board. Whether you are talking about health programs where they could be better organized or they could be more efficiently run to achieve the goal of better services for the people you represent and I represent for all Americans, I want to do that.

But how is DOGE going about it?

And we are here to talk about how they are doing it in the Department of Health and Human Services, under Mr. KENNEDY. Basically, they are doing it by sending out firing notices to people. Over 5,000 people have been fired, and that includes 700 in the Food and Drug Administration, 1,200 in the National Institutes of Health, and 600 in the Centers for Disease Control.

Here is the question, and the answer is obvious: If you want to make a program more efficient, do you fire the people first and essentially erode any capacity of that program to deliver the services that the American people need? Or do you study the organization? Do you kick the tires? Do you investigate and analyze where the issues are that can be addressed by a comprehensive plan that would include getting rid of any waste? It would include getting rid, obviously, of any fraud and abuse.

But what DOGE is doing is not that. It doesn't have a plan. What it has is a decision to fire people. So, essentially, DOGE is saying that the higher the body count of people who are fired, then the more the savings will be. Well, there is truth in that. If you just fire people and they are not on the payroll, you are going to save taxpayer money. But does that mean that you are getting waste, fraud, and abuse out of the system, or are you just wrecking the program? It clearly is going to be the latter.

You are just wrecking the program because you didn't even take the time to examine what is going on and how best to do it. Think about it. In the National Institutes of Health, there are investigators, there are scientists. These are people who are working on research that is important to your State and mine about diseases, about cures, about vaccines, about pandemics, things that—you know, American people are entitled to have some confidence and security that we have the best minds addressing health issues and focusing on cures to diseases that all of us can be subject to or the people we love, that they will be doing that job.

But these people are now just fired. They are gone. That means—just think about it. An NIH scientist, that is somebody who probably has a Ph.D., went to one of our State institutions. It might have been a land-grant college in North Carolina or a land-grant college in Vermont. And there is probably an enormous amount of talent in that person who was able to achieve a Ph.D. in scientific research. And there is probably a good deal of public investment in the career of that person with the return being that person is going to be doing research on trying to cure diseases. And that person may well have gotten some Federal grants, including college assistance or Ph.D. investigatory assistance.

That could be hundreds of thousands of dollars the taxpayers really invested

in supporting a person who has become a scientist, helping us on very important research that is really good for the American people.

Boom. They go to work, or they are at home. They get an email, and they say: Don't show up for work; you are fired.

There is a certain cruelty in a lot of these notices because it also has an assertion that your performance has been subpar. Of course, we find out there has been no performance review; and, in many cases, these people who were fired supposedly because of subpar performance, in fact, did just have a performance review that said you are doing a fantastic job.

Or think about Food and Drug Administration. Their job is to review, among other things, medications that can provide life-enhancing, lifesaving, life-extending, pain-relieving medications that Americans are going to need and can benefit by. The sooner that work of investigation gets done, the sooner that the approval decisions can be made, the sooner cures get to market and to the folks in this country.

Boom. They are fired.

Again, these people, some of whom do have Ph.D.s, as I mentioned, but others of whom have been at the FDA for 15 or 20 years and have that institutional knowledge of how it works—these people are getting fired independent of any performance review, independent of any assessment of where do we need more people or where do we need fewer people or what are some of the functions that no longer need to be done versus some functions where we actually may need to enhance the staff to get a better job for the American people.

What is so bogus about DOGE is that it is not about waste, fraud, and abuse. It really is not because there would have to be an investigation, a plan, people looking at how the functions are being performed. It is simply a mechanism to justify firing people and lowering the head count.

And as I mentioned, you know what? That will "save money," but it will destroy the capacity of these organizations that all of us agree are doing incredibly important work. It is going to destroy their ability to do it. It is just mangling the services in the area of Health and Human Services that are so essential to the well-being of the people in this country.

By the way, this has a real economic impact; and it is the economic impact, first and foremost, among those individuals who lost their jobs. But it is a real economic impact because we are eroding the infrastructure of science, of inquiry, and of investigation for better health cures. You don't destroy that and put it back together again overnight. That is what is so wrong-headed about the DOGE approach to things—body count versus better service, better performance, more sustainability.

Mr. President, you couldn't have a worse approach if your goal is more ef-

ficiency, better service, and better outcomes.

The other question that is going to be recurring for the American people is the likelihood—the inevitability, actually—of massive reductions in aid for Medicaid. Under the version of the House budget reconciliation act, they have to come up with trillions of dollars in savings. The only place you are going to get that is by cutting Medicaid.

We have a contradiction here because the President says he loves Medicaid, but he also says he loves the House bill. And the House bill does not love Medicaid. What the House bill does is it attacks Medicaid.

In Vermont, we have 20 percent or so, a little more, of our folks who depend on Medicaid for healthcare. It is kids from low-income families; it is seniors. Two out of three of our nursing home beds are paid for by Medicaid. You are going to have families where the kids are really trying to help their parents. Their parents need a nursing home, and they are going to get kicked out, literally. That is what happens.

Finally, what we know is, why is this happening? Why are these firings on a mass level being made when there has been no study and no plan in place to indicate that action will improve services or, in the long run, save money for the American people? It is being done because there is a goal to have a tax cut. That is a fair-and-square debate. What should our tax rate be; should we have a tax cut; if we have a tax cut, how do you allocate; how much goes to corporations; how much goes to billionaires; how much goes to everyday people?

But to have that debate without acknowledging that the way you are going to pay for it is by taking away healthcare for everyday Americans, that is not on the level. That is what is happening here, is that there is an agenda: Get that tax cut.

I happen to profoundly disagree with the tax cut for major multinational corporations, and I profoundly disagree with lowering taxes for billionaires—totally disagree with that. But when it is the situation that we are going to pay for it by taking away nursing home beds from Vermonters, from folks in the Carolinas, that is really appalling. We should not do it.

I am here with my colleagues to defend our commitment to good scientific research, to good cancer research, to good healthcare access for poor kids and seniors, and to sound the alert that that is what is at stake despite what the President may say about his "love" for Medicare. What he clearly has as his major agenda item is that tax cut.

I will acknowledge we can have a debate fair and square about that tax cut. But I think it is incumbent on all of us to acknowledge that the path to the President getting his tax cut marches right through access to healthcare in an attack on Medicaid.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Ms. ALSOBROOKS. Mr. President, I would like to use my time to highlight the attacks currently being thrown at our Federal workers and the unconscionable firings that are taking place.

We have heard baseless and callous criticisms of our Federal workers from this administration for weeks now. They are wrong, and much of what they are built on is a lie. And they are dehumanizing.

This is, in fact, a witch hunt. Our civil servants are among the best of what our Nation has to offer. They serve with no political motivation. Many have served for years under Democratic administrations and Republican administrations. They have one dedication: to their fellow Americans. It is a patriotic calling that they have all answered. They are not faceless villains. They are real people with real stories.

People like a woman I spoke with who has served at the Department of Health and Human Services for over 35 years, she has been put on leave as a part of the President's Executive orders. For her and people like her, to be caught up in these partisan attacks is infuriating.

The administration claims to be doing this in the name of efficiency. There is nothing efficient about gaining unauthorized access to private data and then blindly firing 5,200 employees across multiple Agencies. There is nothing competent about cutting the workforce without any thought about how it would impact operations.

This is not efficient. This is senseless, and this is heartless.

NIH is based in my State of Maryland, and many of the workers there are among the 150,000 civil servants who call Maryland home. Each one of them has made a commitment to public service. Each one of them is a civil servant that I am proud to represent. These abrupt and improper firings have shaken up the lives of thousands of dedicated workers who do not deserve this treatment. And what makes this even worse is that attacking our Federal workers doesn't just hurt them; it hurts all Americans, the people who rely on government programs to keep them healthy and safe.

These aren't hypothetical concerns. These firings will have real-world consequences. Eliminating staff at NIH will delay the development and approval of lifesaving treatments. Cancer patients will have to wait longer for promising new treatments as clinical trials still stall due to staffing shortages. This will slowly eliminate research and medical intervention and weaken our standing in global biomedical science.

Cuts to an already understaffed CMS workforce will hurt patient care. We

will see disruptions in medically necessary care and delays in payments to hospitals and other healthcare providers. Firing staff at HHS will cripple our ability to quickly identify and respond to public health threats. And right now, we are experiencing the worst flu season in over 15 years, resulting in school closures in at least 10 States. We are monitoring an outbreak of Ebola in Uganda. We are keeping track of the growing threat of avian influenza.

Without a strong workforce, we will not be able to react effectively. It is impossible to forget the significant role that NIH plays in developing and deploying vaccines and treatments. We are just beyond the clutches of the last major public health crisis. And without a strong workforce, we will not be prepared to face the next pandemic.

In the clearest terms possible, these cuts aren't about efficiency. To the American people, it quite literally could be the difference between life and death. They are as direct a contradiction as you can have of the priorities this administration claimed to set when they took control—to ease burdens on families. Instead, these firings could add enormous strain to a nation that is already in need of relief. They are irresponsible, they are inefficient, and they are undeserved.

What our civil servants deserve is a recognition of the work they do every day to make us stronger. What the American people deserve is for us to keep our obligation to ensure their health and their safety. I will continue to defend them and apply pressure to this administration until it happens.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I rise today to sound the alarm about what is happening to our Nation's ability to advance lifesaving medical research in the first month of the Trump administration.

As many of you know, I am a proud graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Law School. In many ways, I grew up at the university, where both of my grandparents, who raised me, worked. My grandmother ran the costume lab at the theater department, and my grandfather was a scientist. He was a biochemist who spent four decades unlocking the key to how our metabolism works—in large part thanks to funding from the National Institutes of Health. My grandfather and his colleagues pioneered breakthroughs that impacted biochemistry around the world, leading to all kinds of developments to keep our bodies healthy, from nutrition and diet to advanced drugs, to, really, so much more.

I share my grandfather's story because it demonstrates why the NIH is

so essential. As the world's premier biomedical research institution, the NIH invests in our health, our national security, our economy, and our future. These investments influence our Nation's competitive edge, patients' treatment options, and, simply put, American lives for generations to come.

Research supported by the NIH has helped us find breakthroughs for treating diabetes, Alzheimer's disease, and substance use disorders. It is supporting clinical trials right now for patients battling terminal diagnoses for cancer. In fiscal year 2023, the NIH generated almost \$93 billion in economic activity—nearly twice the Agency's budget.

The engine behind all of it is, of course, researchers and scientists. They are dedicated scientists like my grandfather who right now are worried that their life's work—the work of keeping our loved ones healthy and saving lives—is in danger, all because Elon Musk and President Trump are firing nearly 1,200 critical staff across NIH Institutes and Centers, halting lifesaving research in its tracks, and indiscriminately and illegally freezing funding from going out the door to academic and research institutions across the country.

Across the Department of Health and Human Services, Trump and Elon Musk have fired more than 5,000 public servants. We are talking about scientists, doctors, researchers, and so many others who are doing this critical work to keep us healthy.

Musk and Trump are going so much deeper than firing the HHS workforce, which is damaging enough to research programs and puts Americans' lives at risk; they are throwing sand in the gears of the NIH—their basic grant-making operations—to prevent scientists from getting the resources they need to conduct lifesaving biomedical research in the first place.

For instance, the President has unilaterally fired more than 130 employees at the National Cancer Institute—many of them scientists. Across the NIH, Trump and Musk have fired 160 program officers, grant management specialists, and other key administrators whose job it is to get grant funding out the door to universities and other research institutions across the country.

Since President Trump took office, his administration has canceled more than 70 NIH study sections and advisory council meetings that are the final step in grant approval. This means that more than \$1.5 billion in funding has been withheld so far—illegally and in blatant defiance of court orders—by this administration. The impact is already having ripple effects across the research community.

Take, for instance, Alzheimer's disease research. The Trump administration has stopped tens of millions of dollars from going out the door for Alzheimer's research, halting studies, clinical trials, and moving us further from a cure.

The Trump administration is also terminating entire NIH training programs focused on supporting early career scientists from diverse backgrounds and folks who are underrepresented today in biomedical research. In its endless quest to cancel any program that even uses the word "diversity," the Trump administration has even paused research involving women.

Make no mistake, we will be feeling the impact of these cuts for decades to come. Universities are pausing graduate student admissions because they aren't sure they will have the funding to support the students they currently have enrolled.

What is at stake is not just a generation of talent and our Nation's competitive edge; it is also the next breakthrough that could cure cancer or Alzheimer's disease. Thanks to Donald Trump's actions, the United States may lose its global competitive edge in biomedical research and cede it to China.

In Wisconsin, our universities follow a long-held tradition known as the Wisconsin Idea. It is a pretty simple philosophy that says the work done at our universities should make an impact far beyond the classroom itself, and it does. From vitamin D, to human embryonic stem cells, to blood thinners and new treatments for Alzheimer's disease, Wisconsin universities and dedicated scientists like my grandfather have discovered breakthroughs that revolutionize the world of medicine and, more importantly, revolutionize how we keep our loved ones safe and well.

So when President Trump and Elon Musk come after this funding and come after these public servants, they aren't just coming after scientists in classrooms and laboratories; the impact will spread far beyond those institutions. When they come after the NIH, they are coming after patients with terminal illnesses, who are right now being turned away from potentially lifesaving clinical trials because of these cuts. They are coming after the next breakthrough that could have helped your loved one battling Alzheimer's. They are coming after a young scientist who is living paycheck to paycheck who will not be able to pursue a research career developing treatments to help others get better.

Now, you may be asking yourself: Why are Donald Trump and Elon Musk doing this? Well, the answer is pretty simple—so they can give tax breaks to billionaires. Why are they cutting off clinical trials and cancer research? So that people like Elon Musk don't have to pay their fair share. Why are they withholding funding to find a cure for Alzheimer's disease? So big corpora-

tions can pay less in taxes than the average American family. The cuts we are seeing right now will damage Americans' lives for the next generation—all so the wealthiest Americans can get wealthier.

We must stand up to this illegal freeze on funding, this assault on the Federal workforce, and these billions of dollars in cuts that will take decades to undo. Our health and the health of our loved ones depend upon it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to make a simple point: The law cannot be in the eye of the beholder. The law is the law. But yet again, we are seeing the Trump administration break the law.

Many of us have been closely following the Trump administration's illegal freeze of congressionally appropriated funding, including of foreign aid not just from the State Department but also from USAID, the African Development Foundation, the Inter-American Foundation, and other independent Agencies. Each of those Agencies' existence as an independent entity has long been enshrined in statute and reaffirmed by bipartisan majorities in both Chambers year after year in annual appropriations.

Our appropriations law also explicitly requires the administration to notify and consult with Congress before undertaking any efforts to reorganize, realign, or downsize foreign affairs Agencies, as the sweeping reductions in force issued last week and many other brazen actions we have seen clearly seek to do.

The administration's actions, including firing the USAID inspector general and the State IG, will make waste and fraud more likely, will prevent even foreign assistance programs allegedly supported by the administration from being effectively implemented, and will also effectively block hundreds of millions of dollars for other programs enacted into law by bipartisan majorities. Needless to say, the Trump administration has not consulted or notified Congress about these changes. That is in violation of the law.

This week, they took a further step. The Trump administration has chosen to spit in the face of the law and Congress, expressing total disdain for a court order mandating they release the foreign aid funding they had illegally withheld. When finally told they must comply, Secretary Rubio personally approved the termination of 90 percent of the USAID programs and 60 percent of State Department programs virtually overnight. They terminated more than \$58 billion in multiyear programs and have told us they have no intention of utilizing those funds.

The termination of those awards is absolutely not what Congress intended.

Congress appropriated the funding on a bipartisan basis with the express intent to see those dollars spent. This is not trivial stuff. We are talking about resources that often mean the difference between life and death, resources that are imperative not just because they are lifesaving but because they are an investment in our own national security and in U.S. businesses.

Let's take Ebola, for example. USAID helps other countries around the world respond to and contain Ebola outbreaks. That is pretty darn important because there is no known cure for Ebola.

Thanks to the good work of USAID, along with our international partners—often supported by USAID awards—we have never had an Ebola outbreak here at home.

Yesterday, at President Trump's Cabinet meeting, Elon Musk even admitted that, yes, we want to fight Ebola. Of course, then he said they "accidentally" cut USAID's Ebola prevention efforts but that it had been "restored" with no "interruption."

Yet we know for a fact that is a lie. U.S.-based companies implementing these programs received termination notices yesterday. Any basic accounting of USAID's capacity to stop outbreaks abroad shows quite plainly any disease prevention efforts supported by the United States at this point are merely symbolic. You cannot break the foundation of public health systems overseas and expect that it won't have a damaging impact here at home.

This makes America less safe. If Ebola, Marburg, or any other infectious disease makes it to our shores, it will be thanks to Elon and Trump—two billionaires without a clue who are positively smug about their own ignorance.

But it is not just our infectious disease response that has now been gutted—everything from resources to help prevent kids from getting malaria to aid for refugees in war-torn places like Syria, where it is directly in our national security interests to foster stability.

It is not just resources from faraway places. This will hit home in blue and red States. U.S. universities in my home State, in Indiana, in Florida, in Texas, and other States have had their partnerships terminated.

American students from across our country who are now participating in exchange programs overseas are impacted by this. To put it into perspective for my colleagues, 5,800 of 6,300 USAID grants and contracts are being terminated. That is 9 out of 10. That is not to mention 4,100 of 6,800 State Department grants and contracts.

The only detail we have is from the NGO's faith-based organizations and U.S. contractors sending these termination notices to our committee. We do not have one shred of detail from the State Department, not one shred.

The scale is staggering, and it shows you that this administration's scheme

is to bulldoze right through restraining orders and court orders so that by the time the law does catch up with them, the damage will have been done. Compliance is easy at that point. What is left to fix once you have burned everything to the ground?

This administration knows full well they are breaking the law. They are showing us all in plain view their goal is to do irreparable damage, as much as possible, as fast as possible.

Well, I am here today to sound the alarm because this illegal power grab is in direct violation of congressional intent and appropriations laws.

The Supreme Court should act with haste to bring this administration to account and ensure that money Congress appropriated gets to where it was intended. Whether it is President Trump or Elon Musk or the Secretary of State calling the shots, Congress has no visibility into DOGE's actions, frustrating our ability to write funding bills when government funding runs out in weeks.

By ignoring the law and congressional intent, the administration has created chaos; they have eroded trust in the United States; and they made way for Russia and China to take advantage of this leadership vacuum.

No one should fall for this thin veneer about efficiency while this administration racks up legal fees, overdue payments to contractors, pays people not to work, and forces a global recall of staff.

We have a process to avoid this kind of chaos: The President submits his or her budget request to Congress. Congress holds hearings publicly, writes and passes bills that become law. We have explicit notification and consultation requirements for foreign assistance funding for a reason.

Do I need to march down to the National Archives? Do I need to make sure we still have a Constitution? Do I need to check whether the laws we passed are even still there or did they start running them through a shredder? Because as blatant and persistent as it has been, no one—no one—should ex-

pect this kind of lawlessness to fade away.

I cast my votes, and I speak on this floor as a voice for the people of the State I represent, Washington State. I was not elected to let the President of any party or some unaccounted billionaire decide how their tax dollars get spent.

Every Senator here should speak loudly with one unified voice: Congress holds the power of the purse. No President can unilaterally abolish an entire Agency or ignore our appropriations laws.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL MONDAY,
MARCH 3, 2025, AT 3 P.M.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HUSTED). Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 3 p.m. Monday.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 4:16 p.m., adjourned until Monday, March 3, 2025, at 3 p.m.