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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Today, the opening prayer will be offered by Pastor Brad Graves, senior pastor of First Baptist Church from Ada, OK.

The guest Pastor offered the following prayer:

I want to thank you for this opportunity to pray. In front of you today is the vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention. As the senior pastor of the First Baptist Church, as a father, a husband, a grandfather, but most importantly, as a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, let us pray together.

Father God of Heaven, we come to You today in the Name of Your one and only Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Countless men and women of faith in You have walked these halls over the last two-plus centuries. Ever since the setting of its cornerstone in 1793, this building has stood as a place not just of legislation but of morality and nobility. It has been a building that the nations of the world look toward with bated breath to learn what the United States of America would do, how they would respond to crises in our world, and how they would assist those in need.

Our own citizens have looked to this building, wondering with hope and prayers that the laws and decisions made in this room and in this building would better their lives, would protect their families, and would enable their God-given freedoms, and this day is no different.

This day, March 4, 2025, is no different than any other day. We may not be at war, we may not be on the cusp of social crisis, but the world is watching our next move, and our citizens need God-fearing leadership.

So now, before the gavel is struck, before the arguments are made, before

the debate begins, we beg You, God, for mercy on our Nation. God, be patient with us.

We ask for Your grace on our leadership. Lord, they carry a heavy burden for which they will stand in account someday.

We ask for the love of God to be displayed through our actions as a nation because we are called by Your Name, one Nation under God.

I have been praying for every man and woman in this Senate Chamber to come to know the love of God. I pray that every family represented in this room would experience the love of God. I pray for every American citizen to understand the depth of God's love for them.

So, God of Heaven, I claim the Scripture that love "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." I claim the Scripture that "everyone will know that you are [their] disciples, if [they] love one another." And I most certainly claim the Scripture that is so familiar to every one of us, that "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whosoever believes in him will not perish but have everlasting life."

Guide these men and women today, dear God, by Your unending, overwhelming love, to do Your will and to follow Your ways and to especially protect the lives of the most vulnerable, to create legislation that supports families and morality and that shows the watching world the love of Jesus Christ is the only way to Heaven.

I ask these things in the Name of my Lord, my Savior, and my returning King, Jesus Christ.

And all God's people across the Nation say amen and amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Repub-

lic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MORENO). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for debate only until 11 a.m.

The Senator from Iowa.

HAMAS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, October 7, 2023, will probably go down in history to Americans like December 7, 1941, Pearl Harbor Day.

On October 7, 2 years ago, Israel experienced a surprise attack from Hamas. As those under attack rushed to safe rooms and to bomb shelters, the terrorist group infiltrating the country began firing on homes and killing Israelis at random.

Those who have seen the footage of the attacks—in many cases, those films have been taken by the attackers themselves—have said that the glee and the pride Hamas showed in killing and mutilating and raping innocent civilians were particularly shocking. It is also very chilling and also very disgusting.

On October 7, Hamas also took roughly 250 residents hostage, even including babies, really old people, and even some Americans. The horror these individuals have faced under the brutal reign of Hamas is unimaginable. The hostages have been subjected to inhumane conditions, deprived of their basic human rights, and used as pawns in the cruel game of manipulation.

Now more than 500 days later, Hamas is still holding dozens of hostages captive, including five Americans. Of the

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



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five Americans in Hamas's captivity, four have been confirmed to have been murdered.

As the families have spent over a year in anguish, waiting for any sign of their loved ones, desperate for their safe return, Hamas has kept their bodies and refused to return them to family and friends, compounding the grief of loved ones. All Americans would say this cannot stand.

The United States must remain steadfast in its commitment to securing the release of these hostages and holding Hamas accountable for these atrocities. Under President Trump's leadership, that is exactly what our country is doing because of President Trump's support for the State of Israel and his stand against hostage taking.

To the families of these hostages, we grieve with you. We share in your pain, and we share in your hope as well.

To the hostages still in captivity, we want them to know they are not forgotten.

The world is watching, and we will not rest until justice is served and you are safely returned home. God bless you all.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, this evening, President Trump will come to the Capitol to address Congress. I am looking forward to hearing the President discuss his accomplishments so far and outline his vision for our country.

President Trump may have been in office for a matter of weeks, but he has already built a considerable record of success. Chief among his successes, of course, is the work he has been doing to confront illegal immigration and restore order to our southern border.

Over the weekend, it emerged that there were just 8,450 encounters, approximately, at our southern border for the entire month of February—at least a 25-year low. That is a stunning turnaround. To put that number in perspective, under President Biden, the Border Patrol sometimes saw that number in a single day. It is incredible what President Trump has accomplished in just 6 weeks.

I haven't even mentioned how his administration has been making our communities safer by arresting and deport-

ing criminals here illegally. In just 6 weeks, they have taken a lot of dangerous people off of our streets.

It all goes to show what is possible when you have a President committed to protecting our border and our Nation's security.

Of course, that is not all the President has accomplished during his first 6 weeks in office. Among other things, he has also been laying the groundwork for unleashing American energy. While Democrats may not like to admit it, the United States is rapidly heading toward an energy crisis where we simply don't have the supply to meet the demand.

The Washington Post noted last March:

Vast swaths of the United States are at risk of running short of power as electricity-hungry data centers and clean-technology factories proliferate around the country, leaving utilities and regulators grasping for credible plans to expand the nation's creaking power grid.

That is a pretty serious situation.

Instead of taking steps to increase our energy supply, the Biden administration pushed us further toward crisis with measures designed to restrict conventional energy development and force Americans to adopt electric cars, putting a vast new burden on our electric grid.

Fortunately, President Trump recognizes the precarious situation we are facing, and he is already demonstrating his commitment to increasing our Nation's supply and promoting a secure and affordable energy future. I look forward to hearing from him as he discusses the work he has been doing tonight.

Here in the Senate, we have been working to support President Trump's agenda first and foremost by getting his Cabinet in place. I am proud to report we have confirmed 20 of the President's 22 Cabinet nominees—a substantially faster pace of confirmations than in any of the three previous administrations.

In addition to Cabinet nominations, we have also been laying the groundwork for making the tax cuts we passed during the first Trump administration permanent as well as delivering a transformational investment in our border, national, and energy security.

Of course, we are currently working to overturn burdensome Biden administration regulations using the Congressional Review Act.

This week, we are taking up two rules that infringe on Americans' financial freedom. First, we will vote on Senator CRUZ's resolution to stop the Biden administration's digital asset broker rule, which puts at risk the privacy and security of tens of millions of Americans who trade digital assets. This rule could also mean forfeiting American leadership in financial innovation by giving the advantage to foreign companies that do not have to comply with the rule and driving innovation overseas.

Later this week, we will vote on Senator RICKETTS' resolution to prevent an unnecessary expansion of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, or CFPB. The Biden administration made a last-ditch effort to increase government supervision of nonbank payment apps like Venmo and PayPal by expanding the CFPB's authority. But these types of apps are already regulated, and they accounted for just 1 percent of the CFPB's consumer complaints in 2023. Why add another layer of bureaucracy?

Apparently, Democrats can't help but see innovation as an opportunity for regulation. All told, the Biden administration saddled Americans with \$1.8 trillion in regulatory burdens. That is a big weight on the economy and on crucial industries like American energy, and we will continue our work to alleviate these burdens. The Biden administration left our Nation facing a lot of challenges, but we are turning the page on the Biden administration's failed policies, and I firmly believe there is a brighter future ahead.

I look forward to hearing from President Trump tonight as he outlines his vision for American greatness.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill 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. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS

Mr. SCHUMER. So, Mr. President, tonight, Donald Trump will address the Nation before a joint session of Congress. This will be the fifth time Donald Trump speaks from the House Chamber, and by now, the American people know just what to expect.

They can expect Donald Trump to launch a deluge of mistruths and falsehoods. But tonight, we won't hear one peep from Donald Trump about his broken promise to bring inflation down on "day one." We won't hear one syllable about how Donald Trump's policies are making inflation and the costs that average American families pay worse.

So this morning, let's start with that here, starting with tariffs. Last night, for the first time in decades, the President of the United States imposed 25 percent tariffs on nearly all goods coming from Canada and Mexico.

What does this mean for the American people? What do Donald Trump's tariffs mean for the American people? They are going to pay more. Everyday

costs are about to become more expensive. It means, according to the CEO of Target, to take one example, consumers could see higher prices within days. This is not something 6 months out. That includes everything: the price of gas, produce, cars, cheese, dairy products, coffee, even chocolate.

American farmers will pay more for fertilizer, which means food prices go up. New furniture will become more expensive, as Canada is a major supplier of lumber. Refrigerators, washers, microwaves, laptops, smartphones, clothing, and shoes all will likely see increases.

Hold on to your hat, Mr. and Mrs. America. When you bring it all together, the average U.S. household could see \$2,000 in increased expenses a year, and that is a conservative estimate. Let me repeat that. The average American family—\$2,000 more out of their pockets, their hard-earned dollars that they are struggling to stretch. And now another added increase, all that didn't have to happen, because Donald Trump is imposing tariffs on Canada and Mexico.

It has been clear that in the past, when applied intelligently and precisely, tariffs can be a useful tool against adversaries that engage in unfair trade practices that harm American workers. The tariffs against China years ago are one example of this. But the situation today is completely different. It makes no sense to start a trade war with America's closest trade partners because the casualty of that trade war will be consumers and American households.

So let's get it straight: Donald Trump's tariffs are a tax on working Americans to the tune of \$2,000 or more a year.

Why are they doing this? Why are they doing this? Well, he says fentanyl, but less than 1 percent of the fentanyl that comes into the country comes from Canada.

It is one of the ways they can close that budget hole when they take huge tax breaks for billionaires. This is another place—another place—where Donald Trump and the Republicans are raising your costs so they can cut taxes for billionaires. It is unbelievable. I don't think this is going to be seen very positively by the American people.

Now let's talk about 1 month into the Trump administration. So, on his first day in office, Donald Trump promised a golden age was coming over the horizon. But when Donald Trump speaks tonight, his promise of a golden age will feel like ancient history.

So this morning, let's talk about Donald Trump's many broken promises. As a candidate, Donald Trump promised, "When I win, I will immediately bring prices down, starting on day one."

"Grocery prices will come tumbling down," he said, when he gets elected.

Instead, what has happened? Inflation has gone not down but up. Gas

prices were 2 percent up from the previous month. Chicken, pork, beef—all more expensive. Eggs, 15 percent higher than last month.

And what is Donald Trump's solution to all of this? The Secretary of Agriculture said yesterday Americans should just buy their own chickens to lay their own eggs. Is he serious? This is the Agriculture Secretary? Americans should buy their own chickens to lay their own eggs? Whom are they kidding?

As a candidate, Donald Trump also said, "Vote Trump and your incomes will soar. Your net worth will skyrocket."

Now, to be fair, if you are a billionaire, he is telling you the truth. But if you are not rich, Donald Trump and Republicans' signature legislation is to cut Medicaid and Social Security and other programs by hundreds of billions of dollars in order to pay for tax breaks for the billionaires club.

Let's look at another claim by Donald Trump:

The next economic boom will begin the instant . . . Donald J. Trump has won 4 more years.

That is his quote. He said:

The next economic boom will begin the instant . . . Donald J. Trump has won 4 more years.

Well, let's look at what has actually happened. Last month, consumer confidence took its biggest nosedive in years. Retail sales dropped unexpectedly by 0.5 percent. Unemployment filings hit their highest levels since last fall. The S&P 500, one of Donald Trump's favorite measuring sticks, has erased all the gains this year, and now Donald Trump has started a trade war with our closest trading partners. That is not what an economic boom looks like.

This is economic anemia created by Donald Trump's own policies.

I could go on because there are so many people being hurt and such policies of foolishness. Donald Trump promised to take care of veterans. Yet DOGE tried to fire hundreds of critical staffers from the VA, including crisis hotline staff and funding for cancer treatments. Housing costs are up. Electricity bills are up.

If there is any golden age to be had under Donald Trump, it is a golden age for lawlessness; it is a golden age for billionaires and their club. It is not a golden age for Americans who work hard every day to live an honest life to make ends meet. But I doubt we will hear any of that from Donald Trump tonight.

Finally, I am proud to welcome seven New Yorkers to tonight's joint meeting of Congress. These New Yorkers are examples of some of the very people whom Donald Trump promised to help but whom he has left behind.

First, I am honored to welcome Emma Larson, a 12-year-old middle school student from Long Island with a rare genetic disease which has been treated thanks to NIH-funded research.

Emma was diagnosed with spinal muscular atrophy as a 1-year-old. At the time, there was no cure. Her parents were anguished. But thanks to research at an NIH-funded lab in Cold Spring, NY, Emma received a breakthrough drug that changed SMA's prognosis.

Emma's story shows why NIH funding is lifesaving, and we should stand up against efforts to slash funding. Imagine slashing funding to NIH, which helps people like Emma live, so you can give a tax break to billionaires who are already doing very well, thank you.

I am also proud to welcome Alissa Ellman, a disabled Army veteran recently fired from the VA in Lockport, NY, in Western New York. Alissa served honorably in Afghanistan and was diagnosed with a rare cancer associated with toxic burn pit exposure.

Even while receiving treatment, she wanted to work; she wanted to serve her fellow veterans. She got a job at the Buffalo VA.

But guess what, last week, Alissa found herself locked out of her computer and later found out DOGE eliminated her position. This woman served our country, working in the Veterans Administration to help other veterans. All of a sudden—no word, no notice—locked out of her computer, and found that DOGE eliminated her position.

Is that the golden age? For whom? Alissa is 1 of 2,500 VA employees who were fired by DOGE, putting the care of our Nation's veterans at risk.

Tonight, I also welcome Tiffany Ramos from Rome, NY, who worked at the USDA office in Syracuse and was fired from her job helping rural farmers and businesses across Upstate New York. Tiffany is just one of many USDA employees fired with no notice despite years of service, leaving farmers across America wondering who is left to help.

It is amazing. These people worked hard. There was nothing against them. They didn't get a notice saying: You didn't do this, this, this; you can improve this way, this way, that way. They were just fired. It is cruel. It is heartless. It is nasty. It is lacking knowledge and fact-based, and it hurts America—in this case, our farmers.

I am also proud to welcome two Medicaid recipients, Jessica Martinez and Ana Medina Garcia. Jessica and Ana are both cancer survivors who depended on Medicaid to afford their medication and receive treatment.

And, finally, it is truly my honor to welcome Oran Neutra, mother of Omer Neutra, and Ruby Chen, father of Itay Chen. As we all know now, Omer and Itay were tragically murdered by vicious Hamas thugs right on October 7, the day of the massacre, the day of the invasion of Israel.

In the case of Omer's family, it wasn't until a year later they learned he was murdered by Hamas on October 7—how cruel. Hamas let them worry. I met with them numerous times: Is our

son alive? Is he dead? Is he OK? Is he wounded? Viciousness of Hamas—the viciousness.

As for Itay, he was taken hostage and tragically murdered by Hamas on the border of Gaza on October 7. After months of fighting for his return, Itay's family learned that he was also murdered that terrible day.

This is the depths of Hamas' cruelty. For months, they refused to even acknowledge that Omer and Itay had been murdered. They kept these families in anguish, in the dark. What a horrible feeling to wonder if your child is alive or dead. Hamas knowing it, dangled cruelly the possibility of maybe they are alive when they weren't.

The families wondered over and over again: Are our children alive? Are they dead? And, of course, tragically, their worst fears happened. What Omer and Itay's family have endured is beyond comprehension.

I am inspired by their perseverance, by their resolve to keep calling for the safe return of remaining hostages, even though their loved ones are gone, and for the return of the bodies of their loved ones, which is essential by Jewish law.

There is no time to waste. I will continue working for as long as it takes to finally bring every last hostage and the remains of the hostages no longer with us home to us. It is an honor to welcome all my guests to the Capitol.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, tonight President Trump will take the podium, and he will have a joint address to Congress, and, clearly, to the Nation.

I just heard the minority leader of the Senate come to the floor and talk about President Trump's promises. Well, let me talk about those promises—promises made, promises kept by President Trump.

He has only been in the office now for 7 weeks, and he has a very strong record of accomplishment in those 7 weeks. What did he promise he would do? He said he would cut wasteful Washington spending. Well, that is a promise that he has kept.

What we are seeing is the most comprehensive audit of Federal spending of money in history. This administration already, in just these short weeks, has identified \$55 billion of savings.

President Trump promised to secure the border. Well, he has kept that promise as well. He immediately began deporting criminal illegal immigrants. They are here in the country illegally, and they were criminals—heinous crimes. We are talking about murderers, rapists, drug dealers. The word got out around the world. Illegal border crossings in February dropped to an alltime low.

President Trump said he would unleash American energy. He has kept that promise as well. On day one, President Trump declared a national energy emergency. Now, this is going to unlock America's full energy potential. He withdrew from the Paris climate accord. Did it once before, but Joe Biden put us back in.

What we saw in the Biden administration is they applied handcuffs to American energy producers and American energy production. President Trump said: No, we are not doing that. He has opened Alaska's vast amounts of energy for the American people.

He pulled the plug on Biden's electric vehicle mandates. He reopened 625 million acres of offshore drilling. Remember, Joe Biden, in the final days of his administration, with his midnight regulation to ban that exploration for American energy.

President Trump promised to protect women who participate in sports. He kept that promise. The Trump administration marks the return to common sense.

We have seen that return to common sense, also, Mr. President, in here in the U.S. Senate because we are determined to get America back on track. There is no time to waste.

One measure of our rapid start is the historic pace with which we have been able to confirm members of President Trump's Cabinet.

Senate Republicans have now confirmed 20—20—members of President Trump's Cabinet. We confirmed President Trump's Education Secretary just last evening. So compared to previous Presidents, this is a remarkable pace. More confirmations than President Obama had at this point in 2009; more confirmations than President Biden had in 2021. It surpasses the timeline of any President in recent history.

President Trump's nominees are strong. They are smart. They have a history of success, and that history is going to continue now that they are members of the Cabinet.

Our success has had a direct impact on President Trump's agenda. With his team in place, President Trump has been able to execute effectively and efficiently.

The Senate has also acted decisively to secure the border. Within days of taking office, Senate Republicans passed the Laken Riley Act. The Laken Riley Act is named after a young nursing student in Georgia. She was murdered by an illegal immigrant. She was just out for a jog. We named the bill in her honor. The Laken Riley Act saves American lives. It requires illegal immigrant criminals to be deported. It was bipartisan legislation. And 12 Democrats voted with us to pass this legislation, and it is now law of the land.

The Laken Riley Act sends a clear message that tragedies like this never be allowed to happen again in the United States of America, that the era of open borders is over.

Senate Republicans mean business. After years of crises, we are now securing the border. The numbers tell the story. We are deporting illegal immigrant criminals on a daily basis, and we are also working with the House of Representatives on our shared agenda. We are delivering on the promises that we made to the American people. We are going to secure the border, we will restore peace through strength, we are unleashing American energy, and we are going to stop the Democrats' oncoming freight train of a \$4 trillion tax increase.

Democrats oppose all of these things. They want to raise American public taxes by \$4 trillion. Mr. President, we are going to stop that. President Trump is only 43 days in this office in his historic Presidency, an incredible comeback victory—the comeback king, as I call him from his ability to win this election. He won 312 electoral votes, every one of the battleground States, and this President has not wasted a second, a minute, an hour, or a day in office because he knows how important it is to act quickly.

He is doing that. He is solving the urgent problems facing our Nation, what American people elected him to do, what the American people expect, and it is what the American people are seeing. So the President is working with the House and the Senate, all of us working together to get America back on track, and we are going to deliver what the Americans have asked for: safety and prosperity for the people of this great country.

I yield the floor.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Illinois.

JANUARY 6 PARDONS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I have been honored to serve in the U.S. Senate for a number of years, and I carry with that service a great number of memories. But there is one that is particularly personal that I will never forget. The year was 2021, and the day was January 6.

The Senate Chamber was filled with Members who were witnessing a meeting required by our Constitution, where the Vice President presided over the Senate where the Presiding Officer is sitting. We gathered here and counted the electoral votes to determine who was the President as a result of the 2020 election. It is a fairly routine undertaking, but there is some solemnity to it because the Constitution requires it.

And I can recall that episode because it was a hectic day. It was the same

day that President Trump, leaving the Office because he lost that election in 2020, had called a rally down at the end of the Mall. Thousands of people showed up, and they decided to march on the Capitol at the President's urging and invitation.

It is not unusual in this town or even in this building that protesters would gather to state their purpose, as they are entitled to in a democracy. But this was different. The group that was coming up here was not protesting or gathering for speeches. They had some other intent, and we weren't sure what it was.

I can recall it was a few minutes after 2 in the afternoon on that day. Vice President Pence was sitting where the Presiding Officer is, and in the midst of the proceedings, some group—I believe now that it was the Secret Service—came in and literally physically removed Vice President Pence from where the Presiding Officer is sitting, leaving the chair empty while we were in session. It was a startling moment: What is going on here?

In a few minutes, a representative of the Capitol Police stood at the podium where the Presiding Officer is sitting and made an announcement.

Now, for those that don't know the Capitol Police, they are our security force. They are the ones that keep us safe as we do the duties of our government, and they protect everyone in the building—tourists, staff, everyone. They literally risk their lives for us.

So one of them came and stood before us in uniform and said: There is a group approaching the Capitol, and we ask you all to stay in your seats. This is going to be a safe place here in the Senate Chamber. Others will join you along the walls, and don't worry about it. We are all going to be safe in this building.

It wasn't 10 minutes later that another Capitol policeman came before us and said: Plans have changed. Everyone evacuate the Chamber as quickly as possible.

We went outside and saw through the windows the demonstrators with their signs coming toward the Capitol. Some were beating at the windows, and some were approaching the Capitol from different directions. And we were spirited off to another office building on Capitol Hill where we were protected.

That is a day you will never forget—I will never forget. I have been coming into this building since I was a college student at Georgetown, years ago. This is a special place to me. It is not my office building. It is the U.S. Capitol Building. It carries with it not only a history but a significance as a symbol.

It means something to have a mob take over the Capitol, as happened that day, pushing Members of the House and Senate to hide in broom closets and to leave the building for their own personal safety. I never dreamed that would happen in the United States of America, but I lived it. It happened, and the American people know it hap-

pened because the videos are quite graphic. They tell the story of what was going on that day.

At the end of the day, many of us were in different places, watching as C-SPAN broadcast the rioters coming into this Chamber, spiriting, going through my desk—not just mine but many others—posing for pictures in the Presiding Officer's chair. It was a scene that was sad, tragic, infuriating.

I thought to myself, at the time: What if we had just heard a notice that at the Houses of Parliament—the House of Commons in Parliament—in London, England, the door had been beaten down and a mob had overtaken the Members of Parliament?

You wouldn't believe it. That doesn't happen. This is a civilized country. England—it couldn't happen there.

Well, it didn't. It happened here. As a result of it, the Department of Justice took those people, those violent rioters, seriously and prosecuted almost 1,600 of them of wrongdoing—some of them very serious sentences, some just trespassing. But they were all taken seriously and treated appropriately. They answered under the law for their conduct that fatal day.

So what happened when this new President came to office?

He decided: That isn't what happened at all on January 6. These tourists, these demonstrators, were assaulted by the police.

He ignored the fact that 140 law enforcement officials were injured on that day protecting this building and the people in it. He ignored the fact that three or four people died shortly thereafter because of that experience. He decided that the people who needed our sympathy were the rioters and not the police. And so the President, in one of his first acts of office—President Trump—signed the pardon of some 1,600 individuals.

I have come to the floor to report to you what has happened since, in the few weeks that have passed since that mass pardon by President Trump.

I want to tell you the story, today, of several of the people who were involved in January 6 and pardoned by President Trump. Last week, body camera video was released depicting a traffic-related felony arrest during which a sheriff's deputy fatally shot former January 6 defendant Matthew Huttles—not the first to be shot by a policeman after he was pardoned by President Trump.

The video footage confirmed that there was a struggle during the incident, during which Huttles, a January 6 defendant, raised an object that the sheriff's deputy believed to be a firearm. At the beginning of the traffic stop, Huttles can be seen on video stating:

I just want to let you know that I am a January 6 defendant.

I stormed the Capitol. I'm waiting on my pardon.

Investigators later recovered a loaded 9mm handgun and ammunition in

Huttles's vehicle. Huttles was among the 1,600 individuals involved in the January 6 Capitol riot pardoned by President Trump. Huttles had pleaded guilty to one count of entering and remaining in a restricted building or grounds for his role in the insurrection. He was sentenced to 6 months in prison.

Peter Schwartz was sentenced to 14 years in prison on charges that included four counts of assaulting police officers during the January 6 attack on the Capitol. Schwartz was seen on body camera footage spraying officers with pepper spray and wielding a baton, and prosecutors allege he threw the first chair at officers, creating an opening that enabled hundreds of rioters to push back the police lines.

Prior to January 6, Schwartz had amassed criminal convictions in more than four different States for crimes including domestic violence, threatening his girlfriend, and assaulting security officers. One of Schwartz's former girlfriends, Shantelle Holeyton, a 43-year-old factory worker who has voted for President Trump three times, she says, recently told CBS News that she fears for her safety now that Schwartz has been pardoned and released. Holeyton reports that Schwartz persistently beat her during their months-long relationship until she called the police in July of 2019, alleging that Schwartz was threatening to kill her and her son.

In reacting to Schwartz's involvement in the insurrection, Holeyton stated:

He found an opportunity to go and be violent. The man thrives on violence. He thrives on people fearing him.

Another of Schwartz's girlfriends, Shelly Stallings, filed a police report in 2020 alleging that Schwartz bit her forehead and punched her in the head.

Schwartz was one of those who was pardoned by President Trump.

Jeremy Brown, one of the last January 6 defendants remaining behind bars since President Trump's blanket pardon, was released from the Federal correctional institution in Atlanta on Wednesday. Brown had not yet been released because prosecutors did not consider one of his two criminal cases to be related to January 6 and thus covered by the pardon.

However, the Justice Department has since reversed course. In April of 2023, Brown was convicted in Tampa, FL, of possessing a short-barrel rifle, a shotgun, and explosive grenades—explosive grenades—and willful retention of a national defense document, all resulting from a January 6-related law enforcement search of his residence in September of 2021. He was sentenced to 87 months in prison for those charges and released by the pardon of President Trump.

This is a horrible situation, and sadly, tragically, these are people who never should have been pardoned by the President. They attacked the police here in this building. They desecrated this Capitol. They were not the

victims. They victimized innocent people who were doing their jobs under the Constitution.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, instead of improving lives or lowering prices for Americans, we are seeing policies in the Trump administration do exactly the opposite.

The President has spent his time trying to systemically dismantle the Federal Government, creating rifts with our closest allies and now imposing restrictive tariffs on our biggest trading partners. The tariffs that he has unleashed—25 percent on Canada and Mexico as well as an additional 10 percent on China—will hurt American consumers and supply chains and undermine American manufacturing.

Illinois is the fourth largest exporter in the Nation. In 2023, our exports to Canada totaled more than \$21 billion—billion. These tariffs will hurt Illinois farmers, workers, and manufacturers, not to mention consumers. Additional tariffs on our three biggest trading partners will add to the economic strain that is already beginning to show under the new administration.

A survey of consumer sentiment published last month recorded this largest month of decline in 4 years due, in large part, to concerns about trade and tariffs. Tariffs are taxes. They are taxes the consumers of America will have to pay. These levels of concern have not been seen since the trade wars in President Trump's first term.

As Americans already struggle under the weight of high housing costs, these tariffs will make things worse. Much of the lumber used to build new homes in the United States comes from Canada, and more than 70 percent of the imports of two essential materials that homebuilders rely on, softwood lumber and gypsum, come from Canada and Mexico. With a 25-percent tariff on imported goods from those two countries, American homebuilders will need to pay more and so will the consumers.

While the President claims that foreign countries will pay for U.S. tariffs, that isn't the truth, and we know what the truth is: The burden of tariffs is carried by American companies and passed on to American consumers.

Indiscriminately slapping tariffs on the goods American consumers need means higher costs, higher costs on groceries, gas, cars, while inspiring retaliatory tariffs and even boycotts on American-made products, further hurting our economy.

I understand we are probably having a rollcall. I see a number of Members coming to the floor.

But President Trump's economic chaos isn't just happening overseas. You see, right now, Congress is in the midst of doing its most basic and essential job: Funding the government. But under the direction of President Trump, instead of coming to the negotiating table to pass a serious, full-year

spending bill that serves the interests of everyday Americans, Congressional Republicans are bargaining away the well-being of working families to pay for tax breaks for billionaires.

And what is the most egregious example of this? Their plan to slash health coverage for millions of Americans who rely on Medicaid.

House Republicans have proposed \$880 billion in cuts to the Medicaid program, and Senate Republicans have similarly put this health program in the crosshairs. Why? Not because they want to lower health care costs or improve our health care system, but because they want to use Medicaid cuts as a piggy-bank for tax breaks to billionaires.

The richest man in the world, Elon Musk, can dance around on stage with a chainsaw, cheering cuts to basic health care programs, but let me explain to you what that means for working families. Medicaid covers 30 million children—nearly half of all children in America—60 percent of seniors in nursing homes, and is the largest funder of addiction and mental health treatment.

In Illinois, 3.4 million people are enrolled in Medicaid, including 1.5 million children. Under Republican plans to slash Medicaid, 775,000 adults who gained health insurance coverage under the Affordable Care Act could lose coverage almost overnight. And for other children, elderly, or disabled Illinoisans who depend on it, they may no longer be able to access lifesaving medical treatment.

Republicans are ignoring the obvious: Medicaid is a lifeline for children's hospitals and rural hospitals in their communities. In Illinois, 60 percent of our 102 counties are rural. Rural hospitals are the backbone of communities in central and southern Illinois. Rural hospitals anchor the local economy—they often are the largest employer in town. And they are a critical access point for health care. If you suffer a farm accident or face a complication with your birth, you cannot afford to drive hours to the nearest hospital.

That's why I have worked for years to improve access to health care in rural areas—working to strengthen rural hospitals and recruit more doctors, dentists, and nurses. But rural hospitals in Illinois and nationwide could be at risk of closure if Republicans put Medicaid on the chopping block. Already, half of rural hospitals in America operate in the red. And for many rural hospitals, Medicaid covers a large percentage of their patients and accounts for a large portion of the hospital's budget.

For HSHS St. Francis Hospital in Litchfield, IL, Medicaid pays for 53 percent of the hospitalizations. For OSF St. Clare Hospital in Princeton, IL, Medicaid pays for 45 percent of hospitalizations. It is 42 percent for SSM St. Mary's Hospital in Centralia, IL.

Do you see the picture? Cuts to Medicaid put rural hospitals in jeopardy.

And if rural hospitals close because of Republican budget cuts, communities will suffer. Children seeking cancer treatment won't be able to access the local care they need. Pregnant women will have to drive further to deliver their babies. And your grandparent will have to wait months to get in to see that diabetes specialist.

If Republicans push forward with their cruel and unpopular funding plan, working families will lose and billionaires will win. It is simple and devastating math. If Americans cannot access health care because funding was slashed to fund tax cuts for the wealthy, if they cannot afford groceries because of an ill-conceived trade war, know that it is because President Trump is the billionaire's president.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE RELATING TO "GROSS PROCEEDS REPORTING BY BROKERS THAT REGULARLY PROVIDE SERVICES EFFECTUATING DIGITAL ASSET SALES"—Motion To Proceed

Mr. BARRASSO. I move to proceed to Calendar No. 11, S.J. Res. 3.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 11, S.J. Res. 3, providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Internal Revenue Service relating to "Gross Proceeds Reporting by Brokers That Regularly Provide Services Effectuating Digital Asset Sales".

VOTE ON MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

Mr. BARRASSO. 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 bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Michigan (Ms. SLOTKIN) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 70, nays 28, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 101 Leg.]

YEAS—70

Alsobrooks	Boozman	Collins
Banks	Britt	Cornyn
Barrasso	Budd	Cortez Masto
Blackburn	Capito	Cotton
Booker	Cassidy	Cramer

Crapo	Kennedy	Rosen
Cruz	Kim	Rounds
Curtis	King	Schatz
Daines	Lankford	Schiff
Ernst	Lee	Schmitt
Fetterman	Lujan	Schumer
Fischer	Marshall	Scott (FL)
Gallego	McConnell	Scott (SC)
Gillibrand	McCormick	Sheehy
Graham	Moody	Sullivan
Grassley	Moran	Thune
Hagerty	Moreno	Tillis
Hawley	Mullin	Tuberville
Heinrich	Murkowski	Warner
Hoeven	Ossoff	Warnock
Husted	Padilla	Wicker
Hyde-Smith	Paul	Young
Johnson	Ricketts	
Justice	Risch	

NAYS—28

Baldwin	Hirono	Sanders
Bennet	Kaine	Shaheen
Blumenthal	Kelly	Smith
Blunt Rochester	Klobuchar	Van Hollen
Cantwell	Markley	Warren
Coons	Merkley	Welch
Duckworth	Murphy	Whitehouse
Durbin	Murray	Wyden
Hassan	Peters	
Hickenlooper	Reed	

NOT VOTING—2

Lummis	Slotkin
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The motion was agreed to.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE RELATING TO "GROSS PROCEEDS REPORTING BY BROKERS THAT REGULARLY PROVIDE SERVICES EFFECTUATING DIGITAL ASSET SALES"

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the joint resolution.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (S.J. Res. 3) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Internal Revenue Service relating to "Gross Proceeds Reporting by Brokers That Regularly Provide Services Effectuating Digital Asset Sales".

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CURTIS). The Senator from Maine.

(The remarks of Ms. COLLINS and Mr. BALDWIN pertaining to the introduction of S. 830 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Ms. BALDWIN. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

NOMINATION OF ELBRIDGE COLBY

Mr. SCHMITT. Mr. President, I rise today to argue for a swift and decisive confirmation of Elbridge Colby as Under Secretary of Defense for Policy.

It is common today to hear leaders in the foreign policy establishment talk of upholding the rules-based international order and promoting liberal values and norms. What is much less common is to hear anyone talk about tangible, concrete American interests. Mr. Colby is a welcome exception. He believes that America is a real, concrete nation and people with real, concrete interests and that the fundamental purpose of our foreign policy is to protect and advance those interests.

For the past 30 years, American foreign policy has lurched from disaster to disaster. To be a friend of the reigning consensus is to be an advocate of the same failed ideas that led us to spend trillions of dollars and countless young Americans' lives for causes and conflicts that were not ours, while leaving us woefully unprepared for the ones that are.

America does not need more of the same. What America needs is a new approach, a new strategy, a new philosophy of strength for the 21st century. That is what Elbridge Colby will deliver.

No one could argue that Mr. Colby isn't qualified for this role. He spent well over 20 years working in defense and foreign policy, serving in the Department of State, the Department of Defense, and various national security positions at different think tanks.

He served faithfully in the first Trump administration as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy and Force Development, where he was the lead author of the 2018 National Defense Strategy. From there, he founded a think tank, the Marathon Initiative, and wrote a book called the "Strategy of Denial" outlining his vision for confronting the true geopolitical challenge of our time: deterring—and if necessary, defeating—the threats posed by a rising China.

President Trump's decision to nominate Mr. Colby to this position was not a mistake. It was intentional. This administration wants to carry out a fundamental and long-overdue reorientation of our Nation's foreign policy, and Elbridge Colby is a critical component of that mission.

The media tells us that he is controversial. Why? Well, he believes that our foreign policy must prioritize our core interests, and that means that we can't be everywhere at once, doing everything all the time. His critics say that makes him weak. In reality, it is exactly the opposite. The quickest and most certain path to weakness is to waste our blood and treasure on Wilsonian adventurism abroad as the real threats and enemies of America grow unchecked. For years, Mr. Colby has been one of the lone voices in the foreign policy establishment with a real and viable vision for American strength.

It is true that Mr. Colby believes that the Iraq war was a mistake. He does not believe that a hot war with Iran would serve America's long-term interests. He believes that a costly and unwinnable proxy war in Ukraine is an obstacle to our ability to rebuild our military and revitalize our industrial base here at home and that our European allies must step up and do more to defend their own continent as the United States transitions to our focus in the Indo-Pacific. On all of these things, the decisive majority of Americans are on his side even if the foreign policy establishment isn't.

The political class in this city must come to terms with the fact that the

world most of us grew up in no longer exists. President Trump intends to drag this city—kicking and screaming if necessary—into the 21st century. That is what we saw at the White House last week—a new foreign policy centered around uncompromising and unapologetic pursuit of the interests of the American people.

Mr. Colby will play a key role in that project, and I look forward to watching him serve as our next Under Secretary of Defense for Policy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY

Mr. REED. Mr. President, on day one, President Trump lit the fuse on Elon Musk's plan to hollow out the Federal Government by changing the name of an obscure technical office within the White House, the U.S. Digital Services, USDS, and called it DOGE, without congressional authorization, and giving it extraordinary reach into the operations of the Federal Agencies.

Since then, we have heard report after report about how Mr. Musk and DOGE have rammed their way into Agencies not to make smart decisions, not to improve efficiency, not to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse, but to disrupt, denigrate, and demoralize.

And along the way, DOGE has made incredible blunders such as firing and then scrambling to rehire employees at the National Nuclear Security Administration.

Let me repeat that. Mr. Musk and his minions fired the people who keep nuclear weapons safe, and then someone realized, fortunately, within a few days that they had to come back.

And here is another example: Musk and his hackers made the CIA send an unclassified email with the names of its recent hires. Boy, if I was in the Russian Security Service, I would love to get a list—which they did—of everyone who is going into the CIA.

They also cut staff from the Federal Aviation Administration and the National Weather Service who prevent and warn every American of travel and weather dangers. It goes beyond that. Agricultural interests listen daily to the reports, the accurate reports of the Weather Service, so they can plan their crops, so they can plan everything—and that is being withered away. And I think the ultimate goal is to privatize it, which is not the best way to go.

These actions don't just reflect incredible incompetence; they are dangerous. They undermine national security and increase risks for American citizens.

In any other setting, blunders like these would be grounds for firing, but Musk and DOGE operate with arrogance, impunity, and zero transparency. Millions of Americans are asking: Who are these people?

As the ranking member of the Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Subcommittee, the subcommittee that ostensibly oversees the

budget for the White House, USDS, and DOGE, I am asking the same question. Because Congress, like the American people, is being kept in the dark.

As appropriators, we typically work together on a bipartisan basis—no matter which party is in the White House—to get information, to conduct oversight, to ensure that Federal dollars are spent in accordance with the laws passed by Congress. But now, without authorization from Congress, DOGE is recklessly slashing its way through virtually every Federal Agency, from the Office of Personnel Management to Treasury to HUD to State to USAID to the Department of Defense and more.

It is vital that we understand what DOGE is and isn't. While Elon Musk tells us and the American people that DOGE is "maximally transparent," it is not. We still do not have answers to fundamental questions like: What is the scope of DOGE's work? How many people work at DOGE? And who are they? Do they also hold jobs outside the Federal Government? What are their financial holdings and potential conflicts of interest?

Do they have allegiances to foreign governments? Will DOGE respond to requests under the Freedom of Information Act? What are its plans to reform Agencies? Who is DOGE firing and why? And many, many other questions.

And, unfortunately, when DOGE shares information, it is frequently wrong. As the New York Times reported, five of DOGE's biggest claimed savings were deleted from its website because they were inaccurate.

This includes a canceled USAID contract for \$650 million, which was counted by DOGE three times; a canceled Social Security contract was erroneously listed as being worth \$232 million, instead of the actual \$560,000; and a canceled ICE contract was listed as saving \$8 billion instead of \$8 million.

If you are going to name something the Department of Government Efficiency, don't you owe it to the taxpayers to actually do a good job? On top of having zero accountability, DOGE's legal authority to operate is dubious.

DOGE has, essentially, taken over the USDS, which was originally established to help Federal Agencies more adeptly utilize technology to serve the American people. Over the years, USDS helped establish everything from Direct File, which helps taxpayers file their taxes for free, to direct-mail COVID tests to a successful online passport renewal program.

DOGE is now using the hollowed shell of USDS to illegally undo the American Federal Government, moving from Agency to Agency, cutting congressionally appropriated Federal spending, priorities, and even dismantling entire Agencies.

The bottom line is that DOGE, without congressional authorization and without direct funding from Congress, is acting to undermine the Federal Government. And, frankly, contempt

to the U.S. Congress as a constitutional body who creates the law.

The President's challenge in the Constitution is to enforce the laws, not to circumvent the Congress of the United States. Based on press reports, DOGE appears to be populated by a mixture of unelected billionaires, tech executives, and unvetted, inexperienced people, including an individual who was found to have posted racist tweets.

This gang is being granted access to America's most sensitive data like your bank accounts, your Social Security accounts, and, it would seem, a host of classified intelligence. And how are they using this information? How are they protecting this information from our enemies? Is it being shared with outside entities? Is DOGE simply being used to give Mr. Musk, his companies, and his billionaire friends an advantage when competing for government contracts?

We simply don't know what this gang is doing inside the government. Every single day that passes without transparency and congressional access to information about DOGE's funding, staffing, and scope of work is a moment too long.

With the current continuing resolution due to expire on March 14, we have big decisions to make. My hope is that these decisions can be made on a bipartisan basis informed by the facts, but we cannot responsibly fund the government if we do not understand how DOGE has infiltrated it, made it less efficient and less responsive to taxpayers, and, essentially, has circumvented the constitutional responsibilities of the U.S. Congress.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following Members be permitted to speak prior to the lunch recess: Myself, for up to 15 minutes; Senator MURRAY, up to 10 minutes; Senator CANTWELL, up to 5 minutes; and Senator BRITT, for up to 10 minutes.

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

JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, as everybody knows, tonight, President Trump will give an address to a joint session of Congress. I look forward to attending the President's address, and I am happy to welcome my friend Abraham George, who will join me as a guest tonight.

In addition, three other Texans will be joining the President tonight as his guests. Alexis Nungaray from Houston, TX, is an angel mom who lost her lovely 12-year-old daughter Jocelyn. Jocelyn was tragically murdered by two illegal immigrants who, just weeks before, were apprehended and released by the Biden administration.

Next from Texas, Roberto Ortiz from Weslaco is one of our brave veterans who has served nearly a decade in the

U.S. Border Patrol. Roberto's courage in the face of danger has been tested repeatedly as he has been shot on multiple occasions by cartel members while on the line of duty near the Rio Grande River in my home State.

And, finally, Elliston Berry from Aledo, TX, is a 15-year-old victim of computer-generated deepfakes. I applaud Elliston for her courage in joining us here tonight and for using her voice to speak out against the dangers posed by new technologies.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. President, President Trump has rightfully turned the page on a wide array of President Biden's disastrous policies, from reforming our runaway spending through DOGE, the Department of Government Efficiency, to prioritizing investment in semiconductors and manufacturing, to bringing our hostages held in Gaza back home to their families. But perhaps one of his most significant accomplishments thus far—and it has only been about 6 weeks—has been when it comes to border security, something near and dear to my heart and the heart of my 31 million constituents who call Texas home.

Border security played a significant role in the mandate that the President got last November. The past 4 years were marked by President Biden's failure to enforce the law and to secure our border. And this was, without a doubt, a crisis—a humanitarian and public safety crisis—of the former administration's own making. This was truly a manmade crisis.

Starting from the campaign trail, President Biden invited the massive wave of migration by promising a "surge to the border" for asylum seekers. Can you imagine a President inviting a surge to the U.S. border of asylum seekers? This is one promise that, unfortunately, he kept.

But President Biden's failures went far beyond just his rhetoric. In the early days of his Presidency, President Biden basically reversed every policy President Trump had put in place, including the "Remain in Mexico" policy, which has been remarkably effective. In other words, people seeking asylum need to remain in Mexico while their claim is being processed.

And the truth is, only about 15 percent of people who claim asylum in America who appear in front of an immigration judge ultimately are granted asylum. They meet the legal criteria; whereas, the other 85 percent do not.

The Biden administration also halted construction of President Trump's border wall and instead used Federal funds to store already-paid-for wall materials. So not only did the taxpayer pay for those materials, they had to pay for the storage of those materials when they weren't used for their intended purpose.

As the border crisis continued to evolve for the worse, President Biden ended title 42, the COVID 19-era policy that was our last line of defense to keep a lid on the migrant crisis when

President Biden refused to enforce other laws.

After undoing the successful Executive orders made by the first President Trump administration, President Biden then decided to circumvent Congress and attempt to make illegal immigration legal using temporary programs that were never intended for that purpose. His Department of Homeland Security created the CBP One app—short for Customs and Border Protection—an app for your phone which allowed migrants to literally schedule a visit to a port of entry so they could then claim asylum and then enter the country.

Another Biden-Harris administration program allowed up to 30,000 migrants a month to enter from four countries—Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. So that was 360,000 migrants who were basically told, if you come, you can stay in the United States. But they were conferred a temporary status that left them all in legal limbo.

Let's not forget the Biden White House cooking the books on illegal immigration by abusing the parole system. "Parole" is a word that people who are familiar with the criminal justice system understand. But this is different. In immigration terms, parole means simply you were released into the United States even if you didn't claim a right to be able to stay—for example, a right to asylum. You are just simply released as a border control measure to avoid bad publicity at the border when people were sleeping in the streets and lines were stacking up.

Of course, we know what the tragic consequences of these misguided policies look like—a crisis of mass illegal immigration, human trafficking, drug trafficking across our southern border.

Approximately, 100,000 Americans die each year as a result of drugs that come across the southern border—approximately, 70,000 from synthetic opioids, like fentanyl, which is the leading cause of death for young people between the ages of 18 and 45. During all 4 years of the Biden administration, a number of illegal migrant encounters with CBP totaled over 10 million. That is basically 10 million people showing up and saying let me into your country, and the Biden administration said: Come on in.

But on top of that, there were about 1.7 million "got-aways." "Got-aways" are people who were evading law enforcement who appear on some sensor—a camera or some other sensor—and evade law enforcement. Of course, now we know they are freely roaming the interior of the United States.

Let me ask you this. If you know that you could show up at the border and be allowed to enter—basically, ushered into the country—why in the world would you evade Border Patrol? Well, I think the simple answer is these are people who knew that they would not be able to enter because of criminal records because they were transporting drugs or engaged in some other illegal activity. Yet they made their way into the interior of the United States.

Fentanyl, which I mentioned a moment ago, was manufactured from Chinese precursor chemicals, smuggled through the open border, which has taken tens of thousands of lives. And the people in Texas—the 31 million people that I am honored to represent—have felt the burden of President Biden's disastrous border policies most acutely because we are closest to the problem. We are ground zero.

Governor Abbott, our outstanding Governor, and the Texas Legislature filled the gap when the Federal Government refused to do its job along the border. An international border is the responsibility of the Federal Government, not the State government. But what is the State supposed to do if the Federal Government says: "We don't care about the law. We are not going to enforce it. It is up to you?"

Well, Governor Abbott and the Texas Legislature stepped up, and they spent roughly \$11.1 billion to fill the gap that should have been filled by the Federal Government. For that reason, I am insisting that Congress fulfill Governor Abbott's request to be reimbursed \$11.1 billion that the State taxpayers had to spend, that rightfully should have been the expense of the Federal Government and Federal taxpayers all across the country.

There can be no doubt that this historic crisis was the direct result of President Biden's policies. That is one of the reasons why I believe not only did he not run but that Vice President Harris lost the election. It was a rejection of those open-border policies.

I am looking forward to hearing the President discuss tonight the incredible strides his administration has made in just about 6 weeks since his inauguration. Nowhere is that success more apparent than when it comes to border security.

After 4 years of record highs, CBP is now facing record lows. The Border Patrol tells me: Now we can do our job. We are not relegated to changing diapers or transporting migrants from one facility to another. We can actually keep out the worst of the worst and enforce the laws when it comes to border security.

As soon as President Trump was elected, even before he took office, the migrant flows began to subside. That is called deterrence. If you know the law is going to be enforced and you know you are not going to be successful making your way into the country, why would you spend thousands of dollars in order to pay off a cartel member to smuggle you up to the border?

During November and December of last year after the election, encounters were at their lowest levels between the ports of entries—the lowest levels since August of 2020. In the first 2 weeks of January, Customs and Border Protection encounters were nearly 50 percent lower than they were at the same point in January 2021—50 percent lower. During the latter half of the month, when President Trump actually took office,

apprehensions fell by a staggering 85 percent compared to the same period in 2024.

You know, the statement is often said: Elections have consequences. One of the most important consequences of President Trump's election on November 5 was we are now reestablishing border security. And the people of this great country are safer for it.

During the entire month of January, there were less than 1,500 apprehensions a day, a nearly 40-percent decline from December of last year. And just 1 week ago, Customs and Border Protection hit a 15-year low of only 200 encounters in 1 day at the southern border. These numbers are pretty impressive, but they are not at all surprising. They are a direct result of the deterrent effect created by President Trump and Secretary Noem's policy changes. Migrants know that a Trump administration means our laws will be enforced.

If you can make your way into our country using legal means, by all means, do so. As I mentioned earlier, our country is the most generous in the world when it comes to legal immigration. We naturalize about a million people a year. So if you have a desire to come to America, do it through legal means, not through illegal means.

Instead of rolling out the welcome mat like President Biden, President Trump started his second administration by turning the traffic light red instead of green. On day one, President Trump declared a national emergency—which it was—at the southern border, giving him greater flexibility to implement his Executive orders. He reinstated the "Remain in Mexico" policy and ended President Biden's disastrous catch-and-release policies.

Secretary Noem, our new Secretary of Homeland Security, began her tenure in the President's Cabinet by sending a clear video message to migrants that she intends to enforce the laws that prevent illegal immigration. But she didn't stop there. Under President Trump and his administration, ICE arrests—Immigration and Customs Enforcement—ICE arrests have increased more than 600 percent, which include arrests of criminal migrants which have doubled. They returned to a commonsense, case-by-case approach to humanitarian parole, which had been abused under the Biden administration, where it was used as a way to have mass releases of migrants at the border who had made no legitimate claim to be able to stay. They were just released.

Secretary Noem has also clawed back the \$80 million a month spent by FEMA to house illegal migrants in luxury hotels in New York City. That is where your tax dollars went—to put people who had no legal claim to stay in the United States in hotels in New York City to the tune of \$80 million.

These policies are welcome. They are good news to my constituents in Texas and I believe to people across the country.

There is a reason why Secretary Mayorkas, the former Secretary of Homeland Security who was responsible for implementing the border security measures of the Biden administration—there was a reason why he was impeached by the House of Representatives. He simply did not do the job he had sworn to do. Well, Texans have had to bear the brunt of open borders for 4 years, which includes rampant crime and deadly fentanyl.

I look forward to working with President Trump and Secretary Noem to continue the important work they have begun to keep Americans and Texans safe.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, no one wants a shutdown—well, actually, no one except Elon Musk, who recently said that sounds great, or Donald Trump or Russ Vought.

That is why I have been at the table this entire time ready to pass a bill that protects key investments and makes sure that Congress—Congress, not Donald Trump or Elon Musk—decides whether or not our public schools or our lifesaving cancer research gets funded.

Unfortunately, Republican leadership told their Members last week to walk away from the negotiating table—which raises the risk of a shutdown—in an attempt to pass a clean yearlong continuing resolution that would actually give Trump and Musk exactly what they want, fewer restraints and more power over Federal spending so they can pick winners and losers as they see fit, which would hurt all of our constituents.

Nonetheless, I am urging Republican leadership to come back to the table, if they are willing to do that, and work with us on full-year funding bills, the type of work we do together every year and prevent a shutdown while we do that.

We cannot stand by and accept a yearlong power grab CR that would help Elon take a chain saw to programs that families rely on like yours or keeps our Agencies together, that keep our communities safe.

We actually have a job to do here, Republicans and Democrats, to be a voice for our constituents, to advocate for the funding they need, and to get support back to our communities.

I heard my House Republican colleagues say they will not restrict a Republican President's powers. I want to be clear. What I am asking for is to work together to make sure, as we write and negotiate these full-year spending bills, that our laws get followed. I welcome and I want everyone to know I am open to any and all ideas about how we can work together to do that.

I am confident we can get this done. I am ready to pass a short-term CR immediately to take down the risk of a

shutdown so that we can finish our negotiations and write our full-year spending bills, which is our job to do. Today, on a topic I believe appropriators actually on both sides of the aisle would agree with, we need far more information and transparency and accountability from the Trump administration in order to write these bills because here is one big problem: How are we supposed to fund the government when many of our Agencies today are not responding to our questions and we have no picture—clear picture—of what is actually or who is actually in charge of many of our Agencies?

It is clear as day there have been a lot of dramatic changes made across the government. Agencies are being illegally shuttered; workers are being fired by the thousands—again, often in direct violation of laws we have passed—and hundreds of billions of dollars in Federal programs and grants have been frozen, unfrozen, and frozen again. We have had contracts that have been recklessly canceled, some accidentally and then restarted, not to mention the workers who were fired and rehired.

It is incredibly chaotic, and it makes it much harder to write our legislation that actually responds to these latest developments when programs are switching on and off again like a 2-year-old who is playing with a light switch and when the number of people and programs illegally terminated remains unclear. It is much more difficult to write funding bills for Department programs when we have no idea what the Department is actually doing or what the actual plan is for next year or if it is actually they or, perhaps, DOGE making the plans in the first place. We are seeing decisions made and reversed and made and ignored—made by people who have no authority to make them, and yet they are seemingly being implemented.

It is not just the whirlwind of decisions that is causing this chaos; it is the complete lack of transparency and accountability surrounding these decisions from Trump and Musk that makes it all but impossible to get a straight answer.

When we have questions that urgently need answers, like: Why has this energy program been frozen or when will the NIH grants start up again or which VA contracts have actually been scrapped or how many workers have been pushed out? then it helps if we know who is actually in charge.

When our constituents have problems that require solutions quickly or they will have to close a business or lay people off or lose their family farms, then it matters that we can get the right person on the phone to get things resolved.

Yet, when there is information we urgently need so we can write our funding bills and avoid a shutdown, like Agencies' priorities or unexpected challenges or just the basic nuts and bolts of stuff—to say nothing of the in-

formation we need to address the very extraordinary circumstances and decisions of the past few weeks—it is totally unclear who we should actually be talking to if we want answers that actually reflect the reality of what is happening. It is totally unclear who is actually making these decisions and who is actually in charge. Appropriators have now sent over 30 letters to Agencies since January 20, asking just to understand Agency actions, and that is to say nothing of the efforts from me and my staff to get answers to our emails and our calls, but the answers have been few and very far between.

What is more, just because we hear something from someone who should know and just because we hear from someone who should be in charge, we have found that it does not mean it is actually true. There has been more than one time in the past few weeks when we have been told one thing only to see the reality is entirely different. Like, for example, when the OMB funding freeze was implemented and we were told it wouldn't affect Head Start, except that it did affect Head Start. Providers in my State were locked out of that payment system for days even after the funding freeze itself was rescinded.

It seems like the only thing that has been consistent about the last few weeks is that every time there has been chaos, every time I see actions that fly in the face of laws we have passed—not to mention common sense—or contradict what I have heard from Agency leaders, DOGE has been at the center of it. We have seen DOGE absolutely trample the authority of Congress and other Federal Agencies, including officials Congress confirmed.

For example, while Secretary Rubio instituted a recklessly broad and illegal freeze of all foreign assistance funding, he publicly announced exceptions for a limited set of programs, including lifesaving aid, the basic idea being that we probably shouldn't let HIV spread rampant, and we probably shouldn't let food grown right here in America rot in ports while children starve. Causing mass death through pointless negligence is not really a good strategy for bolstering our global reputation. It is cruel, and it is self-defeating.

So, as Secretary of State, he made the exception, but DOGE had other plans, because on the rare occasion that what was left of USAID staff who had not been sidelined was able to clear these payments through the Agency's interim leadership—surprise—DOGE staffers would veto those payments anyway. Keep in mind, we know about this not because DOGE disclosed it or State disclosed it. We know only because of reporting.

That is not how this works. Congress and the American people we represent should not be out of the loop, especially given the serious stakes here and the serious questions that remain, like: On what authority did they veto those

payments? Whose orders did they use to overrule the Secretary?

I, for one, would very much like to know, because while the Secretary is guilty of plenty of attacks on his workforce and programs, it certainly seems like the Secretary of State got steamrolled on numerous occasions without even knowing it. If that is the case, who are we supposed to talk to with questions about States' funding needs—the Secretary or the two DOGE minions who actually have their hands directly on the levers of power here?

And let's not forget about what happened at Treasury. DOGE wanted access to our most secure systems. Agency officials told them no, and then the Agency officials were told they are fired. That sent a chilling message to our Federal workers: You stand up to DOGE at your own peril.

It is not just Treasury. DOGE has been worming its way into Department after Department, making a beeline for the most sensitive systems, including ones storing my constituents' sensitive financial data, and bulldozing over anyone who stands in their way for any reason. We don't even know who all of these people are or whether they even have security clearances. They have even had people fired for denying them access to classified material beyond their security levels. That is how completely unchecked their power has become. We have incredibly little insight into what they are actually doing with those sensitive systems. We have seen DOGE claim they can only view some data. That is already deeply concerning, but there are also plenty of indications they have been given more power at times. They are interested in tinkering around with some of these systems, too, or are unaccountably blocking payments like we saw at USAID.

Let's talk about the Defense Department because, first, Secretary Hegseth was saying he wanted to revive the "warrior spirit" at the Department, but now he is telling employees to reply to DOGE's weekly emails. He is firing thousands of defense personnel, and he is asking every corner of DOD to propose major cuts.

So, as an appropriator trying to write full-year bills that fund our military, which is it—major increases or major cuts? And who do I ask about Department needs? Is it up to the Secretary or up to DOGE? Who at DOGE is even steering this ship? We need to know this kind of thing, and we really needed to, like, know yesterday because we have a deadline coming up for funding the military.

We have some serious questions for whoever is in charge about how the administration is approaching things. When I say "whoever is in charge," I don't mean who is in charge on paper, because it seems like there is a big disconnect. I mean, Who is actually making decisions and driving actions at our Agencies and at DOGE for that matter?

Look. First, Elon was running DOGE with Vivek. Then it was just Elon.

Then it supposedly wasn't Elon at all, but then Elon kept right on posting about hiring decisions like someone in charge and rehiring an individual who resigned after their blatant racism came to light. He kept right on doing press availabilities with the President in the Oval Office to discuss his work at DOGE like someone in charge. So it sure looks like Elon is still the head of DOGE. Even after we were all finally told, with great supposed certainty, that DOGE was actually being run by another person no one had ever mentioned, we then promptly learned, oh, she is on vacation, and the very next day, we saw Elon briefing the Cabinet on what he is doing at DOGE.

If that all seems confusing or contradictory, I don't think it is an accident as much as a smokescreen—one that seems designed to hide the obvious fact that Elon Musk is the one who is calling the shots at DOGE. All of us here in Congress really need to know that because he is the richest man in the world, with billions, actually, in government contracts on the line. He is, apparently, in charge of his own conflicts of interest. And we are just supposed to trust him? Has he recused himself from a single decision? We haven't heard anything about that.

As a steward of taxpayer dollars who wants to make sure the bills we write are implemented to help my constituents, not Elon Musk's bottom line, I would like to know: Did the owner of SpaceX recuse himself from decisions gutting NASA? Did the owner of Tesla interfere at all in the funding freezes that hurt his competition in the electric vehicle market? Does the guy who posted criticizing of Verizon's work for FAA and pitching his own company's Starlink as an alternative have anything to do with the reports the government may reverse course now on the Verizon contract? Did the guy selling satellite internet have any role in halting funds that were helping my constituents have access to broadband?

What about all of the watchdogs who have been fired—people reviewing Neuralink devices at the FDA? people at the Agency that reviews the safety of Tesla's self-driving cars? or the inspector general looking into Elon's connections to foreign governments?

Despite what Musk likes to pretend, it is not in the slightest bit transparent for him alone to be deciding what he hides and what he shares about his role in government, nor is it transparent when DOGE is posting updates that are often completely inaccurate—from getting basic math wrong to getting wrong basic timelines of what Trump did versus Biden to not understanding how our contracts work and counting the same cuts over and over and over again. They aren't being transparent. They are muddying up the waters with falsehoods and disinformation and making it that much harder for us to write meaningful funding bills in the next few days.

I mean, if DOGE doesn't even know what programs they have cut and how

much they have cut, how are we supposed to understand how these decisions hurt our constituents? How are we supposed to write legislation that rejects the cuts we find harmful or even aligns if there are areas of agreement?

We need real answers from DOGE, and we need them as soon as possible. So, once again, I am requesting that Elon Musk come before Congress for a hearing in order to be held accountable to the American people. Tell us: What exactly are you doing? Why are you firing Federal employees whose salaries are covered by fees, not by taxpayer dollars? Why are you firing our veterans by the thousands who are doing work to support our communities? Why are you planning to fire the people who make sure seniors get their Social Security checks? Who are the people who work for you? How were they vetted? What are your long-term plans for this Agency? Based on what authority are you overruling our Secretaries, directing Federal workers, and ignoring the laws we have passed here in Congress?

America is waiting. We are losing valuable time. Congress and the American people deserve answers, and we need them to do their jobs.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I rise to speak today on important public policy issues related to my State's economy and appreciate the opportunity to follow our senior Senator, Senator MURRAY, who is articulating the impact of some of these so important public policy issues on the State of Washington.

Trade is the lifeblood of the State of Washington and our economy. Farmers in my State export \$7.5 billion worth of agriculture products a year. That was the number from 2023—\$7.5 billion. So anytime somebody starts a trade war, I guarantee you, you are going to get our attention.

Under the President's trade war, the farmers in my State are going to be the first victims. Trump said to our farmers yesterday on Truth Social, "Tariffs will go on external products on April 2. Have fun!"

Have fun? Have fun? When retaliatory tariffs strike our farmers, just as they did in the first Trump administration, it is not going to be fun; it is going to be a nightmare for our farmers. And many of the farmers in my State worry that they will be able to farm at all.

It is not like they are going to lose farmland. There are rich people, billionaires, software executives who will buy farmland. We are going to lose farmers. I know this because we have already been through this trade war, with many of my farmers struggling to overcome the damage that was wrought during the first Trump administration.

The last time we went down this road, we lost the apple market because

of retaliatory tariffs. We had a \$120 million market that basically collapsed, practically overnight, in India. And I traveled to India and worked hard over several years to lift those tariffs, and now, we finally are back growing our exports exponentially, but the market still isn't fully recovered, and now, people are questioning what is going to happen next.

I heard from a grower in my State who said, "The alarms in ag are sounding. The band has stopped playing, and the last lifeboats are leaving the ship. We cannot endure another cycle similar to the one that was started seven years ago when tariffs were first put in place. And without meaningful, long-lasting solutions, you may very well be looking at the last generation of farm families."

That is just one of my constituents. He doesn't sound like he is having fun. These family legacies, built on generations of work, cannot be lost in a trade war. You can't get them back once they are gone.

I hope my colleagues will slow down on this tariff tirade. Under article I, section 8 of the U.S. Constitution, Congress has the power to set duties and regulate foreign commerce. However, Congress has spent the last 80 years delegating its tariff authority to Presidents.

You can say, okay, well, that might have been okay because previous Democrat and Republican Presidents worked to lower tariffs and to open up markets. I have voted for many of those trade agreements. But this President, I believe, is abusing this authority. He calls it an emergency. He is using the trade wars to supposedly force countries to do things like changing their border policies.

I believe it is time for Congress to start taking back some of that power and considering how we are going to protect the family farm.

We know this—that in my State, families are paying more for groceries. They are paying more at the gas pump. They are paying more for electricity bills. And they are seeing the stock market plummet because, as businesses grapple with Trump's unnecessary trade war, businesses are concerned about the long-term impacts of the supply chain and the cost of those tariffs.

The American people want to see the administration tackle inflation and the high cost of everything. When President Trump was on the campaign trail, he talked about inflation. He said, "Starting day one, we will end inflation and make sure that America is affordable again and bring down prices on all goods." Well, I don't think that is what is happening today.

The Wall Street Journal editorial board put it well this morning when they wrote: "Trump takes the dumbest tariff plunge." I agree. We don't need to be doing this.

These tariffs are attacks on groceries bought by every American. Canada is

the largest exporter of meat to the United States, while 77 percent of fresh vegetables are imported from Mexico and 11 percent are imported from Canada. So costs are going up on every American who is buying, and that means they will also buy less.

The tariffs on Canada and Mexican goods that President Trump is planning would cost American families an estimated up to \$2,000 per year. According to Anderson Economic Group, tariffs could raise the price of a new car as much as \$12,000. I am pretty sure nobody has extra money for a new car.

Housing costs—one of the biggest drivers on inflation, but President Trump's tariffs would drive up the cost of construction material, making it even more expensive to address our housing shortage, slow our new home construction, and one analysis found that tariffs could push home construction up by 4 to 6 percent over the next 12 months.

I can tell you, we already have expensive housing in the Northwest. We can't afford another 4 to 6 percent. And the tariffs also create supply chain disruptions, making it harder to find alternative sources of materials, delaying projects that are already underway, and these short-term sticker shocks will put long-term pressure on housing affordability, making the problem worse—not solving it.

Just last week, when people want to talk about GDP and where this is going, it was amazing that the Atlanta Fed was forecasting GDP growth over 2 percent for the first quarter of 2025. That is literally what this line here was discussing, that the consensus was 2 percent, and even the Fed was weighing in on that.

But we can see when we got to February, we fell off a cliff. We fell off a cliff. And why? Because now the Atlanta Fed is saying we had one swing of 5 percent in just 1 week. And now, this drop is the representation of a cliff that President Trump is pushing the American economy over.

So you can see they are going down to negative—not just zero growth, but negative. We can't afford that, and we can't afford the stock market dropping 700 points yesterday.

The only way that we can work together is that if my colleagues here will start talking about these tariff issues. We don't need to weaken our institutions here; we need to strengthen them. And our colleagues need to work together to resolve these issues.

I would say, too, that as my colleagues start to plan how we deal with these budget issues, that we should also keep in mind that some of the cuts that these Agencies have been facing are really the cuts to some of the most technical jobs the U.S. Government has.

Whether you are talking about NOAA or the National Weather Service or the National Institutes of Health or the National Science Foundation or the U.S. Department of Agriculture—they

have all been targeted for reductions. These Agencies are critical to our economic growth and to our security. And at a time when we are seeing more extreme weather events or more floods or more wildfires, why shouldn't we be investing more in weather forecasting, not less?

And when you look at NOAA workers who support our commercial and recreation and Tribal fisheries—they employ 1.7 million people, including thousands in the State of Washington. Why would you cut specialized workforce that are helping support the growth of GDP? Because you want to basically cut those technical workers at the same time you are putting on tariffs?

In 2023, the National Institute of Health awarded \$1.2 billion in highly competitive grants to the State of Washington—65 different organizations. This supported 12,000 jobs and generated \$3 billion in economic activity. But DOGE wants to cap the overhead expenses of research. University of Washington Medicine tells me that this would leave them with shortfalls and that they might have to stop clinical trials that are underway. You can't just stop medical research like it is a faucet.

Once halted, the research, the data, the clinical trials, the patients, the laboratories, the equipment, all that led to innovation—will be lost. You think you just turn that back on? You know, these kinds of ideas sound great, but they are not well thought out. It is literally throwing tax dollars away.

Tonight, my guest at the State of the Union will be Dr. Paul Lange from the University of Washington. With support of Federal funding, Dr. Lange helped develop early detection tests for prostate cancer. Because of these tests and other treatment breakthroughs, we have seen a decrease in the death rate from prostate cancer. From 1993 to 2022, it dropped by one-half—significant progress.

That is why we need research dollars to save lives. Similarly, Washington State University researchers actively test on novel drug treatment for advanced prostate cancer at Sharma Lab. If its work is disrupted, they say that "risk potentially is high, not being able to replace data, and endangering the ultimate viability of potentially lifesaving treatments."

There are lives that might not be saved because of these budget cuts. So it is time that Congress gets involved, that we fight for the science that we believe will save lives, move our country forward and grow our GDP, and help our farmers by stopping these trade wars, and putting our farmers back in charge of growing an economy for the future.

I hope that we don't cut ARS funding that USDA depends on. I hope that we will give hope to our future constituents and the growth that we need to grow our economy instead of cutting our opportunity.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

(The remarks of Mrs. BRITT pertaining to the submission of S. 846 and S. 847 are printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

Mrs. BRITT. I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 1:20 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. BRITT).

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE RELATING TO "GROSS PROCEEDS REPORTING BY BROKERS THAT REGULARLY PROVIDE SERVICES EFFECTUATING DIGITAL ASSET SALES"—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 151

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I come to the floor today because I am concerned about President Trump's actions to, I believe, start a trade war with our top two trading partners, Canada and Mexico.

All goods coming from Canada and Mexico, as of midnight last night—I guess midnight today—face a 25-percent tax; that is, all except Canadian energy, which is taxed at 10 percent. Trump's tariffs will make everything from gas to heating, to groceries, to lumber and more, more expensive for everyday Americans.

I think it bears repeating that tariffs are paid by consumers. They are paid by Americans, not by other countries. And what the President is doing amounts to a new tax for Americans. For example, heating oil and propane that keeps hundreds of thousands of Granite Staters warm in the winter is going to cost more. We are going to add about \$150 to \$250 to the cost of heating homes in New Hampshire.

And gas prices are going to go up. In New Hampshire, half of the fuel in our cars and trucks comes from Canada, and U.S. refineries across the Midwest use Canadian oil.

The United States imports 80 percent of its potash fertilizer from Canada, and this tariff makes farming and food more expensive.

It is unclear how the American auto industry is going to continue to operate. Ford's CEO said these tariffs will "blow a hole in the U.S. industry that we have never seen," with up to \$12,000 added to the cost of a car.

And this will make lumber and electrical equipment that we need to build housing—at a time when housing is al-

ready in short supply—it will make them more expensive and harder to find.

Those are just a few examples.

There are countless other imports that American businesses and families rely on that are going to be hit hard, and these tariffs do nothing to bring down those costs. They do just the opposite.

These tariffs could add \$1,200 to an average household's yearly cost, and we won't have to wait very long for the impact to be felt. It is already being felt on Wall Street and the stock market. Target's CEO said this morning that the consumer "will likely see price increases over the next couple of days." And for small businesses, these tariff taxes will be felt by small businesses in all of our States.

I was here, a month ago today, sharing stories from businessowners in New Hampshire who weren't sure how they were going to keep operating if specialized machinery that they can only get from Canada suddenly costs 25 percent more. Since that time, I have heard from even more people in New Hampshire, more small businesses.

Last week, I heard from a small company in Windham, NH, that makes allergen-free cookies, and they can only get certain ingredients for those cookies from Canada. The CEO built her business, which now employs 30 people, and now she can't be sure if they are even going to be able to keep going, let alone keep growing.

When I spoke with business representatives across New Hampshire last month, the theme they kept coming back to was "uncertainty." As a former small businessowner, I know that uncertainty is the most destabilizing aspect of running and growing a business. Yet that is what this administration keeps creating.

Yesterday, we learned that new orders from manufacturers dropped in February for the first time in 22 years. For the first time in 22 years, new orders from manufacturers dropped because companies can't work with this level of uncertainty.

Last Wednesday, the President was talking about Canadian tariffs going into effect April 2. The very next morning, he announced 25 percent tariffs would go into effect today. The whiplash is hard to imagine.

I spoke, last month, about a bus company, C&J Bus Lines, in New Hampshire that was worried about these tariffs and what it would mean for the bottom line. Well, the CEO moved up his delivery date to get three buses in late March before these taxes were set to go into effect, but his costs just went up more than \$450,000.

Businesses plan months, quarters, or years in advance. They need to place orders and plot out their growth in order to succeed. How can they plan when they can't even know whether their costs are going to go up 25 percent overnight? How can a developer know if they can start building the

housing that New Hampshire desperately needs if their lumber costs 25 percent more overnight? And how can a family already struggling with high costs continue to pay the rent or put food on the table if their household costs are going to go up \$1,200 this year?

I want families and businesses to know that the whims of this President are not going to cause them to break the bank on everyday items they need to get by. That is why I introduced the Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes on Imported Goods Act. It is a simple change, really. It says that the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, or IEEPA, can no longer be used to place taxes on imports.

If the President needs to block some dangerous product, he still can. But if there is a real threat, we would want to stop it, not just add a tariff tax. That is what my bill does. It would stop these tariffs on goods and energy coming from Canada and Mexico, and it would give businesses and families more certainty to plan for the future and to keep their hard-earned dollars in their pockets.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S. 151 and that 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?

The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Madam President, reserving the right to object, IEEPA is a powerful tool that provides the President with a range of authorities to protect our national security. With all the challenges facing our Nation, now is not the time to be limiting Presidential power, and that is exactly what Senator SHAHEEN's bill would do.

Instead, we must use every tool available to combat these threats, and we are already seeing results. As an example, Colombia accepted migrant return flights. We have seen Mexico and Canada take initial credible steps to combat fentanyl and illegal immigration. Now is not the time to tie the hands of President Trump.

Thank you, and I look forward to working with my colleagues in the Senate through regular order to ensure that we take every step to protect our national security.

Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I know that my colleague from Oregon wants to speak to this issue, but I just want to respond in a couple of ways.

I know my colleague from South Carolina cares about the issues that I am going to address, but he mentioned fentanyl, and that is what the President has used to justify the tariffs. He

says this is a way to stop the flow of fentanyl into our country, but he has forgotten a few inconvenient facts.

First, it is that, in 2024, CBP, or Customs and Border Protection, seized about 43 pounds of fentanyl along our northern border—about 1 percent of the fentanyl coming into this country. Now, it has long been known that fentanyl is not coming from Canada, and that hard drugs and firearms flow north from the United States into Canada.

In fact, on February 25, the Canada Border Services Agency announced the seizure of 410 pounds of methamphetamine and 42 pounds of cocaine from two commercial trucks seeking entry into Canada at the Coutts port of entry. Seizures like this are not uncommon. Wouldn't it make more sense if we agreed to work together with our Canadian allies instead of putting a tariff on them?

The second fact that bears mentioning is that the vast majority of the fentanyl crossing the southwest border is transported by Americans, hidden in their cars and trucks. That is why I have supported—like most of my colleagues in this body have supported—more money for technology and personnel to better find these drugs before they enter the United States. That is why I supported the border bill last year that this President stopped because he wanted a political issue.

On China, we can debate another time whether this is actually the right long-term strategy with China. But more important than that, my bill does not prevent tariffs against countries like China that have unfair trade practices. Both President Trump, in his first term, and President Biden have already placed tariffs on numerous imports from China to respond to its unfair trade practices, exactly what section 301 of the Trade Act is for. That tool remains available.

My bill only addresses the ability of the President to tax imports on a whim. And I want to note that, thanks to this President, we now have higher taxes on imports from Canada than from China. I don't know how that makes sense—that we are taxing our allies more than we are taxing our adversaries.

So I would say: Is this really about China, or is a more important motivation here to raise costs on American families to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy?

As the ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee, I take very seriously our ability to use sanctions or other tools in foreign policy. This bill does nothing to limit the use of sanctions under IEEPA, nor does it prevent an embargo or fully blocking dangerous imports.

But I don't think a tax is the right solution for those issues. In fact, this is breaking the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement that President Trump negotiated just 6 years ago. And if we are going to break the very deal we have

negotiated—I think, one of the most important achievements of the first Trump administration—why would people want to work with us in the future? Why would they want to work with a Trump administration? How does being an unreliable partner to our closest allies help our national security?

I think it is important to be clear on this: Donald Trump's trade war doesn't create any manufacturing jobs tomorrow in the United States. In fact, it is far more likely to cost us tens or hundreds of thousands of jobs. Half of the goods that America imports are intermediate components, that means parts that our companies manufacture into finished goods. Every one of those items coming from Canada or Mexico just got 25 percent more expensive.

And we have already heard from automakers. They are not sure how much this is going to add to the bottom line of cars. I think that is a lot of risk for tariffs that President Trump can't justify for any other reason, other than because he wants to get funding to support a tax cut for the wealthiest Americans.

Yet the President is talking about wanting to cut deals with Russia for economic development. I don't see the logic in going half way around the world to deal with a dictator—a murderous dictator, by the way—like Vladimir Putin. At the same time, we are damaging relationships and cutting off trade with our closest allies right here in North America.

I am happy to listen to somebody's explanation here, but I don't think it makes sense, and it seems entirely contrary to American values to me. So I hope that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will see the folly in what the President is doing, will recognize the impact on the economy and American families because of these increased costs, and agree that these tariffs should be rolled back.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, my colleague from New Hampshire is being way too logical for some of what passes as trade debate here. And it is my hope that her excellent proposal will be back on this Senate floor sometime soon for unanimous consent to pass a very important bill protecting Americans from tax hikes on imported goods.

This is, as she has stated, a straightforward proposition. All it does is clarify that the President's emergency powers can't be used to put tariffs on the things Americans buy from other countries.

Now, Donald Trump calls himself a "tariff man"—his quote, not mine. It is the only answer he seems to have to any problem under the sun. Instead of taking time to think through actual solutions, he is willing to use any authority he can find to slap tariffs on our trading partners.

Just today, he announced he was slapping 25 percent tariffs on Canada

and Mexico, which are two of our three largest trading partners and closest allies.

That alone is going to raise costs for Americans on gas, on cars, on fruits and vegetables, and many other products. It is also going to cost America jobs because Canada and Mexico have announced plans to retaliate against our exports.

That is the opposite of what Donald Trump pledged to the American people.

It is disturbing that Donald Trump is going rogue and using emergency powers to pursue his tariffs. The American people voted for lower—not higher—prices. Donald Trump campaigned on the promise that he would lower costs on day one of his Presidency. But just a month in, all Trump has managed to do is gut the agencies in charge of protecting consumers and going after predatory corporations, and he's landed us in trade wars that are going to drive up the cost of goods people use every day.

Whether it is to punish a country that he doesn't like or to settle scores with foreign leaders, the only answer Donald Trump has ever had is tariffs. And as the ranking Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee, I have heard him play that card again and again, no matter how many times we have said: Look, tariffs should be one of the tools in the trade toolbox, but it shouldn't be the universal answer to everything.

Trump's approach is going to drive up prices and costs for American families, businesses, and farmers in the process.

He does it, in my view, because he and his billionaire friends aren't going to feel the impacts, and they don't care about the millions of Americans who will.

These higher costs essentially add up to a Trump Tax on everything from food to clothes and cars. And to those who voted for Donald Trump because they wanted lower prices and a fairer economy—it sure seems to me that these policies are a betrayal. The Shaheen bill that we are trying to pass today would rein in some of Donald Trump's worst impulses and clarify that the laws on the books were never meant to be a blank check for the President to abuse tariffs by using them as a punishment against any country that hurts his feelings.

A number of our Republican colleagues have supported the Shaheen proposal in the past because putting a check on the President's power to land us in trade wars should not be, as my colleague has said, partisan or controversial. It is Shaheen common sense. I want to thank her for an excellent bill, and for her leadership that I have watched from my vantage point on the Finance Committee.

And when we can get this bill back on the floor for unanimous consent, I hope it will be met with a resounding bipartisan showing of support, and I look forward to working with her until that day comes to be.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. Banks). The Senator from Connecticut.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. RES. 105

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, tragically and totally unnecessarily, what we are seeing in real time is an assault on the veterans of America. It is an assault that is part of a campaign by Elon Musk, who has been empowered by President Trump supposedly to eliminate waste in our Federal Government.

Instead of eliminating waste, Elon Musk is laying waste to the Department of Veterans Affairs, and it is unfolding in real time, with real-life impacts on our veterans. Not only is he firing veterans at the VA—many of the 2,400 already terminated are veterans, one-third of them—but across Agencies in the U.S. Government, where 30,000 members of the Federal workforce have been indiscriminately terminated. Thirty percent of them are veterans as well.

Almost 50 percent of everybody in the Department of Defense who has been fired are veterans, and they may be probationary employees who have been promoted to positions where they are in probationary status because they have done such a great job. They are being fired.

Younger members of the Federal workforce—there for up to 2 years, the future of our civil service—they are firing, and so many of them are veterans who have worn the uniform, served and sacrificed, and want to continue to benefit the country with the skills and dedication they have demonstrated as members of our U.S. Armed Forces.

Public service has long been a preferred path for military-affiliated populations. Whether it is in our local police force or as emergency medical personnel, joining the Federal workforce has enabled them to continue serving our country while it offers competitive wages, benefits, and much needed stability for them as veterans and tremendous benefits for taxpayers.

Now what Elon Musk is doing—relying on his tech bros and his algorithms and his AI formulas—is to cut across the board, leaving those veterans as disposable trash or roadkill in his campaign to eliminate waste.

Well, let me tell you, Elon Musk, if you were serious about eliminating waste, you wouldn't have fired the inspectors general of these Agencies, who are the watchdogs. They have records of eliminating waste, fraud, and abuse.

Exhibit A is Michael Missal, the inspector general of the VA, hired and appointed first by President Obama. He served under President Trump for 4 years and then under President Biden. He has ruffled feathers of Republican and Democrat administrations because he has uncovered waste and fraud in a very bipartisan way, and he regards his job as bipartisan. He would be the one to eliminate waste, not with a meat-ax but with a scalpel.

I wish my colleagues had been in the hearing today, the joint hearing of the

House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees, to hear Commander Al Lipphardt of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the VFW—a really heroic Vietnam veteran, injured there, with shrapnel in his arm. As he told us, the surgeon removed the shrapnel piece by piece; he didn't cut off his arm. That is the approach that we need, as he said, in eliminating waste—not cutting off arms or legs but removing the waste carefully, deliberately, cautiously.

Among the illegally terminated—and I should stress “illegally terminated”—are 2,400 VA employees, many of them veterans themselves, members of the Guard or Reserves now, caregivers, military spouses. In the DOD, many of them—45 percent—are former veterans. The overall impact will be disastrous on the 640,000 veterans who are public servants.

Musk and Trump have already upended the lives of so many thousands of veterans who were casually discarded, illegally fired without notice or justification—all for cheap headlines. The impacts in real life are undeniable. Stories from newspapers, from broadcast media, from all kinds of outlets, tell the story of those real-life impacts.

I know my colleagues are hearing from their constituents about the mental health services that are delayed, about the surgeries that can't be provided, and about the Veterans Crisis Line, serving veterans who may be taking their own lives—all reduced. These real-life impacts are undeniable. We are talking about the people who make sure that veterans have transportation to those appointments, who assist with benefits claims, who ensure that the VA hospitals are maintained and that they are safe, who clean operating rooms and sterilize instruments in between procedures. It may not be the surgeon who is fired, but the surgeon who is walking into the operating room needs a staff and a team to assist him. He needs the housekeeping staff to make sure that it is clean. These people have dedicated their careers to serving veterans and their Nation, and all have been indiscriminately and illegally terminated.

These short headlines tell a story, and so does this visual from Springfield, MA:

Due to abrupt and unplanned staff shortages, we are not able to greet you at this time. If you have a scheduled appointment, your counselor will be out to get you at the time of your appointment. If you are here for any other reason, please call and leave a message, and a staff member will return your call.

We apologize—

“We apologize”—

for any inconvenience and impact on your care.

Donald Trump and Elon Musk owe veterans an apology. Right now, Elon Musk is giving veterans the middle finger. Veterans won't stand for it.

So, Mr. President, I am introducing a resolution today and asking that we approve it to uphold the contract, to

uphold the promise, to uphold the commitment we made to our veterans when they raised their right hands and promised to serve and sacrifice even at the risk of dying.

I am joined by Senators HIRONO, SLOTKIN, LUJÁN, MURRAY, DURBIN, WHITEHOUSE, WARNOCK, KLOBUCHAR, SHAHEEN, KAINE, ROSEN, CORTEZ, MASTO, ALSOBROOKS, KELLY, WARREN, HASSAN, SCHIFF, BALDWIN, DUCKWORTH, GALLEG0, PETERS, VAN HOLLEN, SANDERS, BOOKER, WYDEN, MERKLEY, WARNER, SMITH, PADILLA, HEINRICH, SCHATZ, and HICKENLOOPER in this effort. I wish—I really wish—it were bipartisan because veterans' issues have been bipartisan. I have worked with veterans, including the chairman, whom I respect, Senator MORAN, on these issues.

This resolution acknowledges that veterans, who make up less than 7 percent of Americans but approximately 30 percent of public service, have been really disrespected and disserved in just these weeks, with such destructive and repugnant effects on them, on the veterans they serve, and on American values. Our Nation and they deserve better.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 105, which is at the desk; further, 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 an objection?

The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, in my conversations with Kansans, I frequently point to the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs as proof that we can still work together, that unity is attainable, and that we are able to set aside our partisan differences and frustrations to find a way to work together to put our Nation's veterans first because they did that for us when they put on the uniform and took a vow to defend and protect our country.

The Senate has to work together with the administration, with the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs, veterans service organizations, and the broad veteran community across the country. This resolution divides the Congress and the administration and makes it more difficult for us to find consensus. We should work together. We should work together to determine what is the right kind of workforce at the VA—a workforce that enables the Department to better care for veterans.

Approving this resolution drives a wedge between this body—this Senate, this Congress—and the executive branch, and I don't see how that helps veterans.

Additionally, this resolution was designed to lock in at the VA the status quo as of January 19. I don't know if any of my colleagues believe the VA

was doing everything just right prior to this administration.

I commit today to all my colleagues to work with them to make certain the VA retains an effective workforce that can deliver our promises to veterans, but we will only achieve that by working together and working with the Department of Veterans Affairs to find the desirable outcomes. We need more information, and we need to be working together to achieve that. Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, first, let me say I am hopeful that we can work together—if the chairman of the VA Committee is willing to do it—to try to arrive at language that calls for the rehiring of these veterans, rescinding the layoffs.

I must say that we are joined today by a number of guests of my colleagues as well as myself, veterans who have been terminated. They are with us today. They are going to be with us tonight at the address offered by President Trump.

I am more than happy to work on this resolution if there is a way to make it bipartisan, but the basic principle that we owe our veterans that contract and commitment and that we need to bring them back so that these kinds of consequences can be avoided I think is fundamental to the effort today.

We know that more than 50 patient appointments were canceled at a VA facility just this past week because they can't hire staff needed to care for those veterans.

We know that in the first round of terminations, Secretary Collins terminated nine Veterans Crisis Line employees. Then he hired some back, and then he fired more.

We know that a pregnant spouse of a disabled veteran who was hired under the military spouse appointing authority was terminated.

We know that a 25-year Marine Corps veteran with a 100-percent service-connected disability rating and 15 years of service was terminated.

We know that a VA researcher working on treatments for substance use disorders among veterans was terminated.

We know that the cyber security lead for the VA website—the digital hub that connects veterans with their benefits and holds sensitive, personal data—was terminated.

These kinds of impacts—and I have mentioned just a tiny fraction of all of them—are ongoing. They are real. They are urgent.

I am more than happy to work on the language of this resolution, but the goal is indisputable and unavoidable.

I am going to turn now to some of my colleagues who have joined me today. I thank them for doing so.

First, Senator WHITEHOUSE, if I may yield to him.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, first, let me thank Senator BLUMENTHAL for this effort. It really matters. Even if it fails, it matters to our veterans to know that we tried, to know that we did not leave them out there at the mercy of Elon Musk and his little muskrats that have been running around through all of our government Agencies breaking Agencies, violating court orders, prowling through your data—Americans, prowling through your data—and, of course, firing veterans.

No President has fired more veterans than Donald Trump just in his first few weeks in office, and what it is doing to the VA and to services for veterans is deeply wrong and deeply unfortunate.

In Rhode Island, we have our Providence VA health center, which is a first-class operation. Our veterans love it. It is well run. It has all sorts of new services and facilities that Senator REED and I have worked to make sure got to the hospital. Also, it has nearly 2,500 employees. It is a big operation.

We also have the Providence VA benefits office, which is such a good benefits office that if a program is being rolled out and not working someplace, they call in the Providence benefits office to try to get it working. If they are about to roll out a new program and they want to beta test it, they go to the Providence benefits office because they are good at what they do. I can't think of anything that makes them more proud than the customers they serve. They love the folks they work for.

So to go through this group and slash and burn without the least logic or care from, like, these little tech bro muskrat types who have never served, have no idea what they are doing, but are just taking delight in moving fast and breaking things, to use the tech bro talk—well, that is fine if you are a tech bro and you are playing around with equipment, but when you are dealing with our veterans and you are dealing with people's lives, running around fast, not knowing what you are doing, and breaking stuff sounds more like Thing One and Thing Two from "The Cat in the Hat." This is not the responsible way veterans should be treated.

I will mention just two while I am here.

There is a Rhode Islander who works for our Veterans Crisis Line. It is the hotline that veterans can call in to when they are having an acute crisis of some kind, perhaps even feeling suicidal. This is not easy work. When that phone goes, you have to be on, and you have to be expert. You have to understand how to support the people who are calling in. You have to understand how to get them to the services they need. It is a life-and-death matter.

This individual was fired and then rehired a few days later—or at least told they were reinstated just a few days

later. But with all the scrambling going on at the VA, the VA has not reissued work credentials, and they still do not have a return-to-work date for the improper firing that never should have happened and then was rescinded but now doesn't have a proper end to the termination. It is administrative malpractice, it is stupid, and it is wrong.

We have another Rhode Islander who worked at the local vet center who was also abruptly and unjustifiably terminated.

As I said, it really means a lot to these people to be working for veterans. They really put their hearts into it, and they really want to do a very good job. They actually get rated on whether or not they are, in fact, doing a good job.

This individual received outstanding performance ratings. It wasn't just that they threw their heart and soul into their work, their peers reviewed them and their supervisors reviewed them and said that they were outstanding performers at their work.

So a letter comes to them saying that they were terminated due to poor performance. Among other things, that was a lie because they weren't poor performers. They were excellent performers.

When you lie to people who are working for veterans just so you can fire them, that is a pretty loathsome way to go about serving veterans, and it is certainly a loathsome way to treat the people who dedicate their lives to taking care of veterans.

If you want to go find the people who have poor performance and fire them, go find the people who have poor performance and fire them, but don't just randomly accuse high performers of poor performance, lie to them about their performance, and fire them. It is a really offensive state of affairs.

It means now that vet center calls are being routed out to Colorado in a different time zone. Rhode Island—a little bit like Connecticut—is a small State. Connecticut is a little bigger. We have our own character, we have our own nature, and we have our own, often, way of speaking. And it matters, when you pick up the phone to call the vet center, that you are not talking to somebody several time zones away in Colorado, particularly not because the phone isn't being answered because a high-performing worker was lied to about their performance and wrongly fired. There is really no excuse for that.

I want to say to the folks at the Providence benefits office: Thank you. God bless you. We admire and respect what you do. We recognize that the entire VA organization has treated you as particularly expert and able, and the work you do to make sure our vets get the benefits they are due is first class. Thank you for what you do. We are grateful. And I apologize that this President and this whatever he is and his little muskrats are doing this kind

of damage to the institution you so proudly serve.

To the folks at the Providence VA hospital: God bless you, and thank you. You do great work.

I deal with veterans all the time. Our veterans love our hospital. They are proud of our hospital. They think it is well run. They think they are well treated. The services are good. You can even get rides there. There is good parking. I mean, this hospital runs the way you would want a veterans hospital to run.

So keep those little muskrats out of Rhode Island. Don't damage the services to our veterans.

I hope that, as the chairman said, we can come together and fix this, but it is hard to hear about how we should come together when nobody came together from "Muskland," and those little muskrats didn't check in with anybody before they went in to break stuff at these Agencies. It is a little late for togetherness when there has been none in terms of defending the work that these wonderful people do.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, we are going to be joined by others of my colleagues, but I want to follow Senator WHITEHOUSE's very eloquent remarks by just making a couple of quick points.

You know, tonight, the President is going to speak to Members of both the House and the Senate, and he is going to make a lot of claims, many of them untethered in any way to the facts. But if he does nothing else, what I would like to see him do is show some respect for our veterans. He has called them suckers and losers. They have been called swamp creatures or deep-staters by members of this administration. Part of the mindset here that is responsible for these firings is that disrespect for our veterans.

Two of my sons are veterans—one, a Marine Corps first lieutenant who served in Afghanistan; another, a Navy SEAL. They value the VA.

Americans see in their real lives how the VA helps our veterans.

When the President speaks tonight, I want him to look at the guests whom we have brought—not only my guest, Michael Missal, the former inspector general of the VA, but also a U.S. Air Force veteran with more than 30 years of military service who retired from a lifetime of dedicated service to his country in November and immediately rededicated himself to serving his fellow veterans at the Department of Veterans Affairs. He started work on January 13. He was illegally terminated barely 1 month later. He is the soul breadwinner of his family. And Tony Ruiz, a disabled Army veteran—until he was illegally terminated, he worked at the VA Benefits Administration to assist veterans with their benefits claim. He was cut just 10 days before his probationary period ended. He was serving in his dream job.

These veterans and other courageous former members of our Armed Forces are going to be with us tonight, and they will be speaking out. They will be sharing their stories. They are not faceless bureaucrats. They are not suckers. They are not losers. They are hard-working public servants who have willingly sacrificed everything for this country, have been willing to give even their lives, and now have rededicated themselves to continue their service now that their military time is complete.

I want to yield to my colleague from Michigan, Senator PETERS, who himself is a veteran and a great colleague and friend of ours.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I rise today to speak in opposition to the mass termination of veterans that is taking place all across our Federal Government.

I was proud to serve more than a decade in the U.S. Navy Reserve, where I rose to the rank of lieutenant commander. During this time, I had the absolute privilege to work with some of the most patriotic, hard-working, and inspiring individuals that I have ever met. I know firsthand that veterans are a vital source of talent to our workforce.

So let's just think for a moment. Let's just think about the qualities that make a valuable employee: leadership, work ethic, problem-solving abilities, and of course, integrity. These are not just abstract qualities; they are tangible assets that veterans bring to our businesses, our communities, and to our government. They are qualities that drive innovation. They boost productivity and foster a culture of excellence. Employing our Nation's veterans when they transition to civilian life is not just a responsibility; it is a smart business decision. That is why the Federal Government has long taken advantage of this absolutely remarkable talent pool.

Veterans now make up roughly 30 percent of our Federal workforce—or more than 640,000 veterans in the civil service—and I rise today to express my absolute outrage over the indiscriminate firings of nearly 6,000 of these veterans—from the VA to the Defense Department to the Department of the Treasury.

At the VA, where veterans' input is particularly critical to shaping policies that support our Nation's robust veteran population, Elon Musk and DOGE have fired more than 600 veteran employees. They are part of more than 2,400 individuals fired all across the VA.

I have heard from numerous veterans and VA workers in Michigan who are absolutely devastated and confused by why this administration would turn their back on them like this. My staff met with a veteran who has worked for the VA in Michigan for nearly 30 years. Last year, they were moved to a new

role within the VA and promoted—promoted—to supervisor shortly thereafter. And no surprise because they had never received less than an excellent performance review over 30 years. But because they were relatively new to that specific role, they were swept up in the widespread firings, both within the VA and across government, of all probationary employees. They were one of many veterans fired abruptly, without cause, without reason.

In another case, a veteran with 8 years of Active Duty service in the Air Force was fired from the VA in Michigan after receiving an "outstanding" performance review. His probationary period was set to expire last week, just 12 days after he was let go.

These cuts are not based on fact. They are not based on logic. They are just cruel. And our country will not be better off. As a result of these mass layoffs, Americans can expect longer wait times to receive important documents like passports and Social Security benefits, fewer food safety inspections, and higher risks during air travel.

These are Americans who put their lives on the line to defend this country. They took up a job to continue to serve the people of this country. They represent the very best of our Nation, and we need them in our Federal workforce.

I am calling today on the administration to reinstate these veteran employees immediately.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. KELLY. Mr. President, we made a sacred promise to our veterans that after their service, they would get the care and support that they earned. That promise did not come with an expiration date. And as a combat veteran myself, I take this responsibility personally on behalf of Arizona's more than 500,000 veterans and veterans across the country. But with these mass firings of staff at the VA, President Trump and Elon Musk are breaking that promise.

In the last month, thousands of VA employees, people who care for our Nation's veterans, were fired with no warning, no phone call, no meeting—just an email telling them that they no longer had a job, that they were no longer wanted. These aren't just nameless, faceless bureaucrats; these are Americans who signed up to serve our country by taking care of veterans. They deserve to be treated with respect. These are the people on the frontlines of veterans' care and services, and they were fired without even a thought.

We can all agree that the VA can do a better job, but aimlessly firing thousands of people will do nothing to help speed up veterans' healthcare—nothing. It will just make accessing care more difficult.

Secretary Collins and the VA claim that these were "non-mission critical" jobs. Well, that is simply not true. In

Arizona, we have seen VA workers and the families who rely on the VA impacted in a real way—like Brandy and David, who shared their story with Arizona's Family News and are both veterans themselves who became loan specialists to help fellow veterans navigate financial hardships and avoid homelessness. Before they were fired, each of them was handling 1,500 cases. Each of those cases represents one veteran who needs help. How much longer will it take veterans in need to get answers?

Another Arizona family reached out to my office, afraid to speak out publicly because of fear of retaliation. The husband is a doctor at the Tucson VA. He treats patients with lung disease. But last week he got an email—not a meeting, no conversation—just an email telling him to resign. Is that who Secretary Collins calls “non-mission critical”? His wife now fears that her job could be next. They have two young kids, and now they are being forced to rethink everything because this administration—this administration—kicked them to the curb.

Donald Trump claims to care about veterans but then turns around and fires the very people whose job it is to ensure that veterans get the care that they need, the care that they earned from serving our Nation, for keeping us safe. These are real people. These terminations, they are not just numbers on a spreadsheet; they are real people who execute a mission serving veterans. And these layoffs—these layoffs are going to mean longer wait times for appointments, fewer options for mental health care, fewer options for pain management, more delays in processing benefits.

Is this really where Elon Musk and Donald Trump want to save a buck? Off the backs of veterans who have risked everything for us?

This is not how the United States should treat our veterans. That is why I stand here today as a veteran myself, with Senator BLUMENTHAL and our colleagues, to support this resolution.

Let's get the folks back to work serving our veterans. The work they do is mission critical. Veterans in Arizona and across the country are counting on them, and they are counting on us.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I am going to close this colloquy by, first of all, thanking my colleagues who have come today, especially veterans like Senator KELLY, who served for decades, and Senator PETERS and all the veterans who have joined in this resolution—Senators GALLEGO and others who have served this country—Senator SLOTKIN, Senator PETERS, who was here, and others.

But we don't have to be veterans to appreciate what members of our military do for our country. My own service in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve pales in comparison to many of theirs

and many who have appeared before the Veterans' Committee over these past 7, 10 days, many of them decrying these kinds of cuts. Again, these are real people, affected in real ways, unnecessarily harmed.

And these headlines speak volumes about how they have been hurt:

DOGE finds zero fraud, waste, or abuse, just new ways to harm veterans.

Veterans fired in federal layoffs say they were “stabbed in the back.”

These are just a scattering of the kinds of real-life stories that bring us to the floor today.

I plead with the President: Please make this resolution unnecessary. Do the right thing. But if you don't, I ask my colleagues on the other side of the aisle: Join us from that other side of the aisle; join us in decrying these cuts, the freezes, the firings, the terminations. They are illegal and immoral.

And we will move forward. We will continue to fight because American values are at stake.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. RES. 21

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, last November, the American people returned President Donald Trump to the Oval Office with a mandate to restore common sense in government, and in many ways, this common sense was most needed on the issue of protecting women and girls.

After 4 years where President Biden waged a war on women's sports, the message from voters was clear: no more biological men competing in women's athletics, no more stolen records and medals, and no more invasions of privacy, humiliation, and harm for our Nation's incredible female athletes.

To be certain, President Trump has delivered on the mandate. On Inauguration Day, the President issued an Executive order that affirms the Federal Government's position that there are only two sexes, male and female.

This is a position grounded in biological reality, not gender ideology. Last month, the President also signed an Executive order that bans biological males from competing in women's sports.

It was an honor to join President Trump at the signing ceremony along with the brave young women and girls who have spoken out for fairness, safety, equal opportunity, including one of those female athletes, Tennessee's Riley Gaines.

The terms of the order are simple: If you allow men to compete in women's athletics, you will lose your Federal funding.

To no one's surprise, the order is getting results. Right after President Trump signed it, the NCAA, which oversees more than 530,000 student athletes, announced that it would comply with the order.

For more than a decade, the Nation's largest athletic association allowed

men to compete in women's events. It will be a top priority of mine to ensure that this injustice never happens again and that the NCAA will fully adhere to the Executive order.

While the vast majority of States are complying, there are some States, blue States like California and Maine, that are vowing to fight President Trump over the order.

The message they are sending is clear: Democrats are willing to risk millions in Federal funding for schools to uphold their radical, far-left ideology that claims there are no differences between men and women.

The American people know better, and so do the more than 3 million female high school and college athletes who deserve every single opportunity to succeed. They work hard; they train hard; they set their goals; they compete; and they work to succeed.

To celebrate all of these incredible accomplishments from these 3 million high school and college athletes, I am asking for unanimous consent for my resolution to establish October 10—the 10th month, 10th day—recognized by the Roman numerals XX, like the female sex chromosome, as American Girls in Sports Day, setting aside a day to recognize the accomplishments of 3 million high school and college female athletes.

In addition to celebrating female athletes, this resolution calls on sports governing bodies across the country to protect women and girls in sports. There is absolutely zero reason for Senate Democrats to oppose this resolution, and here is the reason why: We have a New York Times Ipsos poll that tells the story on this. Seventy-nine percent of the American people, including 67 percent of Democrats, want to make certain that female sports are for girls and women. Those numbers—67 percent of Democrats, 79 percent of all Americans—say they are with us.

They want to protect women and girls in sports. They want to make certain that they have the right to compete, the right to train, the right to do team building, and the right to succeed and be recognized for it.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be discharged from further consideration and the Senate now proceed to S. Res. 21; further, 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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, as I understand it, this bill—this resolution seeks to establish an American Girls in Sports Day.

Obviously, that sounds like a really good idea until you read the resolution, and you realize that this resolution actually has virtually nothing to do with the history and the current reality of girls playing sports.

Instead, it is just another attempt by Republicans to pretend that the biggest threat to this country is transgender kids or gay kids or drag shows. Republicans don't want to talk about rising costs, rising grocery prices, rising gas costs. They don't want to talk about the cratering reputation of America in the world. They don't want to talk about the fact the stock market is crashing because of the disastrous economic policies of this President.

No. As usual, it is transgender kids and drag shows that are causing all the problems in America. How do I know that this bill isn't an honest attempt to celebrate girls in sports? Well, first, if you really cared about girls in sports, you would know that we actually already have a national day. It is February 7. It is called National Women and Girls in Sports Day. It was signed into law 40 years ago by President Reagan.

The sponsors of this resolution were so eager to shame transgender kids that they didn't even check to see if there was already a day. Now, folks are going to say Democrats objected to an American Girls in Sports Day. That is like bringing a resolution before the floor to declare June 27 Christmas, and when Democrats object, Democrats are anti-Christmas.

Second, if this bill were really about girls in sports, it would celebrate girls in sports. But this resolution isn't about that. The resolution, if you read it, is just about this one issue; transgender athletes. Frankly, that is an insult to the thousands of girls who do play sports. Ninety-nine percent of them are never going to compete against a transgender athlete.

I am not saying this isn't an issue that is worth spending a little bit of time on, but let's be clear: A female high school athlete in this country is more likely to be killed by a falling object than to lose a competition to a biological male.

If this resolution were really about celebrating girls in sports instead of just trying to bully and shame transgender kids, then maybe somewhere in the resolution it might talk about Patsy Mink, who successfully championed the passage of title IX. Maybe it would mention iconic women athletes who broke barriers like Billie Jean King or Althea Gibson or Kathrine Switzer or Pat Summitt. Maybe they would talk about the iconic sports teams that put women in sports on the national stage, like Louisiana Tech or the U.S. Women's Soccer Team.

Maybe it would actually tell the story of how over the last 50 years, we have gone from 300,000 girls in high school sports to 3.4 million today, but it doesn't do any of that. The text of this resolution isn't about the history of girls and women entering high school and college sports. It is not a celebration of those iconic teams and athletes. Instead, this resolution is just

a tactic, another one, to scare and mislead the public and to bully vulnerable kids. That is the reason that I am on the floor, once again, to object. Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Tennessee.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I find my colleague's comments so very interesting, and I think it would have served him well to actually read the resolution. So I am going to read part of it so that my colleagues know what this does because it does talk about celebrating these athletes.

Here you go:

Whereas athletic participation has an important, positive impact on young girls, improving their physical health, self-confidence, and discipline;

Whereas women have been responsible for some of the greatest athletic feats in the sports history of the United States, from the Olympic games to professional competition;

He wanted to make certain that some of these greats like Pat Summitt and our Lady Vols are recognized. Absolutely. That is what we are doing:

Whereas female athletes have served as inspirations for generations of women and girls;

And then we talk about title IX. We talk about:

Whereas there are fundamental biological differences between men and women that put women at a competitive disadvantage in sports and jeopardize their safety during competition;

And 79 percent of the American people agree with this.

Then we go through:

Whereas, since 2003, biological men have displaced women and girls from 950 championship titles, medals, scholarships, and records they should have rightly won, including at least 28 women's sports titles in volleyball, swimming, mountain biking, track and field, weightlifting, and cycling.

We look at the policies that have been enacted to protect women and the imperative to make certain they are athletically protected and then setting up October 10 as the day that would be American Girls in Sports Day and continuing to recognize that year after year.

Now, my colleague from Connecticut probably knows that this issue of protecting women and girls in sports is very, very popular in Connecticut. One of Connecticut's biggest track stars is a Conrad High School senior there, a male-to-female athlete who holds the State's top 2023–2024 rankings in the girls outdoor high jump, long jump, and triple jump according to athletic.net.

Then you look at—there are two individuals, two boys who identify as female, they competed on a Connecticut high school track team from 2017 to 2020, and there were—and I want to be sure we look at what this does to girls who are trying to compete. This is why this issue is so popular.

Here are the stats. There were 93 times when a girl was denied an individual or relay championship because

of these two male athletes who were competing as females—93 times. A girl who had trained, who had worked out, who sought to win, to represent her team—they were denied because two boys were competing as females. Ninety-three times.

There were 52 times when a girl was denied the advancement to a championship meet. Now, think about that. We all have children. We know the heartbreak when someone has trained and trained and trained, not just for days or weeks or months but for years, and they are denied the ability to move forward because there is a boy competing in a female category.

There were 39 times when a girl was denied an opportunity to advance to finals, 17 times when a girl was denied an All-New England honor, 11 times when a girl lost a meet record, and 23 girls—23—were denied a Connecticut State Open team championship.

In other words, allowing these two boys to compete as females and compete against girls denied girls opportunities and awards 235 times. That is one State.

So I would remind my colleagues they are on the wrong side of this issue. Seventy-nine percent of the American people say it is wrong for men to compete in women's athletics. Sixty-seven percent of Democrats say it is wrong to have men compete in women's athletics.

It is lost opportunity. It is lost recognition. It is lost success for women.

What ever happened to people on the left that supported women's rights, women's safety, supported title IX? Obviously, they have thrown it to the wayside.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

FEDERAL DISASTER TAX RELIEF ACT

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I want to talk for a few moments about income tax filing season. I realize the Presiding Officer would probably prefer to be condemned to hearing O.J. jokes for the rest of eternity than to hear me talk about Federal income tax filing, but it is important for Americans and my people back in Louisiana because we have a new deduction for people who have uninsured losses from natural disasters. It is really important in my State because many of my people have suffered damages, for which they did not receive insurance payments, from Hurricanes Laura, Delta, Ida, and Francine.

We passed this new deduction in December. It is called the Federal Disaster Tax Relief Act. What it does is the following: It changes the law. It now says that if you are a victim of a natural disaster like a hurricane and you have a loss that is not paid for by your insurance, you can now deduct off your income tax dollar for dollar any uninsured property damage in excess of \$500.

Why is that important? Well, under the old rules, you were limited in your

deduction. You could only deduct your uninsured property losses that were in excess of 10 percent of your adjusted gross income. I know that sounds complicated, and it is kind of complicated. But rather than belaboring the point, the bottom line is this: As a result of this bill that we all worked on and we passed, you can now deduct more, and this is the first time people will be able to do this.

Let me say it again. If you had an uninsured property loss, you can now deduct any of that loss above \$500. This also applies in addition to the standard deduction. So if you take the standard deduction, as most Americans do, you can take this additional deduction on top of it.

I would also like to point out to all Americans but especially my people back home in Louisiana that this tax deduction is retroactive. It goes all the way back to 2020. So that means that going back to 2020, if you had uninsured losses, you can now deduct them if they exceed \$500.

I know folks are thinking, well, I already filed my income taxes for 2021 and 2022 and 2023. You can file an amended return. It is very simple to do. You just file an amended return that says: There has been a change in the law, and I am entitled to have this higher deduction, and therefore the Federal Government owes me money, and therefore please send me my check.

So I wanted to make sure that Americans knew about this new tax provision we passed.

INFLATION

Mr. President, the second thing I want to talk about is a subject that some people want to avoid, but I don't, and the American people don't. It is on the minds of every American. That is high prices. I know there are other issues that are important that we are talking about: male athletes in women's sports—that is important; immigration—that is important; national security—we are talking about that, and that is important; the Middle East; Ukraine. I could go on. But the single most important issue that moms and dads worry about in America today when they lie down to sleep at night and can't is inflation, high prices.

I don't want to dwell on the past, but President Biden's administration was an inflation machine. We saw inflation get as high at one point as 10 percent. What does that mean? That means that prices were going up every day, every month, at the rate of 10 percent annualized. Bidenomics, in most people's minds, became paying more to live worse. I mean, inflation just was gutting the American people like a fish. It happened because of all this breathtaking amount of money President Biden's administration spent, trillions of dollars—the American Rescue Plan, the CHIPS Act, the Inflation Reduction Act. They injected trillions of dollars into the economy, frankly, as we are finding out now, most of it in wasteful spending that caused too

many dollars to chase too few goods. Unless you are master class dumb, you know that every single time, that leads to inflation.

Thanks to the efforts of the Federal Reserve, inflation came down. It went down from 10 percent to—today, it is between 2 and 3 percent, depending on whose numbers you believe. And that is good. I am happy it happened. That is called disinflation.

When inflation goes from 10 percent to 3 percent, that means prices are still rising, but they are just not rising as quickly as they were. And that is a good thing, but it doesn't lower prices. It doesn't mean that we have now lower prices. They just aren't as high as they would have been if we hadn't tried to control inflation. That is called disinflation. Deflation is when prices actually go down. Deflation is when prices actually go down.

What the American people are wondering every single day as they sell blood plasma to go to the grocery store is, when am I going to get some relief from these high prices? And we do need to provide them relief.

I want to talk about three ways that we are in the process of trying to reduce those prices that my Democratic colleagues caused. And I don't mean to pick on all my Democratic colleagues, but as I have said before, I like breakfast food and straight answers. No economist in America believes that this inflation happened as a result of happenstance. It happened because of the breathtaking amount of money that President Biden spent.

There are three things we are doing to try to get these prices down. No. 1, reduce spending. You see it every single day from President Trump. He said he was going to audit Federal spending, and that is exactly what he is doing.

Now, there are some people that are mad. There are people that are very mad at President Trump and Mr. Musk and others for discovering all of this waste. The people that are mad don't seem to be mad at the people who caused the waste; they are mad at the President and Mr. Musk for finding the waste. I find that a little bit ironic.

But the point is that we are trying to reduce spending, and you are going to see it in our reconciliation bill that we are going to pass, as the Presiding Officer knows. You are going to see it in our budget, if we ever pass one. We are trying to reduce spending because our debt is \$36 trillion, and it is going up at the rate of \$7 million a minute. I have been talking 5 minutes, maybe; it has grown \$35 million while I was talking.

So we are trying to reduce government spending to get this debt down but also to reduce high prices. Why does it matter? Because the less money that government spends, the less stimulative government is on the private sector. When government spends money—there is a finite amount of money—when government spends money, it is money that we are spending instead of the private sector to create jobs and to increase wages.

So the first thing we are doing—the new administration and the new Congress—is to try to reduce spending, and if we are successful, that will lower these prices.

No. 2, deregulation. The Federal Government wants to regulate every breath we take—every breath we take.

I wish you could see all of the Federal regulations. If you stacked them right here—if you stack every single Federal regulation right here, you could probably stand on this thing and paint the ceiling. It is just amazing.

Each one of these regulations has a cost. The cost of all of our regulations today is in excess of \$2 trillion—not billion, not million—\$2 trillion. What does that mean? That means when a business produces a product or it delivers a service and it has to comply with a meaningless, gnarly Federal regulation which costs money, that extra expense is added to the cost of the product of the service.

Duh.

I mean, businesses have to stay in business. They can't eat the cost. So they pass it on. That leads to higher prices.

So the second thing that we are doing—we are working on it every day. It hasn't been talked about a lot. We passed some bills here on the floor of the Senate, but the administration is doing even more. We are deregulating. We are getting rid of all of these excess regulations whose costs are greater than their benefit. I think the President said he has a new rule that if you are in the bureaucracy and you want to promulgate a new rule, you can do it if it is really necessary, but you have to get rid of 10 others. If we do that successfully, that will reduce prices.

So the first thing we are doing is cutting spending to get down these high prices. The second thing we are doing is implementing Federal deregulation. The third thing we are doing—we are working on it as we speak, as you know, Mr. President.

We have to grow this economy. I mentioned the high spending and the debt that has led to higher prices. Think about this. Since 2019, 5 years ago, the American population increased 2 percent. The Federal budget has increased 55 percent—2 percent population increase, Federal spending is up 55 percent. That is just a fact. The numbers are the numbers. I know we have had some inflation. We haven't had 55-percent worth of inflation. That is just a fact.

Every dollar that the Federal Government spends is a dollar that business people don't have to invest. Why is that important? Because they invest; they grow their business; they add more jobs; the business becomes more profitable; and wages rise.

The third way we are attacking these high prices is by trying to stimulate the economy to increase wages so that we actually can grow out of these high prices so that people will have more money to spend when they buy a car or

go to the grocery store. We are not going to do that with tepid GDP growth.

If you go back to 2010—what, 15 years now? America has experienced average gross domestic product growth—that means how much your economy is growing, as you know, Mr. President. Average GDP growth is a little over 2 percent. That is not going to get it. That is not going to get it. In fact, now when we have 2.5 percent GDP growth, we get so excited. We are so happy we want to have a toga party. Well, 2.5 percent is not going to get it. In order to grow out of these high prices and increase wages, we are going to have to increase GDP growth to at least 3 percent. And that used to be normal for America. That used to be very, very doable and very normal.

How are we going to do that? We are going to do that through the Tax Code. We have about \$4.5 trillion worth of tax cuts that we implemented back in 2017 that caused the economy to grow and wages to go up until COVID hit. Those tax cuts are expiring here very shortly, and we are going to extend them. If we don't, it will be, in effect, a tax increase by \$4.5 trillion. That will send our growth down, not up.

We are also going to change some other provisions of the Tax Code; and in doing so, we are not going to add to our deficit. We are going to match those tax decreases with spending savings so that we do not add to the national debt. That is what we are doing on inflation.

I didn't want this to be lost in translation because of all the other important things we are talking about.

We are well aware that high prices are gutting the American people like a fish. But by reducing spending, by deregulating the economy, and by designing a Tax Code that looks like somebody designed it on purpose, we are going to get those high prices down.

Point 3, I am speaking of saving money. I talked a little bit about public radio and public television in America—the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, NPR, PBS. These are public TV and radio stations. The American people spend about a half billion dollars a year and give it directly to public TV. They give it to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Corporation for Public Broadcasting picks its favorite local TV stations and radio stations, gives money to them, and local TV and radio stations buy programming from NPR and PBS, which is loosely affiliated with Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

There was a time when it was necessary because we only had three TV stations and few radio stations. And people in rural areas depended on the government for the media. Those days are long gone, as we know. We now have a breathtaking array of ways to get information, everything from podcasts to Facebook to Twitter to Google News to cable TV to streaming. We no longer need to spend half a bil-

lion dollars a year or half a trillion dollars a year—we spent \$14.5 billion since we started funding public radio and television. We no longer need to do it.

I mean, we don't fund CNN. We don't subsidize CNN, and if somebody proposed to, I would vote against it. We don't subsidize FOX News. If somebody introduced a bill to subsidize FOX News, I would vote against it. Why are we subsidizing these radio and television stations? They need to compete with everybody else.

The final point I want to make on this subject, the audience for public radio and public television is declining. Let me say that again. The audience for public radio and public television, which your tax dollars pay for, is declining. Why is that? There are a lot of reasons for it, but I will tell you one. People used to tune into PBS and NPR and Corporation for Public bias—Public Broadcasting—Freudian slip there—because those stations played it right straight down the middle. But they don't anymore. They are very, very biased in their reporting. We all know that. I mean, all you have to do is listen to them.

This is America. You are entitled—I despise opinion journalists, but it is constitutional. On the First Amendment, you can say what you want, within reason. I support that. You are not free if you can't say what you think, so I don't want you to misconstrue what I am saying. These local stations that are getting money from the taxpayers have every right to report what they want. But they don't have a right to do it and offer a jaundiced point of view using taxpayer dollars. That is my point.

I just wanted to, as I have done in the past, I wanted to read a few more headlines. This is the kind of reporting that is being done today with your tax money on NPR, National Public Radio, and PBS. I will start with NPR. Here is one of the headlines of NPR: "Arguments that trans athletes have an unfair advantage lack evidence to support."

That is opinion journalism. Here is another headline from NPR: "A Brief History of How Racism Shaped Interstate Highways."

I did not know our interstate highways were racists. I thought they were concrete. Not according to NPR.

Here is another NPR headline: "Trump 'Embodies Nearly Every Aspect of a Racist,' Author Says."

Another: "The Nation: Confronting Trump's Coded Racism."

And another: "Is Trump's Call For 'Law And Order' A Coded Racial Message?"

As I said, these are your tax dollars at work.

"Sexism Is Out In The Open In The 2016 Campaign. That May Have Been Inevitable." That is another headline.

"Is Trump Really That Racist?" Another headline.

And another headline: "FRONTLINE traces the 'ambition and revenge' driv-

ing SCOTUS Justice Clarence Thomas." NPR is reporting that Justice Thomas is motivated by revenge and ambition.

Another headline from NPR: "What can the White House do to confront the narrative around Biden's ability?"

It wasn't a narrative. I mean, I don't hate anybody, and I am sorry this was the case, but President Biden had neurodegenerative disease. It wasn't a narrative; it was just a fact. I am sorry, but it was just a fact.

Last headline from NPR: "Scientists Start to Tease Out the Subtler Ways Racism Hurts Health."

Your tax dollars at work. I don't want to just pick on NPR. Here are a couple which you saw on television, PBS, paid for with your tax dollars. First headline: "Talking to Young Children About Race and Racism."

Another headline: "How America's history of racism connects to divisions today." Another headline from PBS: "The hidden racism of young white Americans."

Your tax dollars. Another headline: "AP FACT CHECK: Trump seeds race animus with COVID falsehood."

Another headline: "Biden trumpets economic gains, but struggles to get credit."

Another headline from PBS: "'The Other Olympians': Transgender Athletes in the Nazi Era."

Come on, give me a break. Gag me with a spoon.

The final headline I will read: "Debunking common myths about gender-affirming care for youth."

Let me say it again, Mr. President, these television stations and radio stations that are getting money from the Federal Government—your tax dollars—they have every right under the First Amendment to say these things. They do and I support the First Amendment. But they don't have an inalienable right to report these things using opinion journalism that no fair-minded American can construe as anything but representing one point of view with your tax dollars. I am going to try to stop subsidizing media, not just PBS and not just NPR but any form of media that somehow is getting Federal taxpayer dollars. It is just not right. It is not fair. I have a bill to do that. We are also going to pursue it through reconciliation. I think President Trump and Mr. Musk are going to pursue it on their own, and I think that is a very good thing.

With that, 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.

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

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

S.J. RES. 3

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, today's vote to proceed on this Congressional

Review Act resolution should be renamed the “Elon Musk ‘Get Out of Jail Free’ Card.”

This resolution gives Elon Musk the ability to launch his xMoney site without worrying about breaking the law and getting caught. Of course, this is also a “get out of jail free” card for others like, Apple Pay and Google Pay and other online platforms that handle people’s money, and there is a good reason to oppose it.

This bill is another example of how Republicans in Congress, in conjunction with President Trump and Elon Musk in the White House, are sticking it to families and middle-class consumers all over America and declaring it open season for fraudsters. In fact, just a few hours ago, Trump and Elon dropped the Agency’s lawsuit against Zelle and the big banks that own Zelle for failing to protect consumers from being scammed out of nearly \$1 billion on their app. Now Republicans are trying to roll back the CFPB’s ability to protect Americans from getting scammed on payment apps like Venmo and Cash App, and they are making it easier for unelected billionaire Elon Musk to cheat American consumers and line his own pockets.

So here is the back story: Musk bought Twitter, lost buckets of money, then decided he could recover and make more money by setting up a new financial services arm called xMoney. Now, in ordinary times, he could do that, but the CFPB would be responsible for enforcing consumer financial laws for xMoney. It would also be authorized to examine the books and records to prevent illegal practices and make sure that consumers are getting a fair shake. But co-President Musk doesn’t want that, and Donald Trump and Senate Republicans are willing to do Elon’s bidding, and that is what brings us here today.

They want to roll back a rule called the larger participant rule that was put in place to protect consumers from abuses on these apps and to ensure that these apps are being monitored for following the law, just like banks get monitored for doing the same kinds of things.

The rules protect consumers’ privacy when they use digital wallets like Apple Pay or Google Pay. The rules also help companies get their money back when they get defrauded on PayPal or Cash App or Venmo.

Frankly, the rule is great for consumers. It cracks down on tens of millions of dollars of fraud—fraud that has surged in recent years. It protects consumers’ privacy, ensuring that apps are not taking your private spending data and selling it to anybody who comes along. It helps prevent debanking, a problem that my colleagues on the opposite side of the aisle have spent a lot of time talking about.

The CFPB rule protects consumers’ peer-to-peer accounts from being closed or frozen without notice or justification. It prevents these apps from

unfairly depriving consumers of funds that they need to be able to buy stuff. Three-quarters of all Americans have used these peer-to-peer apps, and millions of Americans have had the sad experience of getting ripped off on peer-to-peer payments apps like Venmo and Cash App and PayPal.

Now, if you think that you are dealing with a legitimate person on the other side and then the next thing you know your money is gone and you are left without any recourse, that is wrong, and it is even worse if it happens because a payment app isn’t meeting its basic responsibilities of preventing fraud on its own platform. The CFPB rule helps to protect those millions of Americans who use payment apps, making sure that both their personal data and their money are safe.

This is a rule that is good for consumers, but it is not good for billionaires, who have figured out how to make money by defrauding those consumers. It is a very familiar story now. President Trump and the Republicans are on the side of the billionaires. They are acting to help out their pals Elon and Jeff and Mark. Hard-working people who just want their payment apps to work and who don’t want to get cheated as part of the deal are the ones who will lose.

Never mind that this is the Agency that works so hard for the little guy. Never mind that the CFPB has returned more than \$21 billion directly to American consumers who were cheated. Never mind that Elon Musk and Donald Trump are trying to kill this rule, and they are trying to kill the entire Agency.

Musk and Republicans in Congress are moving quickly to take the financial cop off the beat. They are hoping that people across this country won’t notice or that people are so distracted and overwhelmed by everything else that is going on that they won’t try to stop them.

But your eyes are not fooling you. It is happening in plain sight.

Ahead of Donald Trump’s speech tonight at the Capitol, Republicans are voting to hurt millions of American consumers. Why? Just to protect Elon Musk’s business ventures from a financial cop on the beat who would make sure that he follows the law.

I hope the American public is paying attention tonight. I hope my Republican colleagues are paying attention here in the Senate as well. It is not too late for them to reconsider this vote.

Make no mistake, Elon Musk locked the CFPB’s staff out of the building to protect his own payment app boondoggle, and now he wants Congress to block this rule to legalize his boondoggle.

And, next week, Republicans intend to mark up legislation that would clear the decks for Elon to issue xMoney as his own stablecoin without guardrails to protect consumers, to protect national security, or to protect the financial stability of our entire country.

The line between right and wrong is clear. On one side, Senate Democrats are standing up for Americans who just don’t want to get cheated when they use a financial app, and on the other side, we have got con men, rip-off artists, Elon Musk, and Big Tech billionaires. Which side will our Senate Republicans choose?

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

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

Mr. RICKETTS. Mr. President, following their election loss, the Biden-Harris administration rushed an eleventh-hour rule through the Federal Government to allow the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to start regulating nonbank entities, specifically, around digital consumer payment systems.

These payment systems are applications—think about it—like PayPal or Zelle. Consumers have widely had positive experiences with these payment systems. According to the CFPB’s own database, only about 1 percent of the 1.3 million complaints last year involved these payment systems. These payment system companies, actually, are already being regulated at the State or Federal level. In other words, this eleventh-hour regulation the Biden administration rushed through is pointless. The Biden-Harris rule is a regulation in search of a problem. It is a rule without a reason. Furthermore, the cost-benefit analysis that the CFPB did—an audit by the CFPB—said that it would only cost \$25,000. Now, having come from the business sector myself, that probably is the first day of outside attorneys’ fees at \$25,000. It is widely off the mark.

This one-size-fits-all solution in search of a problem expands the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau’s authority unnecessarily. In fact, I would argue that this is in a way that was unintended by Congress. The CFPB is supposed to be looking over the financial services sector with regard to banking, not over these nonbank payment systems.

The CFPB even failed to define the market they are seeking to supervise, much like how the Biden EPA and Obama before that tried to expand the EPA’s authority under the waters of the United States rule. This is an expansion of the CFPB’s authority that is beyond what we want to allow.

I am proud to be able to lead the pushback with the Congressional Review Act to stop this unnecessary rule. I am also honored to work with my fellow Nebraskan, Congressman MIKE FLOOD, who is leading the same effort over in the House. This is an opportunity for us to ease the regulatory

burden the previous administration put upon the American people.

Thank you to Leader THUNE for bringing this resolution to the floor for a vote.

I urge my colleagues in the Senate to vote yes to overturn and stop this unnecessary rule that is expanding the authority of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau unnecessarily and despite the intent of Congress. The CFPB's overregulation of nonbank digital consumer payment applications should stop. We can do it here.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CURTIS). The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, the decentralized finance industry is in its infancy. It is a new technology in the digital asset space which enables two individuals to exchange cryptocurrencies without a third party sitting in between them. Although that sounds straightforward, the technology holds potential for technological and financial innovation that we are just beginning to explore. In that sense, DeFi is a microcosm of the crypto revolution, which is unleashing innovation and economic growth and, indeed, personal liberty.

I think of my home State of Texas when it comes to cryptocurrencies. Texas is becoming an oasis for Bitcoin and for cryptocurrency worldwide. In Texas, we have abundant, low-cost energy, and as the energy capital of the world, Texas has both the expertise and the ethos of Texas.

The Lone Star State was founded by a bunch of wildcatters who were guys with fourth grade educations who began drilling holes in the ground. One after the other, they became the richest men on Earth. That is Texas, the spirit of Texas, and that is the spirit of crypto as well.

So what is the rule that Congress is in the process of repealing? At its core, DeFi was designed to allow individuals to freely buy, sell, and exchange digital assets without reliance on third-party intermediaries. It is ironic, therefore, that in the final hours of the Biden administration, the IRS finalized a new rule attacking America's cryptocurrency industry and more specifically DeFi.

Under the gross proceeds reporting by brokers that regularly provide services effectuating digital asset sales—that is a mouthful—the Biden administration expanded the definition of “broker” to include the software developers who create DeFi software, protocols, technology, and so on. They define “coders”—computer programmers—as “brokers.”

The IRS rule is untenable on its face. These software developers—they never touch any of the cryptocurrency being exchanged. DeFi interfaces are neutral technological tools, not financial intermediaries. They do not facilitate transactions. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act could not have been intended for software developers to be

classified as financial intermediaries for the simple reason that their software never holds or controls user funds.

In fact, the rule is not just ironic, but it is incoherent. The software these developers are creating is designed to facilitate crypto exchanges between two individuals without a third party in between. What we have here are software developers—not brokers—developing software to facilitate peer-to-peer exchanges without brokers. That is the entire point.

If left in place, this rule would undermine innovation by turning developers into brokers and through reporting requirements that are incredibly onerous for crypto startups to meet. Those developers would inevitably go overseas instead.

If we were to allow this rule to stand, we would be handing China the opportunity to tighten its grip on the digital asset industry, stifling innovation, economic freedom, and financial sovereignty.

In that sense, this issue isn't just about crypto; it is about stopping unchecked Federal overreach. The Federal Government can do a lot of damage to crypto if the government screws it up.

The requirements, in turn, would risk the privacy of millions of Americans because software developers would be required to collect personal information and pass it on to the IRS.

Just for emphasis, this rule would compel DeFi developers—people who are creating cutting-edge technology to enhance the privacy of Americans—to collect, to store, and to report the personal identifying information of tens of millions of Americans and then hand it over to the IRS—an Agency with a long and well-documented history of mishandling sensitive taxpayer information.

These are serious privacy and surveillance risks. The IRS has already proven to the American people that it cannot be trusted, and it has already demonstrated its reckless disregard for privacy. Just last year, a former IRS contractor was sentenced to 5 years in prison for disclosing thousands of tax returns and return information for high-ranking government officials and related entities and individuals. These private taxpayer files were stolen and subsequently leaked to the press.

Indeed, DeFi is a powerful technology precisely because it undermines bureaucrat control over American citizens. The foundation of financial freedom is the right to engage in financial transactions without unnecessary government interference. The American people should be free to spend their money the way they see fit.

Far too often, we are increasingly seeing and hearing the opposite: threats to individual freedom, enforced through financial control. Banks are denying services to Americans because of their political beliefs or their line of work. We saw it first under Obama

with Operation Choke Point, and we saw it again, tragically, under the Biden administration.

These actions aren't just abuses of power; they strike at the very foundation of a free society.

DeFi isn't controlled by Washington bureaucrats. Indeed, by design, it can't be. That is one of the many things I love about it. DeFi's noncustodial technology lets citizens hold and spend their own money, securely, without needing permission from some government-backed institution.

It is no wonder the Chinese Communist Party hates crypto in general and DeFi in particular. China has already banned cryptocurrency within its borders because it operates beyond government control, and central governments hate that. And, of course, the Chinese Government is one of the most dystopian, authoritarian regimes in the world, and so they have made cryptocurrency transactions illegal because they view those transactions—they rightly view those transactions—as threats to their authoritarian power.

So, yes, every time we create a new ecosystem using something like DeFi, that is an ecosystem insulated from China, and it is an ecosystem that China views as a threat. That is exactly why we must ensure that Americans have access to this technology. We should make sure it thrives right here in the United States.

There has been a lot of talk on both sides of the aisle about supporting cryptocurrency. We now have an opportunity to deliver results for the American people. Earlier this afternoon, we cast the initial vote on moving to proceed to the CRA to repeal this rule. I have to say, I was incredibly heartened that 70 Senators voted together in support of my legislation, and 18 Democratic Senators crossed the aisle and voted in support of repealing this ridiculous and abusive rule.

That is a powerful statement. It is a powerful statement to bitcoin and crypto that Congress is not going to let Washington crush the innovation that is driving so much prosperity. I thank the 18 Democratic Senators who crossed over, and on this final vote I urge even more: Come join us.

I will say—it is an interesting note—if you look at the list of the Democratic Senators who voted with us, it is almost every single Democratic Senator under the age of 60. There is a clear delineating line, and I think there is a reason for that.

Let's stand on the side of innovation. Let's stand on the side of jobs. Let's stand on the side of prosperity. Let's stand on the side of freedom. Let's foster innovation, cut government overreach, and unleash the full potential of the American economy. Let's rescind this rule, and let's unleash the future.

Mr. President, I yield back all time on Calendar No. 11, S.J. Res. 3.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back.

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.

VOTE ON S.J. RES. 3

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. JUSTICE) and the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Michigan (Ms. SLOTKIN) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 70, nays 27, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 102 Leg.]

YEAS—70

Alsobrooks	Graham	Ossoff
Banks	Grassley	Padiella
Barrasso	Hagerty	Paul
Blackburn	Hawley	Ricketts
Booker	Heinrich	Risch
Boozman	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Britt	Hoeven	Rounds
Budd	Husted	Schatz
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Schiff
Cassidy	Johnson	Schmitt
Collins	Kennedy	Schumer
Cornyn	Kim	Scott
Cortez Masto	King	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Cramer	Lee	Sheehy
Crapo	Lujan	Sullivan
Cruz	Marshall	Thune
Curtis	McConnell	Tillis
Daines	McCormick	Tuberville
Ernst	Moody	Warner
Fetterman	Moran	Warnock
Fischer	Moreno	Wicker
Gallago	Mullin	Young
Gillibrand	Murkowski	

NAYS—27

Baldwin	Hirono	Reed
Bennet	Kaine	Sanders
Blumenthal	Kelly	Shaheen
Blunt Rochester	Klobuchar	Smith
Cantwell	Markey	Van Hollen
Coons	Merkley	Warren
Duckworth	Murphy	Welch
Durbin	Murray	Whitehouse
Hassan	Peters	Wyden

NOT VOTING—3

Justice	Lummis	Slotkin
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The joint resolution (S.J. Res. 3) was passed as follows:

S.J. RES. 3

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That Congress disapproves the rule submitted by the Internal Revenue Service relating to "Gross Proceeds Reporting by Brokers That Regularly Provide Services Effectuating Digital Asset Sales" (89 Fed. Reg. 106928 (December 30, 2024)), and such rule shall have no force or effect.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 25.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Troy Edgar, of California, to be Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security.

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 nomination of Executive Calendar No. 25, Troy Edgar, of California, to be Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security.

John Thune, Roger Marshall, Tommy Tuberville, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Tim Sheehy, Katie Britt, Pete Ricketts, Tom Cotton, Kevin Cramer, John Barrasso, James Lankford, Rick Scott of Florida, Jon Husted, Markwayne Mullin, John R. Curtis, Roger F. Wicker, Bernie Moreno.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 29.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Lori Chavez-DeRemer, of Oregon, to be Secretary of Labor.

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 nomination of Executive Calendar No. 29, Lori Chavez-DeRemer, of Oregon, to be Secretary of Labor.

John Thune, Markwayne Mullin, Cindy Hyde-Smith, John Barrasso, Mike Lee, Katie Britt, Mike Crapo, Bill Hagerty, Steve Daines, Jim Banks, Eric Schmitt, Tommy Tuberville, Chuck Grassley, Ashley B. Moody, Roger Marshall, John R. Curtis, Bernie Moreno.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

HALT ALL LETHAL TRAFFICKING OF FENTANYL ACT—Motion To Proceed

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 18, S. 331.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion to proceed.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 18, S. 331, a bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act with respect to the scheduling of fentanyl-related substances, and for other purposes.

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. 18, S. 331, a bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act with respect to the scheduling of fentanyl-related substances, and for other purposes.

John Thune, Roger Marshall, Tommy Tuberville, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Tim Sheehy, Katie Britt, Tom Cotton, Pete Ricketts, Kevin Cramer, John Barrasso, James Lankford, Rick Scott of Florida, Jon Husted, Markwayne Mullin, John R. Curtis, Roger F. Wicker, Bernie Moreno.

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"—Motion To Proceed

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 20, S.J. Res. 28.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 20, 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".

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to proceed.

Mr. THUNE. 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 Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. JUSTICE) and the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Michigan (Ms. SLOTKIN) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 103 Leg.]

YEAS—50

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

NAYS—47

Alsobrooks	Heinrich	Reed
Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Bennet	Hirono	Sanders
Blumenthal	Kaine	Schatz
Blunt Rochester	Kelly	Schiff
Booker	Kim	Schumer
Cantwell	King	Shaheen
Coons	Klobuchar	Smith
Cortez Masto	Lujan	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Markey	Warner
Durbin	Merkley	Warnock
Fetterman	Murphy	Warren
Gallego	Murray	Welch
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Hassan	Padilla	Wyden
Hawley	Peters	

NOT VOTING—3

Justice	Lummis	Slotkin
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The motion was agreed to.

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"

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (S.J. Res. 28) 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".

MORNING BUSINESS

REPUBLICAN MEMBERS OF THE SENATE NATO OBSERVER GROUP

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, for the 119th Congress, I ask that the Republican cochair of the Senate NATO Observer Group be Senator TILLIS, and, at his recommendation, the following Republican Senators participate in the group: Senators ROUNDS, BARRASSO, ERNST, MORAN, SCOTT of South Carolina, and CURTIS.

PROBATION ACT OF 1925

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, today, Tuesday March 4, is the 100th anniversary of the Probation Act of 1925. The act created our Nation's Federal probation system and, for the first time, authorized Federal judges to impose a sentence of probation as an alternative to incarceration. Alternatives to incarceration like probation facilitate the fair administration of justice, enhance public safety, and positively impact the lives of individuals who become involved with the Federal courts. Our Nation's probation officers and staff do deeply difficult and too-often unheralded work that plays a critical role in the functioning of our criminal justice system, and I am committed to doing what I can in the U.S. Senate to support them in what they do. I firmly believe that we owe them a debt of gratitude for their service, and I am especially grateful for the incredible work of Delaware's probation officers and staff working to make Delaware safer every day.

USAID

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, every President of the United States has a right to review and realign programs funded by Congress, but only if the President acts in a way that complies with the law.

In the past 5 weeks, President Trump, Elon Musk, and Secretary of State Rubio have done away with even the pretense that they are conducting a review of programs administered by the U.S. Agency for International Development. It is not a review, and it never was. It is the destruction of an entire Agency.

If it was, in fact, an honest review, I would support it. We should be looking for ways to maximize the results we get from spending taxpayer funds across the Federal Government.

If this was an honest review, they would not have announced the closure

of USAID and put virtually the entire domestic staff on leave. The Trump administration cut off their communication with the global workforce and required staff who were temporarily reinstated by court order to work remotely because they were locked out of the—now former—headquarters.

If this was an honest review, the Trump administration would not have recalled 95 percent of USAID's global workforce after cutting off their email access without warning and putting their security at risk, while those staff were waiting for instructions to conduct the so-called "review."

They would not have, prior to any review, forced American businesses and nongovernmental organizations to lay off thousands of workers by illegally withholding funds previously appropriated for USAID programs.

USAID supports programs that serve U.S. national interests overseas, but it is farmers here in America who grow the corn, wheat, beans, and peanuts. It is dairy farmers in Vermont who produce the powdered milk that USAID uses to feed millions of hungry children in Africa, Central America, and Asia.

It is American companies that manufacture the generators, water pumps, trucks, and computers for USAID's programs, and American workers—in blue States and red States—that implement those programs.

Thanks to Elon Musk—an unelected billionaire—those American farmers and companies have lost their business with USAID, and the workers are losing their jobs.

If the administration was serious about rooting out wasteful spending, they would not have stopped programs in countries like Somalia where USAID is a key partner in counterterrorism efforts with the U.S. military.

They would not have shut down the Famine Early Warning System, risking medicines and American-grown food aid to spoil in the supply chain.

They would not have put more than a half dozen USAID lawyers on leave, including its ethics lawyers.

They would not delay payment of invoices for work already completed on behalf of the U.S. Government, incurring needless fees for violating the Prompt Payment Act.

If this were truly about preventing waste, fraud, and abuse, if this were truly about rooting out corruption, they would not empty U.S. Embassies, leaving virtually no one trained in financial management and oversight.

If there were any truth to their hyperbolic claims of corruption, for which they have offered no credible evidence, they should have asked the USAID Inspector General to investigate, rather than fire him without cause.

And if they actually did discover programs they don't support, they could have reprogrammed the funds consistent with congressional requirements and past practice. They also could have asked Congress to change the law.

What is taking place right now is not about conducting a review, policy realignment, or addressing waste, fraud, and abuse. The administration instead has made every one of those goals impossible to achieve.

President Trump, who claims a mandate but who won by the narrowest of margins, does not have a mandate to illegally destroy Federal Agencies and the careers of thousands of dedicated Federal employees. He does not have a mandate to break the law.

But President Trump and Secretary Rubio are forging ahead, using Elon Musk to provide cover through lies and misinformation on the social media platform he bought and broke.

They highlight select examples of programs they deem wasteful which amount to a fraction of a penny of the foreign aid budget—some of which began under the first Trump administration—and they make baseless claims of fraud and insubordination, blaming anyone else but themselves for the chaos they are causing.

And while they say they favor transparency, they are doing this after taking USAID's website down with all its previously publicly available reports and data. Congress, the media, and the public are in the dark about what they are doing.

We don't know which congressional spending directives they are violating when they say they have terminated \$1 billion in programs. It could impact every single state.

We don't know how many HIV/AIDS patients have become sick because the administration cut off funding for treatment or how many children are sick with malaria or other preventable causes or how many malnourished women and children have no emergency food rations because the funding was stopped. We don't know how many thousands of girls can no longer go to school in countries where they are traditionally denied access to education because the funding was frozen. We don't know how many organizations working to stop sex trafficking, child labor, and gang violence are no longer functioning because the funding was cut off. We don't know how many deminers we have trained and equipped to locate and destroy unexploded mines and bombs in Vietnam, Laos, Lebanon, and Ukraine are no longer working because the funding was stopped.

But before long, we will know, and our constituents will know. And they will know that this administration is responsible for the chaos and life and death impacts that are reverberating in the United States and around the world.

How does cutting off infectious disease surveillance and treatment during outbreaks of Ebola, bird flu, and the deadly hemorrhagic Marburg virus disease make Americans safer? It doesn't. How does abandoning our allies and partners and ceding ground to Russia and China and to ISIS and other terrorist organizations make America

stronger? It doesn't. How does cutting off funding for joint USAID-DOD programs with Vietnam, on the 30th anniversary of the normalization of relations with that former enemy, which is now a Comprehensive Strategic Partner, advance U.S. national security? It doesn't.

Anyone can see that Moscow is celebrating these reckless actions, while Beijing plots how to fill the void to advance China's interests.

This wholesale, thoughtless, and illegal destruction of USAID is playing out across the government. DOGE has told the U.S. African Development Foundation and the Inter-American Foundation, agencies established and funded with direct appropriations by Congress, that their budgets are being slashed.

Elon Musk doesn't know and doesn't care why Congress established these Agencies, what they do, or the positive impact they are having on the lives of millions of people. To Musk and his DOGE agents, the law be damned. Congress be damned. The American people be damned. The world be damned.

The precedent being set by these illegal actions is a lasting threat to the American people, to our global leadership, our national security, our reputation around the world, and to the checks and balances that are the foundation of our democracy.

Vermonters are outraged by what is happening. Dozens have already lost their jobs. They want the United States to be a leader for good in the world. They care about the image of the United States as the world's oldest democracy. They are smart enough to know that abandoning friends and allies is how you lose friends and allies.

The destruction of USAID and these other Agencies will reverberate around the world and cause lasting damage. I urge Secretary Rubio, senior Pentagon officials who know the invaluable role that USAID plays in preventing conflict, and my Republican colleagues who in the past have supported USAID, the Inter-American Foundation, and the U.S. African Development Foundation, to stop this.

Because if the Congress, especially my friends in the majority party, allow this to happen, people will soon realize that it wasn't China or Russia that did this; we did it to ourselves.

TRIBUTE TO RIYA MYNENI

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I would like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation to Riya for her hard work as an intern in my Washington, DC, office. I recognize her efforts and contributions to my office, as well as to the State of Wyoming.

Riya is a native of Virginia. She is currently a junior at Madeira School in McLean, VA. She has demonstrated a strong work ethic, which has made her an invaluable asset to our office. The quality of her work is reflected in her great efforts over the last several months.

I want to thank Riya for the dedication she has shown while working for me and my staff. It is a pleasure to have her as part of our team. I know she will have continued success with all of her future endeavors. I wish her all my best on her journey.

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT DELIVERED TO A JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS ON MARCH 4, 2025—PM 12

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States which was ordered to lie on the table:

To the Congress of the United States:

Speaker JOHNSON, Vice President VANCE, the First Lady of the United States, members of the United States Congress, and my fellow citizens:

America is back! Six weeks ago, I stood beneath the dome of this Capitol and proclaimed the dawn of the Golden Age of America. From that moment on, it has been nothing but swift and unrelenting action to usher in the greatest and most successful era in the history of our country.

We have accomplished more in 43 days than most administrations accomplish in 4 years or 8 years—and we are just getting started.

I return to this chamber tonight to report that America's MOMENTUM is back. Our SPIRIT is back. Our pride is back. Our confidence is back. And the American Dream is surging—bigger and better than ever before. The American Dream is unstoppable, and our country is on the verge of a comeback the likes of which the world has never witnessed, and perhaps will never witness again.

The presidential election of November 5th was a mandate like has not been seen in many decades. We won all 7 swing states, giving us an Electoral College victory of 312 votes. We won the popular vote by millions, and won counties in our country 2,700 to 525—on a map it reads almost completely red for Republican.

Now, for the first time in modern history, more Americans believe that our country is headed in the right direction than the wrong direction—an astonishing record 27-point swing since Election Day alone. Likewise, small business optimism saw its single largest one-month gain ever recorded—a 41-point jump.

Over the past 6 weeks, I have signed nearly 100 Executive Orders and taken more than 400 Executive Actions to restore common sense, safety, optimism, and wealth all across our wonderful land. The People elected me to do the job, and I am doing it. In fact, it has been stated by many that the first month of our presidency is the most successful in the history of our nation.

What makes it even more impressive is that number two on the list is the late, great George Washington.

Within hours of taking the oath of office, I declared a National Emergency on our Southern Border, and I deployed the U.S. Military and Border Patrol to repel the invasion of our country. As a result, illegal border crossings last month were by far the lowest ever recorded! They heard my words, and they chose not to come. In comparison, under Joe Biden, the worst president in American History, there were hundreds of thousands of illegals crossing a month, and virtually ALL of them, including murderers, drug dealers, gang members, and people from mental institutions and insane asylums were released into our Country.

This is my fifth such speech to Congress—and once again, I look at the Democrats in front of me, and I realize that there is absolutely nothing I can say to make them happy, or to make them stand, smile, or applaud. I could find a cure to the most devastating disease, a disease that would wipe out entire nations, or announce the answers to the greatest economy in history, or the stoppage of crime to the lowest levels ever recorded, and these people sitting right here will not clap, will not stand, and certainly will not cheer for these astronomical achievements. It's very sad, and it shouldn't be this way. Democrats sitting before me, for just this one night, why not join us in celebrating so many incredible wins for America? And for the good of our nation, let's work together, and truly Make America Great Again!

Every day, my administration is fighting to deliver the change America needs, and the future Americans deserve. This is a time for big dreams, and bold action.

Upon taking office, I imposed an immediate freeze on all Federal hiring, a freeze on all new Federal regulations, and a freeze on all foreign aid.

I terminated the ridiculous Green New Scam, I withdrew from the unfair Paris Climate Accord, I withdrew from the corrupt World Health Organization, and I withdrew from the anti-American U.N. Human Rights Council. We ended all of Biden's environmental restrictions that were making our country far less safe, and totally unaffordable. And importantly, we ended the last administration's insane Electric Vehicle Mandate, saving our autoworkers and companies from economic ruin.

To unshackle our economy, I have directed that for every 1 new regulation, 10 old regulations must be eliminated, just like I did in my very successful first term, when we set records on ending unnecessary rules and regulations.

We ordered all Federal workers to return to the office—they will either show up for work, in person, or be removed from their job.

We have ended weaponized government, where as an example, a sitting president is allowed to viciously prosecute his political opponent—how did

that work out? And I have stopped all government censorship, and brought back free speech in America.

I also signed an order making English the official language of the United States.

I renamed the Gulf of Mexico the Gulf of America, and we are restoring the name of a great president, William McKinley, to Mount McKinley in beautiful Alaska.

We have ended the tyranny of so-called "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion" policies across the entire Federal government and private sector. Our country will be "woke" no longer. We believe that whether you are a doctor, an accountant, a lawyer, or an air traffic controller, you should be hired and promoted based on skill and competence, not race or gender. You should be hired based on merit—and the Supreme Court, in a brave and very powerful decision, has allowed us to do so.

We have removed the poison of Critical Race Theory from our public schools. And I signed an order making it the official policy of the United States Government that there are only two genders, male and female.

I also signed an Executive Order to ban men from women's sports. 3 years ago, Payton McNabb was an all-star high school athlete preparing for a future in college sports. But when her girls' volleyball match was invaded by a male, he smashed the ball in Payton's face, causing traumatic brain injury, partially paralyzing her right side, and ending her athletic career. Payton is here tonight in the gallery—and Payton, from now on, schools will kick the men off the girls' teams, or they will lose all Federal funding. And if you really want to see numbers, just take a look at what happened in women's boxing, weight lifting, track and field, swimming, or cycling, where a male recently finished a long-distance race 5 hours and 14 minutes ahead of the women. It's demeaning for women, and it's bad for our country.

What I have just described is only a small fraction of the Common-Sense revolution that is now, because of us, sweeping the world. Common Sense has become a Common Theme—and we will never go back.

Among my very highest priorities is to rescue our economy and get dramatic and immediate relief to working families. As you know, we inherited, from the last administration, an economic catastrophe and an inflation nightmare. Their policies drove up energy prices, pushed up the cost of groceries, and drove the necessities of life out of reach for millions of Americans. We suffered the worst inflation in 48 years, but perhaps even in the history of our country. As President, I am fighting every day to reverse this damage and Make America affordable Again.

Joe Biden especially let the price of eggs get out of control—and we are working hard to get it back down.

A major focus of our fight to defeat inflation is rapidly reducing the cost of

energy. The previous administration cut the number of new oil and gas leases by 95%, slowed pipeline construction to a halt, and closed more than 100 power plants. We have never seen anything like it.

That is why on my first day in office, I declared a National Energy Emergency.

We have more liquid gold under our feet than any nation on earth, by far, and I have fully authorized a very powerful program. It's called Drill, Baby, Drill.

My administration is also working on a gigantic natural gas pipeline in Alaska, among the largest in the world, where Japan, South Korea, and other nations want to be our partner—with trillions of dollars being spent by them. It will truly be spectacular.

Later this week, I will also take historic action to dramatically expand production of critical minerals and rare earths here in USA.

To further quench the fires of inflation, we will not only be reducing the cost of energy, but will be ending the flagrant waste of taxpayer dollars. To that end, I have created the brand-new Department of Government Efficiency—headed by Elon Musk, who is in the gallery tonight.

Just listen to some of the appalling waste we have already identified: \$22 billion dollars from H.H.S. to provide free housing and cars for illegal aliens. \$45 million dollars for Diversity Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) scholarships in Burma. \$40 million dollars to improve the "social and economic inclusion of sedentary migrants." \$8 million dollars to promote "L.G.B.T.Q.I. Plus" in the African nation of Lesotho, which nobody ever heard of. \$60 million dollars for Indigenous Peoples and Afro-Colombian Empowerment in Central America. \$8 million dollars for making mice transgender. \$32 million dollars for a left-wing propaganda operation in Moldova. \$10 million dollars for male circumcision in Mozambique. \$20 million dollars for the Arab Sesame Street programming in the Middle East. \$1.9 billion dollars to a recently-created "decarbonization of homes" committee of Stacey Abrams. A \$3.5 million dollar consulting contract for "larval fish monitoring." \$1.5 million dollars for "voter confidence" in Liberia. \$14 million dollars for "social cohesion" in Mali. \$59 million dollars for illegal alien hotel rooms in New York City. \$250,000 to increase "Vegan Local Climate Action Innovation" in Zambia. \$42 million dollars for "social and behavior change" in Uganda. \$14 million dollars for "improving public procurement" in Serbia. \$47 million dollars for "improving learning outcomes in Asia." And \$101 million dollars for DEI contracts at the Department of Education.

Under the Trump Administration, all of these scams, and many more, have been found out, exposed, and swiftly terminated. We have taken back the money, and reduced our debt to fight

inflation. This is just the beginning—the Government Accountability Office has estimated annual fraud of over \$500 billion dollars, and we are going to stop it. When people criticize us, they never talk about where the money is going to, they only claim it's supposedly a violation of the Constitution, which it's not. But they don't mean that, they don't care about our Constitution. They only care about the money. The whole thing is a scam.

We are also identifying shocking levels of incompetence and probable fraud in the Social Security program our seniors rely on. Believe it or not, Government databases list 4.7 million Social Security numbers from people aged 100 to 109 years old, 3.6 million from ages 110 to 119, 3.47 million from ages 120 to 129, 3.9 million from ages 130 to 139, 3.5 million from ages 140 to 149, 1.3 million from ages 150 to 159. And over 130,000 over age 160. Including 1,039 people between the ages of 220 to 229. One person between the age of 240 to 249. And one person at 360 years of age.

By slashing all of the fraud, waste, and theft we can find, we will defeat inflation, bring down mortgage rates, lower car payments and grocery prices, protect our seniors, and put more money in the pockets of American families. And in the near future, I want to do what has not been done in 24 years: balance the Federal budget.

With that goal in mind, we have developed in great detail what we are calling the Gold Card, which goes on sale very soon. For \$5 million dollars, we will allow the most successful, job-creating people from all over the world to buy a path to U.S. citizenship. So while we take out the criminals, killers, traffickers, and child predators, who were allowed to enter our country under the open border policy of the Biden Administration, we will now bring in brilliant, hardworking, job-creating people.

Americans have given us a mandate for bold and profound change. For nearly 100 years, the Federal bureaucracy has grown until it has crushed our freedoms, ballooned our deficits, and held back America's potential in every possible way. The nation founded by pioneers and risk-takers now drowns under millions of pages of regulations and debt. Approvals that should take 10 days instead take 10 years. Meanwhile, we have hundreds of thousands of Federal Workers who have not been showing up to work. My Administration will reclaim power from this unaccountable bureaucracy, and we will restore true democracy to America again. Any Federal bureaucrat who resists this change will be removed from office. We are draining the swamp. The days of rule by unelected bureaucrats are over.

The next phase of our plan to deliver the greatest economy in history is for this Congress to pass tax cuts for everybody. We are seeking permanent income tax cuts across the board. And to get urgently needed relief to Americans hit especially hard by inflation, I

am calling for no tax on tips. No tax on overtime. And no tax on Social Security benefits for our great seniors. I also want to make interest payments on car loans tax deductible—but only if the car is made in America. That, along with our other policies, will allow our auto industry to boom. In fact, already, numerous car companies have announced that they will be building massive automobile plants in America, with Honda just announcing a new plant in Indiana, one of the largest in the world. This has taken place since our great Election victory on November 5th, a date which will hopefully go down as one of the most important in the history of our country.

In addition, as part of our tax cuts, we want to cut taxes on domestic production and manufacturing. This will reward businesses that build in America, hire American workers, and stamp their products with those beautiful words, Made in the USA. And just as we did before, we will provide 100% expensing—it will be retroactive to January 20th, 2025, and it was one of the reasons why our tax cuts were so successful in the first term.

If you don't make your product in America, however, under the Trump Administration, you will pay a TARIFF, and in some cases, a rather large one. Other countries have used tariffs against us for decades, now it is our turn to start using them against those other countries. On average, the EU, China, Brazil, India, and countless other nations charge us tariffs many times higher than ours. India charges us auto tariffs higher than 100%. China's average tariff on our products is twice what we charge them, and South Korea's average tariff is 4 times higher. This system is not fair to the United States, and never was, so on April 2nd, reciprocal tariffs kick in.

Whatever they tariff us, we tariff them. Whatever they tax us, we tax them. If they do non-monetary tariffs to keep us out of their market, then we do non-monetary barriers to keep them out of our market. We will take in trillions of dollars, and create jobs like we have never seen before. We have been ripped off for decades by nearly every country on earth, both friend and foe alike. We are not going to allow that to happen anymore. Much has been said about Mexico and Canada, but we have large deficits with them. They are in effect receiving subsidies of hundreds of billions of dollars, and the United States will not be doing that any longer.

Thanks to the America First policies we are putting into place, we have had \$1.7 trillion dollars of new investment in America in the past few weeks: SoftBank announced \$200 billion, OpenAI and Oracle announced \$500 billion, Apple announced \$500 billion, and just yesterday, Taiwan Semiconductor, the biggest in the world by far, announced \$165 billion dollars to build the most powerful chips on earth, right here in the USA.

Our new trade policy will also be great for the American farmer—who will now be selling into our home market, because nobody is going to be able to compete with you. Tariffs will go on agricultural product coming into America on April 2nd. Have fun farmers, I love you too! And I have also imposed a 25% tariff on foreign aluminum, copper, lumber, and steel—because if we don't have steel, and lots of other things, we don't have a military, and frankly, we don't have a country.

Here today is a proud American steelworker from Decatur, Alabama. Jeff Denard has been working at the same steel plant for 27 years, in a job that has allowed him to serve as the captain of his local volunteer fire department, raise 7 children with his wife Nicole, and over the years, provide a loving home to more than 40 foster children.

Stories like Jeff's remind us that tariffs are not just about protecting American jobs—they're about protecting the soul of our country. Tariffs are about Making America rich again and Making America Great Again. Jeff, thank you.

I also want to recognize another person who has devoted herself to the foster care community—our magnificent First Lady. Melania's work has yielded incredible results, helping prepare our nation's future leaders as they enter the workforce. Our First Lady is joined by two impressive young women: Haley Ferguson, who benefitted from the First Lady's Fostering the Future Initiative, and is poised to complete her education and become a teacher; and Elliston Berry, who became a victim of an illicit Deepfake image produced by a peer. With Elliston's help, the Senate just passed the "Take it Down Act," to criminalize the publication of such images online—and once it passes the House, I look forward to signing that bill into law.

But if we truly care about protecting America's children, no step is more crucial than securing America's borders. Over the past 4 years, 21 million people poured into the United States—many of them were murderers, drug dealers, gang members, and other criminals from the streets of dangerous cities all throughout the world. Because of Joe Biden's insane and very dangerous open border policies, they are now strongly embedded in our country, but we are getting them out.

Last year, a brilliant 22-year-old nursing student named Laken Riley, the best in her class, went out for a jog on the campus of the University of Georgia. That morning, Laken was viciously attacked, assaulted, beaten, brutalized, and horrifically murdered. Laken was stolen from us by a savage illegal alien gang member who was arrested while trespassing across Biden's open southern border, and then set loose into the United States under the heartless policies of that failed administration. He had then been arrested

and released in a Democrat-run Sanctuary City, before ending the life of this beautiful angel.

With us this evening are Laken's beloved mother, Allyson, and her sister Lauren. Last year, I told Laken's grieving parents that we would ensure their daughter would not have died in vain. That is why the very first bill I signed into law as our 47th president mandates the detention of all dangerous criminal aliens who threaten public safety. It is called the Laken Riley Act. Allyson and Lauren, America will never, ever forget our beautiful Laken Hope Riley.

Since taking office, my administration has launched the most sweeping border and immigration crackdown in American history—and we quickly achieved the lowest numbers of illegal border crossers ever recorded.

The media and our friends in the Democrat Party kept saying we needed new legislation to secure the border—but it turned out that all we really needed was a new president.

Joe Biden didn't just open our borders, he flew illegal aliens over them to overwhelm our schools, hospitals, and communities throughout the country. Entire towns like Aurora, Colorado and Springfield, Ohio, buckled under the weight of the migrant occupation and corruption. Now, just as I promised in my inaugural address, we are achieving the Great Liberation of America.

But there still is much work to be done. Here tonight is a woman I have gotten to know, Alexis Nungaray from Houston. Last June, Alexis's 12-year-old daughter, her precious Jocelyn, walked to a nearby convenience store. She was kidnapped, tied up, assaulted for two hours under a bridge, and horrifically murdered. Arrested and charged with this heinous crime are two illegal alien monsters from Venezuela released into America by the last administration.

The death of this beautiful 12-year-old girl and the agony of her mother and family touched our entire nation, greatly. Alexis, I promised you that we would always remember your daughter, and earlier tonight I signed an order keeping my word to you. One thing I have learned about Jocelyn is that she loved animals, and loved nature. Across Galveston Bay from where Jocelyn lived in Houston, you will find a National Wildlife Refuge—a pristine, peaceful 34,000-acre sanctuary for all God's creatures on the edge of the Gulf of America. Alexis, moments ago, I formally renamed that refuge in loving memory of your daughter, Jocelyn Nungaray. Mr. Vice President, please present the order.

All three savages charged with Jocelyn and Laken's murders were members of the Venezuelan prison gang known as Tren de Aragua. Two weeks ago, I officially designated this gang, along with MS-13 and the bloodthirsty Mexican drug cartels, as Foreign Terrorist Organizations. They are now officially in the same category as ISIS.

Countless thousands of these terrorists were welcomed into the U.S. by the last administration. But now, every last one will be rounded up and forcibly removed from our country.

With us this evening is a warrior on the front lines of that battle: Border Patrol Agent Roberto Ortiz. In January, Roberto and another agent were patrolling by the Rio Grande near an area known as "cartel island," when heavily armed gunmen started shooting. Roberto saw that his partner was totally exposed, and he leapt into action, returning fire, and providing crucial seconds for his fellow agent to seek safety. Agent Ortiz, we salute your courage in the line of fire.

The territory to the immediate South of our border is now dominated entirely by criminal cartels that murder, rape, torture, and exercise total control—posing a grave threat to our national security. The Cartels are waging war on America, and it is time for America to wage war on the cartels.

5 nights ago, Mexican Authorities, because of the tariffs being imposed on them, handed over to us 29 of the biggest cartel leaders in their country—it has never happened before. But we need Mexico and Canada to do much more—they have to stop the fentanyl and drugs pouring into our country.

I have sent Congress a detailed funding request laying out exactly how we will eliminate these threats, protect our Homeland, and complete the largest deportation operation in American history, larger even than current recordholder Dwight D. Eisenhower—a moderate man but someone who believed very strongly in borders. Americans expect Congress to send me this funding without delay, so I can sign it into law.

As we reclaim our sovereignty, we must also bring back LAW and ORDER to our cities and towns.

In recent years, our justice system has been turned upside down by Radical Left lunatics. Many jurisdictions virtually ceased enforcing the law against dangerous repeat offenders, while weaponizing law enforcement against political opponents, like me.

My administration has acted swiftly and decisively to restore fair, equal, and impartial justice under the Constitutional Rule of Law—starting at the FBI and DOJ.

We are also once again giving our police officers the support, protection, and respect they so dearly deserve. This also includes our great fire departments throughout the country, who are likewise under siege.

One year ago this month, 31-year-old New York Police Officer Jonathan Diller was gunned down at a traffic stop on Long Island. The vicious criminal charged with his murder had 21 prior arrests. The thug in the seat next to him had 14 prior arrests and went by the name "Killer." I attended Officer Diller's funeral, and met his one-year-old son Ryan and his 29-year-old widow Stephanie—and she is here tonight.

Stephanie, we are going to make sure Ryan knows his dad was a Hero—and we are going to get these cold-blooded killers and repeat offenders off our streets, and fast.

I have already signed an Executive Order requiring a mandatory death penalty for anyone who murders a police officer—and tonight I am asking Congress to pass that policy into permanent law. I am also asking for a new Crime Bill getting tough on repeat offenders, while enhancing protections for America's police officers—so they can do their jobs without fear of their lives being destroyed.

Joining us in the Gallery tonight is a young man who truly loves our police. His name is D.J. Daniel, he is 13 years old, and he has always dreamed of becoming an officer. But in 2018, D.J. was diagnosed with brain cancer—the doctors gave him 5 months to live. That was more than 6 years ago. Since that time, D.J. and his dad have been on a quest to make his dream come true. D.J. has been sworn in as an honorary law enforcement officer a number of times. And tonight, D.J., we're going to do you the biggest honor of them all. I am asking our new Secret Service Director, Sean Curran, to officially make you an agent of the United States Secret Service. Sean, please present D.J. with his badge. Thank you, D.J.

D.J.'s doctors believe his cancer likely came from a chemical he was exposed to when he was younger. Since 1975, rates of child cancer have increased more than 40%. Reversing this trend is one of the top priorities for our new Presidential Commission to Make America Healthy Again, chaired by our new Secretary of Health and Human Services, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. Our goal is to get toxins out of our environment, poisons out of our food supply, and keep our children healthy and strong. As an example, not long ago, 1 in ten thousand children had autism. Now it's 1 in 36. Something is wrong, and we are going to find out what it is.

My administration is also working to protect our children from toxic ideologies in our schools. A few years ago, January Littlejohn and her husband discovered that their daughter's school had secretly "socially transitioned" their 13-year-old girl. Teachers and administrators conspired to deceive January and her husband, while encouraging her daughter to use a new name and "they/them" pronouns—all without telling January, who is here tonight, and is now a courageous advocate against this child abuse.

Stories like this are why shortly after taking office, I signed an Executive Order banning public schools from indoctrinating our children with transgender ideology. I also signed an order to cut off all taxpayer funding to any institution that engages in the sexual mutilation of our youth.

Now, I want Congress to pass a bill permanently banning and criminalizing sex changes on children, and forever ending the lie that any child is

trapped in the wrong body. Our message to every child in America is that you are perfect exactly the way God made you.

We are getting wokeness out of our schools—and also out of our military. Our service members won't be activists and ideologues—they will be fighters and warriors. I am pleased to report that in January, the U.S. Army had its single best recruiting month in 15 years—and all of our Armed Services are having among the best recruiting results in modern history.

We are joined tonight by a young man, Jason Hartley, who knows the weight of that call of duty. Jason's father, grandfather, and great-grandfather all wore the uniform. Jason tragically lost his dad, who was also a Los Angeles County Sheriff's Deputy, when he was just a boy, and now he wants to carry on the family legacy of service. Jason is a senior in high school, a 6-letter varsity athlete, a brilliant student with a 4.46 (GPA), and his greatest dream is to attend the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. Jason, I am pleased to inform you that your application has been accepted,—you will soon be joining the Corps of Cadets and the proud ranks of the Long Gray Line.

As Commander-in-Chief, my focus is on building the most powerful military of the future. As a first step, I am asking Congress to fund a state-of-the-art, Golden Dome Missile Defense shield to protect our homeland—all made in the USA. Ronald Reagan wanted to do it long ago, but the technology just wasn't there.

To boost our defense industrial base, we are also going to resurrect the American shipbuilding industry, including commercial shipbuilding. For that purpose, I am announcing tonight that we will create a new Office of Shipbuilding in the White House, and offer special tax incentives to bring this industry home to America, where it belongs.

To further enhance our national security, my administration will be reclaiming the Panama Canal—and we've already started. Just today, a large American company announced they are buying both ports around the Panama Canal. The Canal was built by Americans, for Americans, at tremendous cost of American blood and treasure—38,000 workers died building the canal, the most expensive project ever built in our country's history. It was given away by the Carter administration for \$1 dollar, but that agreement has since been severely violated. We didn't give the Canal to China, we gave it to Panama, and we're taking it back.

I also have a message tonight for the incredible people of Greenland: we strongly support your right to determine your own future, and if you choose, we welcome you into the United States of America. We will keep you safe, we will make you rich, and together we will take Greenland to heights like you have never seen before.

America is once again standing strong against the forces of Radical Islamic Terrorism. Three and a half years ago, ISIS terrorists killed 13 American servicemembers and countless others in the Abbey Gate bombing during the disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan, perhaps the most embarrassing moment in the history of our country. Tonight, I am pleased to announce that we have just apprehended the top terrorist responsible for that atrocity, and he is right now on his way here to face the swift sword of American Justice. I want to thank the government of Pakistan for helping arrest this monster. This is a momentous day for those 13 families whose children were murdered, and the many so badly injured on that fateful day in Afghanistan. I spoke to many of them today, and they are all in our hearts tonight.

In the Middle East, we are bringing back our hostages from Gaza. In my first term, we achieved one of the most groundbreaking peace agreements in generations, the Abraham Accords—and now, we are going to build on that foundation to create a more peaceful and prosperous future for the entire region.

I am also working tirelessly to end the savage conflict in Ukraine. Millions of Ukrainians and Russians have been needlessly killed or wounded in this horrific and brutal conflict, with no end in sight. The United States has sent hundreds of billions of dollars to support Ukraine's defense. Meanwhile, Europe has sadly spent more money buying Russian oil and gas than they have spent on defending Ukraine—by far! And Biden has authorized more money in this fight than Europe has spent. Earlier today, I received an important letter from President Zelensky of Ukraine. The letter reads: "Ukraine is ready to come to the negotiating table as soon as possible to bring lasting peace closer. Nobody wants peace more than Ukrainians. My team and I stand ready to work under President Trump's strong leadership to get a peace that lasts. We do really value how much America has done to help Ukraine maintain its sovereignty and independence. Regarding the agreement on minerals and security, Ukraine is ready to sign it at any time and in any convenient format." I appreciate this letter. Simultaneously we've had serious discussions with Russia, and have received strong signals that they are ready for peace. It is time to stop this madness. It is time to halt the killing. And it is time to end this war.

If you want to end wars, you have to talk to both sides.

Nearly four years ago, amid rising tensions, a history teacher named Marc Fogel was detained in Russia and sentenced to 14 years in a penal colony. The previous administration barely lifted a finger to help. But last summer, I promised his 95-year-old mother Malphine that we would bring her boy

safely back home. After 22 days in office, I did just that—and they are here tonight. To Marc and his mom, we are delighted to have you safe and sound.

As fate would have it, Marc Fogel was born in the small rural town of Butler, Pennsylvania, where his mother has lived for the past 78 years. I just happened to go there last July 13th for a rally, and that is where I met his mom, right before I walked out on stage. I told her I would not forget her son, and I never did.

Less than 10 minutes later at that same rally, gunfire rang out, and a sick and deranged assassin unloaded 8 bullets from his sniper's perch into a crowd of many thousands of people. My life was saved by a fraction of an inch, but some were not so lucky.

Corey Comperatore was a firefighter, a veteran, a Christian, a husband, a devoted father, and above all, a protector. When the sound of gunshots pierced the air, Corey knew instantly what to do. He threw himself on top of his wife and daughters, and shielded them from the bullets with his own body. Corey was hit, and he was hit hard. He sacrificed his life to save theirs. Two others were also seriously hit, but thankfully they have recovered.

We are joined by Corey's wife, Helen, who was his high school sweetheart, and their two beloved daughters, Allyson and Kaylee. To Helen, Allyson, and Kaylee, Corey is looking down on his three beautiful ladies right now, and he is cheering you on.

Corey was taken from us much too soon—but his destiny was to leave us all with a shining example of the selfless devotion of an American Patriot. It was love like Corey's that built our country—and it is love like Corey's that is going to make our country more majestic than ever before.

I believe that my life was saved that day in Butler for a reason: I was saved by God to Make America Great Again.

From the patriots of Lexington and Concord to the heroes at Gettysburg and Normandy—from the warriors who crossed the Delaware to the trailblazers who climbed the Rockies—and from the legends who soared at Kitty Hawk, to the astronauts who touched the Moon, Americans have always been the people who defied all odds, transcended all dangers, made the most extraordinary sacrifices, and did whatever it took to defend our children, our country, and our freedom. And as we have seen in this chamber tonight, that same strength, faith, love, and spirit is still alive and thriving in the hearts of the American People.

Despite the best efforts of those who would try to censor us, silence us, break us, and destroy us, Americans are today a proud, free, sovereign, and independent nation, and that, we will always be.

We are a country of doers, dreamers, fighters, and survivors. Our ancestors crossed a vast ocean, strode into the unknown wilderness, and carved their

fortunes from the rock and soil of a perilous frontier. They chased our destiny across a boundless continent. They built the railroads, laid the highways, and graced the world with American marvels like the Empire State Building, the mighty Hoover Dam, and the towering Golden Gate Bridge. They lit the world with electricity, broke free of the force of gravity, fired up the engines of American industry, vanquished the communists, fascists, and marxists all over the world, and gave us countless modern wonders sculpted out of iron, glass, and steel.

We stand on the shoulders of these pioneers who won and built the modern age, these workers who poured their sweat into the skylines of our cities, these warriors who shed their blood on fields of battle, and gave everything they had for our rights and our freedom.

Now, it is our time to take up the righteous cause of American Liberty. And it is our turn to take America's destiny into our own hands, and begin the most thrilling days in the history of our country. This will be our greatest era.

With God's help, over the next four years, we are going to lead this nation even higher—and we are going to forge the freest, most advanced, most dynamic, most dominant civilization ever to exist on the face of this earth. We are going to create the highest quality of life, build the safest, wealthiest, healthiest, and most vital communities. We are going to conquer the vast frontiers of science, and we are going to lead humanity into space, and plant the American flag on the planet Mars, and even far beyond.

Through it all, we are going to rediscover the unstoppable power of the American Spirit. And we are going to renew the unlimited promise of the American Dream.

Every single day, we will stand up, and we will fight, fight, fight for the country our citizens believe in, and for the country our people deserve.

My fellow Americans, get ready for an incredible future because the Golden Age of America has only just begun. It will be like nothing that has ever been seen before!

Thank you, God Bless You, and God Bless America.

DONALD J. TRUMP.
THE WHITE HOUSE, March 4, 2025.

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

ENROLLED JOINT RESOLUTION SIGNED

At 10:05 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following joint resolution:

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".

The enrolled joint resolution was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

At 12:07 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, 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. 758. An act to direct the United States Postal Service to issue regulations requiring Postal Service employees and contractors to report to the Postal Service traffic crashes involving vehicles carrying mail that result in injury or death, and for other purposes.

H.R. 856. An act to require the Director of the Office of Management and Budget conduct a review to determine the impact of the lowest price technically acceptable source selection process on national security, and for other purposes.

H.R. 872. An act to require covered contractors implement a vulnerability disclosure policy consistent with NIST guidelines, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1515. An act to increase access to agency guidance documents.

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 758. An act to direct the United States Postal Service to issue regulations requiring Postal Service employees and contractors to report to the Postal Service traffic crashes involving vehicles carrying mail that result in injury or death, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 856. An act to require the Director of the Office of Management and Budget conduct a review to determine the impact of the lowest price technically acceptable source selection process on national security, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 872. An act to require covered contractors implement a vulnerability disclosure policy consistent with NIST guidelines, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 1515. An act to increase access to agency guidance documents; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

MEASURES DISCHARGED PETITIONS

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with chapter 8 title 5, United States Code, hereby direct that the Senate Committee on Banking Housing and Urban Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S.J. Res. 28, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection relating to "Defining Larger Participants of a Market for General-Use Digital Consumer Payment Applications" and, further, that the joint resolution be immediately placed upon the Legislative Calendar under General Orders.

Pete Ricketts, Steve Daines, Tom Cotton, James Lankford, John Cornyn, John Barrasso, Kevin Cramer, James C. Justice, Marsha Blackburn, Katie Boyd Britt, Tommy Tuberville, Ashley

Moody, Rick Scott, Rand Paul, Mike Crapo, Jon Husted, John Thune, Markwayne Mullin, Bill Cassidy, Mike Rounds, Thom Tillis, John R. Curtis, David McCormick, Ron Johnson, John Hoeven, Roger F. Wicker, James E. Risch, Susan M. Collins, Bernie Moreno, Tim Scott.

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with chapter 8 title 5, United States Code, hereby direct that the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be discharged from further consideration of S.J. Res. 30, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the National Park Service relating to "Glen Canyon National Recreation Area; Motor Vehicles" and, further, that the joint resolution be immediately placed upon the Legislative Calendar under General Orders.

John R. Curtis, Pete Ricketts, Mike Crapo, Jon Husted, John Barrasso, Tim Sheehy, Roger F. Wicker, Bernie Moreno, James Lankford, Joni Ernst, Kevin Cramer, Thom Tillis, John Cornyn, Tommy Tuberville, Ted Budd, Mike Rounds, Jim Banks, John Kennedy, Josh Hawley, Ashley Moody, Katie Boyd Britt, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Chuck Grassley, Tom Cotton, Ted Cruz, Lindsey Graham, Todd Young, Steve Daines, Markwayne Mullin, Eric Schmitt.

MEASURES DISCHARGED

The following joint resolution was discharged from the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, by petition, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 802(c), and placed on the calendar:

S.J. Res. 28. 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".

The following joint resolution was discharged from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, by petition, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 802(c), and placed on the calendar:

S.J. Res. 30. Joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the National Park Service relating to "Glen Canyon National Recreation Area; Motor Vehicles".

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Ms. ERNST, from the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 298. A bill to require the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to relocate 30 percent of the employees assigned to headquarters to duty stations outside the Washington metropolitan area, and for other purposes.

S. 300. A bill to improve accountability in the disaster loan program of the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes.

By Ms. ERNST, from the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, without amendment:

S. 371. A bill to require certain reports on small business disaster assistance to be published on the website of the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. KENNEDY (for himself and Mr. CASSIDY):

S. 824. A bill to reauthorize the National Flood Insurance Program; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. COONS, Mr. YOUNG, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. HAWLEY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. OSSOFF, Ms. ERNST, and Mr. WARNOCK):

S. 825. A bill to require the Attorney General to propose a program for making treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder and acute stress disorder available to public safety officers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. SCOTT of Florida:

S. 826. A bill to amend title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to prohibit discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance on the ground of religion, to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide for rigorous enforcement of prohibitions against discrimination by institutions of higher education on the basis of antisemitism, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. CRAMER (for himself, Mr. KING, and Mr. SULLIVAN):

S. 827. A bill to extend and modify the transportation grant program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. DUCKWORTH:

S. 828. A bill to direct the Secretary of Transportation to issue rules requiring the inclusion of new safety equipment in school buses, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. CRAMER (for himself and Mr. HOEVEN):

S. 829. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 840 Front Street in Casselton, North Dakota, as the "Commander Delbert Austin Olson Post Office"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Ms. BALDWIN):

S. 830. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize the program relating to lifespan respite care, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

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

S. 831. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to improve telephone communication by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. TILLIS (for himself, Mr. BUDD, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. DAINES, and Mr. LANKFORD):

S. 832. A bill to amend title XI of the Social Security Act to equalize the negotiation period between small-molecule and biologic candidates under the Drug Price Negotiation Program; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. LEE:

S. 833. A bill to prevent use of United Nations facilities located in the United States by the ICC, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

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

S. 834. A bill to call for the immediate extradition or return to the United States of convicted felon Joanne Chesimard, William "Guillermo" Morales, and all other fugitives who are receiving safe haven in Cuba to escape prosecution or confinement for criminal offenses committed in the United States; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Mr. GRASSLEY):

S. 835. A bill to amend the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 to establish a voluntary program to reduce food loss and waste, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Mr. CASSIDY, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. SCHATZ, Mrs. CAPITO, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. LUJÁN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. WELCH, Mr. KING, Mr. KELLY, Mrs. BRITT, and Mr. HEINRICH):

S. 836. A bill to amend the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 to strengthen protections relating to the online collection, use, and disclosure of personal information of children and teens, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WELCH, Ms. HIRONO, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. COONS, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. WARREN, and Mr. REED):

S. 837. A bill to repeal certain executive orders; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. MORAN (for himself, Mr. KING, Mr. TUBERVILLE, Mr. GALLEG0, and Mr. CRAMER):

S. 838. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude from gross income interest received on certain loans secured by rural or agricultural real property; to the Committee on Finance.

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

S. 839. A bill to prohibit the use of funds to implement, administer, or enforce measures requiring certain employees to refer to an individual by the preferred pronouns of such individual or a name other than the legal name of such individual, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. WELCH (for himself, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MERKLEY, and Mr. LUJÁN):

S. 840. A bill to hold accountable operators of social media platforms that intentionally or knowingly host false election administration information; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN (for herself and Mr. HICKENLOOPER):

S. 841. A bill to require online dating service providers to provide fraud ban notifications to online dating service members, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. CURTIS (for himself and Ms. ROSEN):

S. 842. A bill to counter efforts by Hezbollah to conduct terrorist activities in Latin America, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 843. A bill to require the Secretary of Commerce to establish the Sea Turtle Rescue Assistance Grant Program; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. HAWLEY (for himself, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. PETERS, Mr. MORENO, and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 844. A bill to accelerate workplace time-to-contract under the National Labor Relations Act; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. BALDWIN (for herself and Mr. GRASSLEY):

S. 845. A bill to amend the Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act of 1978 to remove the limitation on the amount of a civil penalty, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mrs. BRITT (for herself, Mr. KAINE, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. KING, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 846. A bill to implement or strengthen programs that increase the supply of quality child care services by enhancing the wages of child care workers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. BRITT (for herself, Mr. KAINE, Ms. ERNST, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. CURTIS, Mr. KING, Ms. COLLINS, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. 847. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand the employer-provided child care credit and the dependent care assistance exclusion; to the Committee on Finance.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. SLOTKIN, Mr. LUJÁN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WARNOCK, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. KAINE, Ms. ROSEN, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Ms. ALSOBROOKS, Mr. KELLY, Ms. WARREN, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. SCHIFF, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. GALLEG0, Mr. PETERS, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. WARNER, Ms. SMITH, Mr. PADILLA, and Mr. HEINRICH):

S. Res. 105. A resolution condemning the mass terminations of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs carried out with no justification or analysis of the impact on veterans and their families; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 85

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 85, a bill to require the Secretary of the Interior to partner and collaborate with the Secretary of Agriculture and the State of Hawaii to address Rapid Ohia Death, and for other purposes.

S. 94

At the request of Mr. CRAMER, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN), the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER), the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) and the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 94, a bill to award 3 Congressional Gold Medals to the members of the 1980 United

States Olympic Men's Ice Hockey Team, in recognition of their extraordinary achievement at the XIII Olympic Winter Games where, being comprised of amateur collegiate players, they defeated the dominant Soviet ice hockey team in the historic "Miracle on Ice", revitalizing morale in the United States at the height of the Cold War, inspiring generations, and transforming the sport of ice hockey in the United States.

S. 100

At the request of Mr. TUBERVILLE, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 100, a bill to repeal the Corporate Transparency Act.

S. 117

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. JUSTICE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 117, a bill to provide remedies to members of the Armed Forces discharged or subject to adverse action under the COVID-19 vaccine mandate.

S. 151

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. ALSOBROOKS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 151, a bill to exclude the authority to impose duties and tariff-rate quotas from the International Emergency Economic Powers Act.

S. 197

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. JUSTICE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 197, a bill to require the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States to review any purchase or lease of real estate near a military installation or military airspace in the United States by a foreign person connected to or subsidized by the Russian Federation, the People's Republic of China, the Islamic Republic of Iran, or the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and for other purposes.

S. 214

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. JUSTICE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 214, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to increase the rate of the special pension payable to Medal of Honor recipients, and for other purposes.

S. 338

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. KIM) was added as a cosponsor of S. 338, a bill to award posthumously a Congressional Gold Medal to Fred Korematsu, in recognition of his contributions to civil rights, his loyalty and patriotism to the United States, and his dedication to justice and equality.

S. 339

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the names of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) were added as cosponsors of S. 339, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act

to provide for Medicare coverage of multi-cancer early detection screening tests.

S. 356

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 356, a bill to extend the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000.

S. 398

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 398, a bill to transfer and limit Executive Branch authority to suspend or restrict the entry of a class of aliens.

S. 410

At the request of Mr. WARNOCK, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. ALSOBROOKS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 410, a bill to amend titles 10 and 38, United States Code, to improve benefits and services for surviving spouses, and for other purposes.

S. 554

At the request of Mr. SULLIVAN, the names of the Senator from Utah (Mr. CURTIS), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. GALLEGGO) and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) were added as cosponsors of S. 554, a bill to enhance bilateral defense cooperation between the United States and Israel, and for other purposes.

S. 556

At the request of Mr. SULLIVAN, the names of the Senator from Utah (Mr. CURTIS), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. GALLEGGO) and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) 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. 703

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. GALLEGGO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 703, a bill to establish a pilot program to assess the use of technology to speed up and enhance the cargo inspection process at land ports of entry along the border.

S. 752

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 752, a bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to streamline enrollment under the Medicaid program of certain providers across State lines.

S. 761

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor 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. 766

At the request of Ms. ERNST, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 766, a bill to require an annual report of taxpayer-funded projects that are over budget and behind schedule.

S.J. RES. 3

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. MCCORMICK) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 3, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Internal Revenue Service relating to "Gross Proceeds Reporting by Brokers That Regularly Provide Services Effectuating Digital Asset Sales".

S.J. RES. 18

At the request of Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 18, a joint resolution disapproving the rule submitted by the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection relating to "Overdraft Lending: Very Large Financial Institutions".

S.J. RES. 24

At the request of Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 24, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Environmental Protection Agency relating to "National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants: Rubber Tire Manufacturing".

S.J. RES. 28

At the request of Mr. RICKETTS, the names of the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER) and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) were added as cosponsors of 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".

S. RES. 47

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. KIM) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 47, a resolution designating January 30, 2025, as "Fred Korematsu Day of Civil Liberties and the Constitution".

S. RES. 100

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the names of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ), the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 100, a resolution dissenting from the United States delegation's February 24, 2025, vote at the United Nations General Assembly.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED
BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and
Ms. BALDWIN):

S. 830. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize the program relating to lifespan respite care, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce legislation with my colleague from Wisconsin, Senator BALDWIN, to reauthorize the Lifespan Respite Care Program.

Every day, an estimated 53 million family caregivers attend to loved ones across all age groups, disabilities, and chronic conditions. Respite care gives these full-time caregivers a much-needed opportunity to take a temporary break from their important responsibilities.

Caregivers help their loved ones remain at home, and the decision to assume these responsibilities full time often delays the need for nursing home care. While many of these individuals care for an older adult, almost one-third of caregivers attend to family members under the age of 50. The value of their efforts is tremendous, amounting to more than \$600 billion in uncompensated care each year.

This compassionate task, however, can take a tremendous toll. Caregivers experience higher mortality rates and are more likely to acquire acute and chronic health conditions themselves.

Respite care helps reduce mental stress and physical health problems that they may experience, thus helping to keep caregivers healthy and families intact. Yet almost 85 percent of America's caregivers have never received any respite services.

As a Senator representing the State with the oldest median age in the Nation, the well-being of our older citizens and their caregivers is among my top priorities.

Since the Lifespan Respite Care Act was enacted in 2006, 38 States and the District of Columbia have received grants to increase the availability and quality of respite services. Our legislation would extend this programming for another 5 years, through fiscal year 2030.

In Maine, there are approximately 166,000 family caregivers who provide 155 million hours of care to loved ones each year. The Maine Department of Health highlighted the importance of respite care in a report released earlier this year that evaluates the Maine State Respite Care Program. Participants shared how assistance made available through this program has enabled them to take much-needed breaks, reduce their anxiety, and even reenergize their enthusiasm for caregiving.

One Mainer shared that access to respite care has meant that she has been able to truly visit with her parents when she spends time with them in-

stead of using all of that time just to do their chores, their yard work, and other tasks. She says that it has been wonderful to have someone help her parents with their chores and shopping for their needs, and it has meant that she, herself, is far less tired.

Stories such as these emphasize the importance of respite care, of a break for these caregivers who are giving so much to their family members.

Although most caregivers are adults, there are also more than 5 million young people in our country who provide care for grandparents, parents, or siblings with disabilities. Studies have found that approximately one in five young adults who dropped out of school did so to care for a family member. These children often choose to give up activities that other teens should enjoy, such as extracurricular activities—sports, outside activities—and they may experience depression or anxiety. Our legislation would clarify that young people who are caregivers, including those who are under age 18, are also able to access respite care services.

There is a large gap between caregivers who need respite services, who need a break from the 24-hour care of their loved ones, and those who actually receive this kind of assistance. Our bill would help close that gap by reauthorizing funding for this program that has helped States establish or strengthen respite services. This funding can be used to assist caregivers in finding available respite services, to train and recruit volunteers to provide temporary caregiving, and to provide financial support through vouchers so that caregivers can better afford respite services.

Our bill is widely supported by leading caregiver and respite organizations, including the ARCH National Respite Network and Resource Center, the Alzheimer's Association, and the Alzheimer's Impact Movement.

Our bipartisan legislation will provide the necessary resources to ensure that more caregivers have access to the respite services they need. I urge all of our colleagues to support this important, bipartisan legislation. It will make a real difference for the caregivers, the family caregivers, in our States.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, today, I rise to reaffirm my partnership with Senator SUSAN COLLINS in the Lifespan Respite Care Reauthorization Act of 2025.

Senator COLLINS and I recognize the challenges that family caregivers face. We have worked together over many years to advance legislation to support the essential role that caregivers play in our communities. We were successful in passing legislation that establishes a national strategy to support family caregivers, the RAISE Family Caregivers Act, and we are committed to reauthorizing the Lifespan Respite

Care Program that supports the health and well-being of family caregivers.

Every day, family caregivers in Wisconsin and across our country tend to the needs of their loved ones. Although this work can be very, very rewarding, it can also be emotionally and physically challenging.

After serving as my grandmother's primary caregiver as she got older, I know firsthand the time, the dedication, and the sacrifice involved to keep our aging, disabled, or sick loved ones safe and well. Caregiving can be a 24/7 job, and too often, family caregivers compromise their own health to ensure that their loved ones are not left in limbo.

Respite care offers family caregivers a necessary break to focus on their own mental health and well-being. That is why I was proud to reintroduce our bipartisan legislation so that our family caregivers can access the support and the relief they need. This bill would support family caregivers by reauthorizing the Lifespan Respite Care Program, which allows full-time caregivers to take a temporary break from their responsibilities caring for aging or disabled loved ones.

Across the country, there are over 53 million Americans who currently provide uncompensated care for their families, which provides an estimated \$600 billion in uncompensated care each year. Let that sink in.

By protecting the health of caregivers, respite care decreases the need for professional long-term care and allows individuals who require care to remain at home.

I look forward to continuing to work with Senator COLLINS to advance this important legislation in the 119th Congress.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself and
Mr. GRASSLEY):

S. 835. A bill to amend the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 to establish a voluntary program to reduce food loss and waste, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

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. 835

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 "Reduce Food Loss and Waste Act of 2025".

SEC. 2. FOOD LOSS AND WASTE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM.

Subtitle A of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1621 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"SEC. 210B. FOOD LOSS AND WASTE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM.

"(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

"(1) APPARENTLY WHOLESOME FOOD.—The term 'apparently wholesome food' has the meaning given the term in subsection (b) of

the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act (42 U.S.C. 1791(b)).

“(2) **CERTIFIED PARTICIPANT.**—The term ‘certified participant’ means an eligible participant that has been certified under subsection (d).

“(3) **ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANT.**—The term ‘eligible participant’ means—

“(A) a contractor that has entered into a contract with an executive agency, the Senate, or the House of Representatives for the provision, service, or sale of food in the United States;

“(B) a State, local, municipal, or Tribal government;

“(C) a corporation, partnership, organization, or association;

“(D) a farm or a food producer, manufacturer, processor, holder, or packer;

“(E) a retail grocer;

“(F) a restaurant or similar food service establishment;

“(G) an institution of higher education or a consortium of those institutions; or

“(H) a primary or secondary school or a consortium of those institutions.

“(4) **EXCESS.**—The term ‘excess’, with respect to food, means that the food would otherwise be discarded.

“(5) **FOOD.**—The term ‘food’ means food (as defined in section 201 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 321)) that is intended for human consumption.

“(6) **PROGRAM.**—The term ‘program’ means the Food Loss and Waste Reduction Certification Program established under subsection (b).

“(7) **SECRETARY.**—The term ‘Secretary’ means the Secretary of Agriculture.

“(b) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—The Secretary shall establish a voluntary program, to be known as the ‘Food Loss and Waste Reduction Certification Program’—

“(1) to certify eligible participants in accordance with subsection (d); and

“(2) to promote certified participants in accordance with subsection (e).

“(c) **PURPOSES.**—The purposes of the program are—

“(1) to reduce food loss and waste;

“(2) to increase donations of excess, apparently wholesome food to nonprofit organizations that provide food assistance to individuals in need; and

“(3) to increase the use of alternative disposal methods for food, such as redirection to animal feed, anaerobic digestion, and composting.

“(d) **CERTIFICATION.**—

“(1) **CRITERIA.**—

“(A) **IN GENERAL.**—

“(i) **ESTABLISHMENT AND PUBLICATION.**—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of the Reduce Food Loss and Waste Act of 2025, the Secretary shall establish and publish in the Federal Register criteria for the certification of an eligible participant under the program.

“(ii) **INCLUSIONS.**—Criteria described in clause (i) shall include the submission to a third-party certifier accredited under paragraph (3) of documentation from 12 consecutive months on the quantity of food that the eligible participant—

“(I) has donated to nonprofit organizations that provide food assistance for individuals in need; or

“(II) has sent to be disposed of.

“(B) **STAKEHOLDER INPUT.**—The Secretary shall solicit comments from interested parties prior to the establishment or revision of the criteria described in subparagraph (A).

“(C) **REVISIONS.**—

“(i) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary shall revise the criteria described in subparagraph (A) on a periodic basis.

“(ii) **PUBLICATION.**—The Secretary shall publish in the Federal Register criteria re-

vised under clause (i) not later than 270 days before the effective date of the revised criteria, including an explanation of the revisions.

“(2) **ACCREDITATION BODIES.**—

“(A) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of the Reduce Food Loss and Waste Act of 2025, the Secretary shall establish a process to recognize accreditation bodies to accredit third-party certifiers under paragraph (3)(A).

“(B) **STANDARDS.**—The Secretary shall recognize an accreditation body under subparagraph (A) if the accreditation body meets such standards as the Secretary shall establish.

“(3) **THIRD-PARTY CERTIFIERS.**—

“(A) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of the Reduce Food Loss and Waste Act of 2025, the Secretary shall establish a process for accreditation bodies recognized under paragraph (2) to accredit third-party certifiers to review and certify eligible participants under the program.

“(B) **STANDARDS.**—An accreditation body recognized under paragraph (2) shall accredit a third-party certifier under subparagraph (A) if the third-party certifier meets such standards as the Secretary shall establish.

“(C) **PREFERENCE.**—In accrediting third-party certifiers under subparagraph (A), an accreditation body recognized under paragraph (2) shall give preference to institutions of higher education that have expertise in food loss and waste reduction.

“(D) **CERTIFICATION.**—A third-party certifier accredited under subparagraph (A) shall review and certify an eligible participant under the program if the eligible participant meets the criteria established under paragraph (1).

“(4) **PUBLICATION.**—The Secretary shall maintain on a publicly available website of the Department of Agriculture—

“(A) a list of accreditation bodies recognized under paragraph (2); and

“(B) a list of third-party certifiers accredited under paragraph (3).

“(e) **PROMOTION.**—

“(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary shall promote a certified participant under the program, including through—

“(A) voluntary labeling established under paragraph (2); and

“(B) such other communications as the Secretary determines to be appropriate relating to the products, buildings, practices, and policies of the certified participant, such as—

“(i) publication on the website of the Department of Agriculture of information relating to the certified participant; and

“(ii) holding events to promote the certified participant or otherwise relating to the program.

“(2) **VOLUNTARY LABELING.**—The Secretary shall establish 1 or more voluntary labels that indicate that a certified participant is certified under the program.

“(f) **INTERAGENCY COORDINATION.**—The Secretary shall carry out this section in coordination with the Commissioner of Food and Drugs and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, in accordance with the memorandum of understanding revised under section 3 of the Reduce Food Loss and Waste Act of 2025.

“(g) **AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section, including for the hiring of additional personnel, \$3,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2026 through 2030, to remain available until expended.”

SEC. 3. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING.

The Secretary of Agriculture, the Commissioner of Food and Drugs, and the Adminis-

trator of the Environmental Protection Agency shall revise, in accordance with section 210B of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (as added by section 2), the agreement signed on December 17, 2020, relating to cooperation and coordination on food loss and waste.

By Mrs. BRITT (for herself, Mr. KAINE, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. KING, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 846. A bill to implement or strengthen programs that increase the supply of quality child care services by enhancing the wages of child care workers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. BRITT (for herself, Mr. KAINE, Ms. ERNST, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. CURTIS, Mr. KING, Ms. COLLINS, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. 847. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand the employer-provided child care credit and the dependent care assistance exclusion; to the Committee on Finance.

Mrs. BRITT. Mr. President on November 5, President Donald J. Trump was elected to a second term on the back of a big-tent coalition. In 2024, this election showed us that we needed to put the finishing touches on a shift that we have seen occurring in our party and our Nation.

The Republican Party is the party of parents, we are the party of families, and we are the party of hard-working Americans. We have an opportunity to prove it, starting with addressing our country's childcare crisis.

Anyone who has kids can attest to this: It is incredibly difficult to find affordable, accessible, high-quality childcare.

When I was a student in Tuscaloosa—I had gone back to school with essentially a newborn and an 11-month-old; decided, why not? Law school sounds good. I joked that on the scale of bad ideas I have had in my life—and I have had a few—that one is without a doubt No. 1.

In the midst of trying to figure out my 1L year, I also had to figure out childcare, and it was challenging for me to find a place where I could get both of my kids in. So at the very beginning, there I was, taking one child to one place and one child to another, all hoping to show up at torts on time and then get back before you get fined, picking them both up and hoping traffic didn't keep me from being late.

When my husband and I had the opportunity to move to Birmingham, where he began his new career and I had 1 more year of law school left, we got them immediately—both of our kids—into one childcare facility. But the check that we wrote—wow—it felt like I was writing a check for college tuition and not a check for a 3- and 4-year-old to be cared for and loved and educated during the day.

Well, I will tell you what. The problem—that was, what, 13 years ago—has

only gotten worse. Childcare costs have been increasing. They have actually increased 36 percent over the last 10 years, actually outpacing inflation. It has gotten to the point where parents, on average, are spending 22 percent of their income on childcare. The median annual price of childcare in this country is about \$15,600. The cost is crushing for so many parents. It is also prohibitive.

Ask yourself this: How many married couples, do you think, think about having another child; they want to, and they start looking at the dollars and cents and feel like they can't financially afford it?

To my fellow Republicans: Don't we want to incentivize rather than deter parents from starting their families? And how can we, as the party of life and the party of families and the party of parents and the party of workers, neglect to make that easier? If our goal is creating a comprehensive culture of life—and that should absolutely be our goal—then we have a role to play in the childcare space.

But families are not the only ones that are affected by the current state of childcare in this country. The amount of money that the American economy loses annually because of childcare, the challenges that we face as a result of the affordability and accessibility, are staggering. Our economy loses \$122 billion a year, and 74 percent of mothers and 66 percent of fathers either have to leave work early, arrive late, or be absent because of last-minute changes in childcare. Also, 59 percent of part-time or nonworking parents say they would go back to work—they want to go back to work—but, unfortunately, they don't have access to quality childcare at a reasonable cost. That isn't good for the broader economy, and it isn't good for American workers.

President Trump has made it clear he wants America to be a place that builds things once again. He wants to unleash a golden era for made-in-America excellence, where the skill, hard work, and ingenuity of our people accomplish the impossible and changes the world. To accomplish that goal, which I wholeheartedly agree with, we need to tackle the childcare affordability crisis.

Ultimately, this is a workforce crisis as well. That is where the two-pronged approach that I have introduced today, alongside a number of my colleagues, comes into play. With the Child Care Workforce Act and the Child Care Availability and Affordability Act, it consists of targeted investments in families and small businesses. It modernizes our existing tax credits so that our policy reflects our current economic reality. It is a good example of commonsense policymaking.

We are not creating or growing another entitlement. We are letting Americans keep more of their hard-earned taxpayer dollars in a manner that grows our economy and gives peo-

ple an opportunity for their American dream. And we are offering job creators an incentive to invest directly into hard-working people with childcare-related benefits.

We will help couples who want to have more children. We will help parents be able to reenter the workforce after having kids. And we will help our job creators—especially small businesses—recruit and retain workers.

This legislation is pro-family. It is pro-Main Street. It is pro-growth.

For the first time in years, the Republican Party controls both Chambers of Congress and the White House. We have an opportunity we can't afford to waste. If we truly are the party of parents and families and hard-working Americans, we have an opportunity to prove it. Let's address the childcare crisis in this year's tax package. I think America will be better for it.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 105—CON-DEMNING THE MASS TERMINATIONS OF EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS CARRIED OUT WITH NO JUSTIFICATION OR ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT ON VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. SLOTKIN, Mr. LUJÁN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WARNOCK, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. KAINE, Ms. ROSEN, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Ms. ALSOBROOKS, Mr. KELLY, Ms. WARREN, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. SCHIFF, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. GALLEGO, Mr. PETERS, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. WARNER, Ms. SMITH, Mr. PADILLA, and Mr. HEINRICH) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs:

S. RES. 105

Whereas veterans make up approximately 30 percent of the Federal workforce, including nearly 26 percent of the workforce of the Department of Veterans Affairs and 45 percent of the workforce of the Department of Defense;

Whereas more than 642,000 veterans are continuing their public service through careers in the Federal Government;

Whereas veterans bring invaluable experience, including technical expertise, training, security clearances, and commitment to service, to their work as Federal employees;

Whereas, on February 13, 2025, the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Doug Collins, announced the termination of 1,000 employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs;

Whereas, on February 24, 2025, Secretary Collins terminated an additional 1,400 employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs;

Whereas United States Senators have, in pursuit of their oversight duties, attempted to obtain detailed information from the Department of Veterans Affairs regarding these terminations, including any analysis of the impacts on veterans, confirmation that the

terminations did not affect essential services like call centers, homeless programs, mental health care, transition assistance, claims processing, tribal health, and veterans education benefits, involvement of unelected, unauthorized, non-Department of Veterans Affairs personnel in the decisionmaking process, and how much the Department of Veterans Affairs spent recruiting and hiring these employees and will now spend covering their workloads, but have yet to receive that information;

Whereas the mass terminations of employees of the Federal Government are damaging the economic security and morale of veterans and their families;

Whereas these terminations are harming the trust of veterans in the Department of Veterans Affairs, and harming the ability of the Department to recruit and retain employees;

Whereas gainful employment and economic security is a chief social determinant of health; and

Whereas veterans and employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs have expressed concerns regarding the effect of these terminations, including—

(1) the suspension of service lines, beds, and operating rooms at hospitals and clinics of the Department;

(2) the cancellation or postponement of mammogram and other time-sensitive appointments;

(3) the reduction of support lines for caregivers;

(4) the termination of Veterans Crisis Line employees;

(5) the termination of employees performing critical research at the Department;

(6) the termination of cyber security personnel protecting websites of the Department; and

(7) the termination of Vet Center staff.

Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) mass terminations of employees at the Department of Veterans Affairs carried out with no justification or analysis of the impact on veterans and their families should be condemned; and

(2) all affected employees should be reinstated.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mrs. BRITT. Mr. President, I have three 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 in open session during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, March 4, 2025, at 9:30 a.m., to consider a nomination.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, March 4, 2025, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

The Committee on Veterans Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, March

4, 2025, at 10 a.m., to conduct a joint hearing.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following interns and law clerks in my office be granted floor privileges until May 5, 2025: John Mark Huff, Jr., John Paul Doucet, Alexandra Grace Davis, and Maura Elaine Schlee.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5, 2025

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate recess until 8:20 p.m. today and proceed as a body to the Hall of the House of Representatives for the joint session of Congress provided under the provisions of H. Con. Res. 11; that upon the dissolution of the joint session, the Senate stand adjourned until 10 a.m. on Wednesday, March 5; 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 resume consideration of Calendar No. 20,

S.J. Res. 28; further, that if cloture is invoked on the Blanche nomination, all time be expired at 3:45 p.m. and the Senate vote on confirmation; that following confirmation of the Blanche nomination, the Senate proceed to legislative session and resume consideration of S.J. Res. 28 and that all time be expired and the Senate vote on passage of the joint resolution; finally, that if any nominations are confirmed during Wednesday's session, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, for the information of all Senators, Senators should expect one vote at 11 a.m. on cloture on the Blanche nomination and two votes at 3:45 p.m.: confirmation of the Blanche nomination and passage of S.J. Res. 28, Senator RICKETTS' digital consumer payments CRA.

RECESS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that it stand in recess under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:40 p.m., recessed until 8:20 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. MORENO).

JOINT SESSION OF THE TWO HOUSES—ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed as a body to the Hall of the House of Representatives to receive a message from the President of the United States.

Thereupon, the Senate, preceded by the Chief of Staff, Sergeant at Arms, Betsy Holahan; the Secretary of the Senate, Jackie Barber; and the Vice President of the United States, JD Vance, proceeded to the Hall of the House of Representatives to hear the address by the President of the United States, Donald J. Trump.

(The address delivered by the President of the United States to the joint session of the two Houses of Congress is printed in the proceedings of the House of Representatives in today's RECORD.)

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5, 2025, AT 10 A.M.

At the conclusion of the joint session of the two Houses, and in accordance with the order previously entered, at 11:04 p.m., the Senate adjourned until Wednesday, March 5, 2025, at 10 a.m.