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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Friday, October 24, 2025, at 2 p.m.

Senate

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2025

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

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal Lord God, give our lawmakers this day the wisdom to seek Your guidance and to make time to consider and act on Your precepts. May they not simply embrace the opinions of others, but seek Your truth for their lives. Lord, make them muscular thinkers, not merely reflecting the thoughts of others. Help them to make pleasing You their first priority. We continue our importunity for the ending of this shutdown, particularly pray for our Capitol Police and the many others who are serving without monetary compensation. We pray also for those who are not considered essential workers. Lord, reward them all as only You can. We pray in Your magnificent Name. 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 Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MULLIN). 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, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The great Senator from Iowa.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS AND EXTENSIONS ACT, 2026—Motion to Proceed

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, on behalf of the majority leader of the Senate, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 168, H.R. 5371.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The senior assistant executive clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 168, H.R. 5371, making continuing appropriations and extensions for fiscal year 2026, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, first of all, I want to compliment the Chaplain on each one of his prayers this week. He has made very important in his prayers the importance of opening up the government and ending the Schumer shutdown.

I come to the floor today to speak about the Department of Health and Human Services inspectors general routinely issuing recommendations to improve the operation of healthcare

programs and to produce savings for the taxpayers.

Until this year, two very important and top HHS inspectors general recommendations were unaddressed, and they should have been addressed because these are egregious wastes of taxpayers' moneys. No. 1, the report says we should stop duplicative enrollment on two or more State Medicaid Programs of individuals and, second, stopping Medicaid payments for enrollees who have passed away.

The tax bill signed by President Trump July 4 puts an end to this fraud, waste, and abuse in the Medicaid Program. That legislation establishes solutions to stop duplicative enrollments and sending payments out for deceased enrollees and providers. Once implemented, I hope that these recommendations of the inspectors general are satisfied.

Let me give some examples of reasons why these reforms are necessary. In July, the Centers For Medicare and Medicaid Services found 2.8 million Americans were enrolled in two or more Medicaid or Federal marketplace plans.

It is quite obvious that any enrollee only needs one insurance plan for Medicaid—not both—to satisfy their healthcare options.

Is this duplicative enrollment a new discovery? No. Previously, the HHS inspector general has found that nearly all States have paid managed care insurance companies for enrollees who were enrolled in two different State Medicaid Programs.

In another example, in August, a Louisiana Medicaid Program audit

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



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found that \$9.6 million were paid out for deceased enrollees in that Medicaid Program.

In other words, showing how stupid it is to pay for healthcare for people who have died. Now, do you happen to think that Louisiana is an isolated incident? It is not an isolated incident. In the past decade, the HHS inspector general has uncovered similar fraudulent payments paid out for deceased enrollees in at least 17 States.

In addition, State Medicaid Programs have been uncovering fraud but, at the same time, failing to return the correct refund to the Federal Government.

Last year, four States were fined by the HHS inspector general for failing to report and return Federal Medicaid overpayments. Using the resources established in the 2025 tax bill, we will put a stop to this and save taxpayers over \$24 billion over 10 years.

While this action might seem like common sense, you have heard me say so often that Washington, DC, is an island surrounded by reality. But now duplicative enrollment payments for deceased enrollees and failing to return Federal money correctly is a stiff to the taxpayers every time it happens.

With these savings, we can protect Medicaid resources for the reason that Medicaid was set up, to help vulnerable Americans like the disabled, like the elderly, like pregnant women, like children, and many more groups of people you can name.

So common sense will now prevail as a result of the changes that the Congress has made in that 2025 tax bill that Congress passed and the President signed on July 4.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, there was a time when Democrats opposed government shutdowns. And not just opposed, Democrats were critical of holding government funding hostage to political demands.

Our Democratic colleague from Michigan said that funding the government is "Congress' most basic responsibility."

The senior Senator from Massachusetts, a leading Democrat, said:

The least we can do—the bare minimum that we can do—would be to pass a "continuing resolution" to keep the doors open and the lights on.

And the Democrat leader, just last year, described the "chaos and pain and needless heartache" that a shutdown brings to American families.

So what has changed? Why are Democrats, in 2025, suddenly comfortable shutting down the government, subjecting Americans to all that chaos, pain, and heartache that the Democrat leader described? Why did Democrats instigate the longest full government shutdown in history?

Well, they would like you to believe it is about healthcare. It is not. Repub-

licans have been perfectly clear that we are willing to have a discussion about healthcare, just not while government funding is being held hostage—and all the Federal employees that come with that.

So if this were really about healthcare, Democrats would be voting in favor of the clean CR as the quickest way to open the government and start the discussions.

But that is not where we are, and that is because what is really driving Democrats isn't healthcare. It is not a desire for negotiations. It is politics and far-left activists who demanded a showdown with President Trump.

The real reason we are now in the longest full government shutdown in history is because Democrats are afraid of backlash from the far left if they stand down. One Democrat Senator was quoted this week saying:

"People are going to get hammered" if they vote for the House-passed bill to reopen the government and keep it funded through Nov. 21.

"People are going to get hammered" if they vote for the clean continuing resolution. That is from a Democrat Senator—hammered by outside groups, hammered by leftwing political activists.

Or take it from one of the organizers of Saturday's No Kings rally, who said:

I'm telling every elected I talk to:—

That is every elected official that I talked to—

millions will be out cheering you on, or they'll be calling for new leadership.

Democrats are keeping the government shut down because they are scared—scared of a primary from the left, scared of losing fundraising dollars, scared that the far left will punish them if they don't appear to be fighting President Trump hard enough.

Unfortunately, Democrats' political games are having real consequences. Airport tower staffing shortages have caused thousands—thousands—of flight delays nationwide. Medicare patients and people in rural areas are dealing with the elimination of telehealth services. Military families have turned to food banks in "unprecedented" numbers.

And things are about to get worse. The nutrition assistance programs that millions of Americans depend on to feed their families are in jeopardy.

And, tomorrow, Federal workers will miss a full paycheck because of the Democrat shutdown. That is right. Tomorrow, Federal workers will miss a full paycheck, thanks to Senate Democrats.

Republicans want to do something about this. We would love to pass the clean, continuing, nonpartisan resolution, which would pay everyone. It passed the House a long time ago. We have voted on it 12 times here now. They continue, with three exceptions, to block-vote against it. Twelve times now, Democrats have blocked just paying our Federal employees.

It is Federal employees all throughout the Federal workforce, which literally is millions of Americans. But it is people right here. People in this Chamber, people in this building had to stay here the night before last, all night—all night—to listen to some Democrats drone on. One Democrat Senator read the same poem four times.

They were here all night, not getting paid. Three hundred thirty-five, exactly, Federal employees, in this building, had to stay here all night, work through the night and into the next day, so they could make some campaign political speech or point, in the middle of the night, that nobody is listening to, obviously—which is why, I guess, you read the same poem four times—four different times—reading from books, while the people sitting here, doing the work, aren't getting paid.

And so, today, we are going to have a vote on Senator RON JOHNSON's bill that would guarantee pay for Federal employees who are working through the shutdown. The 335 people who had to be here, the night before last, to listen to that—they would finally get paid. It is also people like air traffic controllers, TSA agents, park rangers, Federal law enforcement, ICE, Border Patrol—people putting their lives at risk to keep Americans safe.

So we will see what Democrats do. Do they think people that are working ought to get paid?

Well, to date, Democrats have rejected every opportunity they have been given to put the American people ahead of their far-left base.

As I said, they have rejected a clean CR now 12 times—a CR, continuing resolution—that would fund the government until November 21 to give us time to finish the appropriations process, a clean CR, a CR that has no partisan riders, no policy gimmicks that came over from the House, just clean, fund the government straight up. It is sitting right here at the desk of the U.S. Senate.

Five Democrats could help us pass it today. We could send it to the President; he would sign it into law; the government opens up; and all the people here and across our Federal Government would get paid.

Last week, Democrats blocked the bipartisan Defense appropriations bill that would have paid our troops. It came out of the Senate Appropriations Committee by a vote of 26 to 3, very bipartisan on the floor. It should have been. It usually is. It usually gets 80-plus votes on the floor of the Senate, but they blocked it. It would have paid our troops, the Defense appropriations bill.

So today, we are going to have another opportunity to show whether they stand on the side of hard-working Americans or remain beholden to their far-left base. We heard Democrats this week criticize Senator JOHNSON's bill because it would provide pay only to

workers who continue to work through the shutdown. They say they want everybody to get paid.

I have great news for them. The clean continuing resolution sitting at the desk would pay everybody—everybody. We just need five more Democrats to support it. Five more gets us to 60. It takes a supermajority in the Senate. Democrats are the only thing standing in the way of the outcome that they say they want, which is for everybody to get paid.

The clean, nonpartisan continuing resolution sits right there at the desk. President Trump is ready to sign it. The shutdown could be over in a matter of hours if just five Democrats would agree.

But, unfortunately, the shadow of the Democrats' far-left base continues to stand in the way. You don't have to take it from me. As one source familiar with Democrats' thinking told *The Hill* this week, "We would have enough votes to reopen the government if people were not terrified of getting the guillotine."

"We would have enough votes to reopen the government if Democrats were not terrified of getting the guillotine."

We just need five more Democrats to show some courage. This was a statement made yesterday by a Democrat House Member. Sometimes people around here say the quiet part out loud—sometimes it is just subconsciously—and this is what she said. She is a Member of the Democratic leadership in the House of Representatives:

Of course there will be families that are going to suffer . . . but it is one of the few leverage times we have.

Boy, just take that in. Take that in:

Of course there will be families that are going to suffer.

But we don't want to give up our leverage. Leverage for what?

Leverage for what?

We need five Democrats to show a little courage. Reopen the government, and let's get to work.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, we are staring into the abyss of the healthcare crisis here in America. And what is Donald Trump doing as we stare into the abyss of the healthcare crisis? He is flying off, yet again, to another corner of the world while people's premiums are set to skyrocket here at home. He shut down the government, Trump has, for 23 days, the second longest shutdown ever by refusing to negotiate with Democrats. He is bulldozing the East Wing of the White House to make way for his own ballroom. His own Justice Department is getting ready to cut him a personal check—a personal check—to Donald Trump for \$230 million out of taxpayer money when people are suffering in terms of their healthcare premiums. And then he was

caught trying to push a nominee with proud Nazi and racist views.

And, again, we are in the middle of a healthcare crisis that will decimate tens of millions of Americans. But Donald Trump doesn't seem to want to touch this topic, touch the topic with a 10-foot pole, and has decided to fly off to another country, yet again, without negotiating with Democrats.

Leader JEFFRIES and I asked him to sit down and talk with us. We said we need to talk. He refused. Donald Trump would literally rather fly to another country than meet with Democrats to negotiate on healthcare because he knows the American people are on one side of the issue and his base—his rightwing MAGA base—is on the other. He is afraid to touch the issue so he does his version of JOHNSON's shutting down the House. He flies away.

It is hard to fathom someone more out of touch and oblivious to our Nation's struggles than the current President.

Let's take the ballroom, for instance. This is the image Donald Trump doesn't want America to see. This is the picture Donald Trump told his people to hide from the American people. Do you know what the picture represents? It is not just the desecration of the White House. It shows that Donald Trump is not focused on fixing healthcare but rather on vanity projects like this one that don't do anything to benefit the American people. They only benefit Trump and his ego.

Donald Trump is telling the American people: No Medicaid for you; the ballroom for me. Americans are appalled at these images. A YouGov poll this week found 50 percent of the Americans oppose this ballroom project, only 33 percent in support.

To Americans, the image of Donald Trump adding a wrecking ball to the White House is a symbol for what he is doing to the whole country. Yes, this is the image Americans are seeing, and they don't like it. They don't like it.

I ask my Republican colleagues: Where are you? Frankly, the East Wing teardown is not the only thing Donald Trump is focused on instead of fixing healthcare. He is also using the Presidency to enrich himself. This week, we learned that Trump is pushing his own DOJ to write him a \$230 million check because his feelings got hurt after being investigated for criminal wrongdoing. While Americans are agonizing over their healthcare, Donald Trump is using the Presidency to reach into the taxpayers' till and put money in his own pocket. Imagine the gall of this President who tells the American people: No healthcare for you, but you pay me an additional \$230 million.

Again, I ask my Republican colleagues: Where are you? And again, I don't expect Republicans to oppose Donald Trump very often, but they should be outraged—outraged—by the way he is pillaging the DOJ to enrich himself.

And, finally, Americans are getting awfully fed up with the Trump administration's incompetence, corruption, and chaos. The data shows it. A few days ago, a Gallup poll showed movement you rarely see among the electorate in a short amount of time. Democrats' party ID is now 7 points higher since the start of the year—7 points higher. It was even with Republicans—"Are you a Democrat or Republican?"—when Trump took office. It is now plus-up 7, Democrats. You rarely see that kind of movement for that kind of number so quickly. It should be an immediate red-light warning to my Republican colleagues.

To quote the pollster Harry Enten, who works for CNN:

I was shocked to see how [Democrats] have gained on Party ID per Gallup. [Democrats] lead by 7 pts vs. a tie at the start of the year. Looks a lot more like the 2018 cycle than 2022.

Indeed, Democrats have gained House seats in all midterms since 1990 when party ID looks like what Gallup has.

That is Harry Enten, not me. You don't need to be a political genius to understand why these numbers are moving. People see that Donald Trump is making their lives worse on costs and healthcare and on their financial security.

We spend so much time here in Washington focused on the day-to-day back-and-forth. But people back home don't care about the back-and-forth here in Washington. They care about how much they are paying for groceries. They care about their rising electricity bills. They care about the dramatic increase so many will pay in their healthcare premiums very soon.

What has Donald Trump done while all this is happening, while people are just sitting down at the dinner table on Friday nights and wondering, How the heck am I going to pay the bills? He has enacted the biggest healthcare cuts in American history. He is closing rural hospitals. Americans can see with their own eyes what Trump is doing.

So I say to my Republican colleagues: Beware, this Gallup poll is a warning that Americans are fed up with the high costs that go up each week and the Trump administration's incompetence, corruption, and chaos. It is only going to get worse the more Donald Trump doubles down on this shutdown and on his failed policies.

SHUTDOWN FAIRNESS ACT

Mr. President, on the Johnson bill—that is RON JOHNSON, Senator JOHNSON—right now, on day 23 of the longest total government shutdown in American history, millions of American families are wondering how they will make rent, pay their bills, or put food on the table. What is the Republican response? To hand Donald Trump and his right-hand man Russ Vought, the originator of the evil, awful Project 2025—to hand Russell Vought more power to decide who gets paid and who gets punished.

Let me make one point very clear: The shutdown is on Donald Trump's

back, and the American people know it. They know that Republicans have the Presidency, the House, and the Senate and the shutdown is on them.

So Senator RON JOHNSON and Republicans are feeling the heat and have come up with this proposal. JOHNSON and Republicans know because they are feeling the heat that the American people know exactly who is in charge: Donald Trump and Republicans. When workers are laid off, when they are furloughed, they miss a paycheck, America knows who is to blame. It is on Donald Trump's back.

That is why Donald Trump and his allies are pushing this bill. The bill would not reopen the government, which is the only permanent solution to this crisis. Democrats want to reopen the government as quickly as we can. We want to sit down with THUNE, with JOHNSON, with Trump and negotiate a way to address this horrible healthcare crisis. We also want to make sure that every last Federal worker who has suffered during the Trump shutdown is taken care of.

So that is why Democrats are offering two solutions that actually include all of our Federal employees, not just the ones the President picks and chooses:

Oh, I will lay you off.
I will furlough you.
I won't do you.
I like you.
I don't like you.

That is not the way you govern, but that is how Trump seems to govern.

Our bill is an antidote to that awful way that Trump uses when he picks and chooses winners and losers whom he likes and hates.

The bill—the Republican bill—is a ruse. It is nothing more than another tool for Trump to hurt Federal workers and American families and to keep this shutdown going for as long as he wants.

We will not give Donald Trump a license to play politics with people's livelihoods. That is why we oppose this Johnson bill, because it doesn't end the pain of the shutdown; it extends it.

The only way—the only way—to pay every Federal worker is for Republicans to get serious and sit down with Democrats to avert their healthcare crisis and reopen the government.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican whip.

WAIVING QUORUM CALLS

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum calls with respect to cloture on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 191, S. 3012, and the Taibleson nomination.

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

H.R. 5371

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, today is day 23 of the Schumer shutdown of the government, and we just heard the minority leader—right here on the floor—continue to practice the politics of pain, and it is pain felt by the American people.

Remember, Senator SCHUMER is the one who said to the press:

Every day gets better for us.

I don't know who "us" is. It is not the American people, not the people who come to work all across the country and the Wyoming National Guard, the people all around America, the people in the Presiding Officer's State and mine, the people who aren't going to get paid.

Senator SCHUMER said: Can't we do anything about it?

Yes. You could vote to open the government.

Yesterday, they decided, once again, to vote to keep the government shut.

Tomorrow, hundreds of thousands of Federal workers are going to miss their paychecks because CHUCK SCHUMER and the Democrats will not vote to open the government. They won't do it. They haven't done it for 23 days. Democrats have now set the record for the longest full-time government shutdown in American history.

In previous shutdowns, some of the Agencies stayed open—not now. This is the longest shutdown in the history of the entire U.S. Government because, this time, no one is getting paid, not the Capitol Police officers who had to come in during the so-called filibuster by the Senator from Oregon, Senator MERKLEY; none of the people at the desk; none of the people who were working around the Capitol; none of the Democrats' staff or the Republicans' staff who were here as Senator MERKLEY droned on and on and on through the night, reading the same poem four times, to no avail. It was rubbish—all of it.

The Democrats have shut down this government, and they are punishing the American people as a result. They are more concerned about playing politics than they are about protecting working families. It is a big game that they are playing as American families suffer. And they don't seem to care that families are suffering. They are actually bragging about the fact that families are suffering.

This is the Democrat whip in the House of Representatives. What did she say this week? It wasn't just some slip of the tongue. She was in an interview. There is a video of her on television—I saw it early this morning—saying, of course, there are going to be families who are going to suffer. Of course, she says, there is going to be suffering—almost gleefully—because it is one of the few leverage times we have.

That is the Democrat whip of the House of Representatives. The Presiding Officer may have served with her when he served in the House before coming to the Senate. He knows this individual.

This is the politics of pain, practiced by the Democrats, and, apparently, they don't believe that withholding paychecks or stamps or funding to feed women and infants and children is a problem. They think it is leverage. They think it is a big game. Leverage

for what—to give taxpayer-funded healthcare to illegal immigrants? That is one of the demands that we got from CHUCK SCHUMER in the letter of demand to open the government.

Lay it all out there. What do they want? Lots of things, including healthcare—free, paid for by taxpayers—for illegal immigrants. They want \$1.5 trillion in permanent new spending added to the debt because whom are they trying to impress? The radical wing of the Democrat Party, their radical leftwing.

That is what the Democrats are trying to do. That is what CHUCK SCHUMER is trying to do. He doesn't care. He is standing here, talking. He is only talking to one group. It is the radical wing of the party—the people in New York who have nominated Mamdani to be the mayor of that city. The Democrats are willing to cause the American people to suffer because they want to continue to pass liberal policies that Americans don't want and never voted for but that are being demanded by that radical wing of the Democrat Party.

So what have we done as Republicans?

We have proposed a clean, bipartisan continuing resolution to reopen the government and that pays the workers who have been working for weeks without pay so they don't miss their paychecks.

Democrats have rejected it and have continued to reject it not once, not twice—12 times. It is a cycle of obstruction.

Democrats have voted for clean continuing resolutions, as I have heard the Presiding Officer say, a number of times. I have heard him say it on television. The Democrats voted for it 13 different times when Joe Biden was President. Now they oppose it. Why? Because President Trump is in the White House, and they don't even like the White House. They just had a picture of some of the improvements that the President is doing at the White House. They don't like that either. They don't like the fact that he is in the White House. They don't like the fact that he is improving the White House. They don't like the fact that he is going to continue to be in the White House.

Speaking of the President, just days ago, he told the Democrats that he was happy to meet. I agree, and we were there when he said it. He said he was happy to meet once they reopened the government, but since the Democrats continue to refuse to reopen the government, the Senate is going to try to do the next best thing. Today, this body is going to move to begin debate on Senator Johnson's Shutdown Fairness Act. So let's talk about it.

There is not a single good argument that I have heard against passing it immediately because this bill ensures that the men and women who keep our Nation safe receive their pay during this Schumer, Democrat-caused shutdown as they play politics. We have got

to pay the people who are keeping our Nation safe. It pays our troops who are protecting our Nation at home and abroad. It pays the Coast Guard as they continue to patrol our waters. It pays the Border Patrol. They defend our southern border. It pays members of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement as they round up and deport illegal immigrant criminals. It pays the air traffic controllers who guide flights safely to their destinations. It pays the TSA agents who screen the passengers at every airport in America. It pays the Capitol Police officers who have worked for weeks here without pay.

It applies back to the very first day of the Schumer shutdown, and that means employees will get their full pay. It applies to this shutdown, and it applies to future shutdowns. I think that is very important as we cannot allow the Democrats to continue to painfully treat the people and use the American people as what the Democrat whip calls, in the House, "leverage," hurting the American people for leverage. No. So it is not just for this shutdown but for future shutdowns to provide stability and predictability to those who keep us safe.

Would I prefer a clean continuing resolution that fully reopens the government today? Immediately? Absolutely, but Democrats have blocked a clean, bipartisan continuing resolution every single time we have offered them.

It has been reported that Democrats are going to filibuster this bill, today, too. So, when Democrats stand up here today and criticize the bill, remember this: The Democrats have a choice to pay the essential workers who are working right now and are working here without a paycheck or to send them into the weekend with empty bank accounts and bills they cannot pay. If Democrats vote no, it won't be about fairness. It is all going to be about politics. It is a dangerous game of politics they are playing.

Remember what the House Democrat whip told the press. She said: Of course families are going to suffer.

This is a Democrat.

Of course, she says, families are going to suffer, and this is one of the few times—the few leverage times—we have.

That is not about helping the American people. It is about taking advantage and using the American people maliciously, terribly, disgustingly, disgracefully. If the Democrats vote no, it is all going to be about leverage rather than paying the American people.

It is time to reopen the government. It truly is.

BORDER WALL FOOTBALL GAME

Mr. President, on a separate matter, on Saturday, the annual Border Wall football game comes to Laramie, WY.

For the 117th time, the Wyoming Cowboys will play Colorado State University. The winner of the game gets something called the Bronze Boot. This year, the Pokes are going to play in special Cowboy and Coal jerseys, and

uniformed coal miners from all around Wyoming will lead the Cowboys onto the field. This is a fantastic way to celebrate Wyoming's proud history and heritage.

NATIONAL COAL WEEK

Mr. President, in Wyoming, we have world-class coal. Wyoming's Powder River Basin provides nearly half of all the coal produced in America. It is clean coal. It is low-sulfur coal. We have enough coal to power America for at least the next 100 years.

Here in the Senate, Republicans are also celebrating this vital industry.

Senate Republicans introduced a resolution earlier this week to designate this week as National Coal Week.

I want to thank and congratulate Senator CYNTHIA LUMMIS for leading this important effort.

No one knows better than our home State of Wyoming how important coal is to keeping the lights on. Coal is the most affordable, available, reliable source of energy on the planet. National security, of course, starts with energy security. Coal means freedom. That is why coal is such an important part of the Republicans' agenda to unleash American energy. We are cutting redtape. We are opening up 13 million acres of Federal land for mining. Coal production is up more than 6 percent since last year.

The coal renaissance that we are seeing today is part of the broader American energy revival. It was even reported this week that the price of gasoline has fallen to below \$3 for the first time in 4 years. You didn't see this when Joe Biden was in the White House, and they were fighting American energy and making us desperate for energy. Oh, no. We are now heading into an energy-dominant time for America.

Across the country, families are feeling the financial relief that comes from returning to commonsense energy policies. Republicans know you can protect the environment without punishing the economy. Democrats never understood that. And, in Wyoming, we know better than anyone else. America is an energy superpower. Wyoming is America's energy breadbasket. We have the resources; we have the workers; and now we are acting like it.

So, as we mark National Coal Week, I want to thank the great men and women of our coal industry in Wyoming and across the Nation for helping make America energy dominant once again.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). The Democratic whip.

H.R. 5371

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I am sure that those who are following the opening remarks of the Senate today can sense the frustration, bordering on anger, with the current situation, the current status quo. It is shared on both sides of the aisle.

I have had the good fortune of serving in the House of Representatives

and the Senate, representing parts of Illinois and then the entire State, for a big part of my life. I have watched these institutions, the House and the Senate, face frustrating, disappointing, challenging situations. I have found that the rule of thumb is, basically, if reasonable people will sit down to the table and put the items on the table and say, "Let's see if we can find common ground," it usually works. It could work here too. We could reopen this government by the end of the day. I believe it. It is going to be even more difficult because the House of Representatives is not in session. I believe it has now been 3 weeks—maybe even 4 weeks—that they have been out of session. They need to be here, doing their job, helping to work to find a solution to this frustrating situation.

What exactly is behind the shutdown of this Federal Government?

Let me tell you. It is a serious issue that affects virtually every American.

Do you have health insurance?

I do. Most of us do.

Is it expensive? Yes.

Do you still need it? God, yes.

Without it, it would be even worse. With one automobile accident, one broken bone, one serious diagnosis, you could wipe out the savings of most American families. That is the reality. So health insurance is critical. People need it.

Do you know what is going to happen soon? I am sorry to say we are going to see a dramatic increase in health insurance premiums.

There was a debate here several months ago on what the President called his big, beautiful budget. The big, beautiful budget did many things, but in addition to some spending decisions, it made the decision that we were going to give a tax break to the wealthiest people in America, people like Elon Musk. His tax break, if I remember correctly—I don't have it written down here—was \$230,000 a year. I would say that is a lot of money for most Americans. Mr. Musk, though, is so rich—a multibillionaire—he probably wouldn't even notice it.

But the \$230,000 tax break for the wealthiest Americans meant that other programs needed to be cut. One of the programs that President Trump and the Republicans in Congress decided to cut—one was Medicaid.

Medicaid is a pretty universal program that affects millions of Americans and the services that they receive from clinics, from hospitals, even living in nursing homes. Medicaid is an important part.

The Republicans, in order to provide the money for tax cuts for people like Elon Musk, needed to cut \$1 trillion out of Medicaid over the next 10 years.

What does it mean in my State? Well, we worry. Will rural hospitals or inner-city hospitals survive if Medicaid is cut? Will the nursing home people be able to stay in the nursing homes? Those are important and critical questions.

The second part of the decision by the Republicans in the big, beautiful budget to provide a tax break for the wealthy was basically to eliminate the tax subsidy that is available for middle-income families under the Affordable Care Act.

What does that mean? Well, for some people, they are going to see the results in the mail in just a matter of days. The target date in Illinois, which I represent, is October 27. Watch for the mail then because on October 27, you will receive a notice about what is going to happen to your health insurance premiums January 1. They are going to go up an average of 114 percent. So take a look at what you are now paying for health insurance and anticipate that it is going to go up. How much? I am not sure, but it could easily double.

For a lot of families who are struggling to survive, that is going to become a difficult challenge. How are we going to pay this premium? These are the same families who come back from the grocery store every Saturday and Sunday and say: I can't believe what has happened to the price of beef. I can't believe what has happened to the price of produce.

Across the board, people see the cost of living going up. And now an essential service—health insurance premiums—we are going to see this dramatic increase.

It is this increase that is going to affect millions of Americans—over 20 million Americans—that is at the heart of this decision about whether this government is going to reopen.

We have said to the Republicans that we believe the American families need a helping hand and need it now—not something we talk about later but now—so that we can do something to stop these premiums from going up dramatically.

You know what is going to happen. When the premiums go up, some families will say: No problem. Making plenty of money. Hate it, but we can pay it.

Other families are going to say: How in the world are we going to do this? We are going to have to get a health insurance policy which has more copays and deductibles that are paid by us for virtually everything. So we are going to pay through the course of next year for this increase in premiums anyway.

Some will walk away and say: I just can't afford it. Can't make ends meet. Can't pay utility bills. Electric bills are going up and other things that we face, and this health insurance premium too. We are just going to have to drop the insurance and hope for the best.

I am sorry for those people because it not only means that they are facing risks in life without the protection of health insurance—we know statistically that when you don't have health insurance or any basic health insurance, that you forgo treatment and examinations. That is not good, it is not healthy, and it doesn't lead to a good result.

Is that an important issue for your family? I bet it is. It is an important issue for every single family.

That is what is at the heart of this government shutdown—the need for Republicans and Democrats to sit at the table and say: How can we spare American families from this premium increase that they are going to face inevitably—millions are going to face—with bad consequences?

Can we do it? Of course, we can. People of good will can reach a conclusion that they are going to find a way to compromise and see this issue come to an end. We need to do it now—not next week, not the week following, but now. There is too much hardship going on with this government shutdown, and it should not continue.

So my appeal is to the President: Delay your trip overseas.

My appeal to the Republicans in the House: Come back home—I shouldn't say "home"—come back to Washington. Leave your home, come back to Washington, and go to work with us on a bipartisan basis.

Is that what America wants? You bet it is. To address this issue of health insurance premiums—do it on a bipartisan basis, and end this government shutdown. We can do it today.

There is a lot of furniture in this Capitol—I have seen it over the years—and there are a lot of tables. There are many tables big enough for the leaders in Congress and the President to sit down and reach an agreement. That sitdown ought to happen sooner rather than later.

ILLINOIS

Mr. President, on another issue unrelated, last Friday, the Trump administration asked the Supreme Court to green-light the deployment of National Guard troops in my home State of Illinois after the lower courts had temporarily blocked the deployment. In her decision, District Court Judge April Perry said the Trump administration has produced "no credible evidence that there is a danger of rebellion" in Illinois. Rather, Judge Perry found that "the unnecessary deployment of military troops, untrained for local policing, will escalate tensions and undermine the ordinary law enforcement activities of state and local entities."

Three judges on the Seventh Circuit Appeals Court, including one appointed by President Bush and another appointed by President Trump, considered that decision by the lower court and agreed with Judge Perry. They found that "the facts do not justify the President's actions in Illinois. . . . Political opposition is not rebellion." That panel is right.

Last Saturday, I was part of the No Kings demonstration. We estimate there were 100,000 people in Grant Park at the Petrillo band shell. It was non-violent. It was orderly. Oh, they were loud once in a while, but no one was involved in any sort of rebellion. They were exercising their constitutional right to express their opinion about the policies of this government.

I have been honored to represent the great State of Illinois for over 40 years in the Senate and the House. And, yes, like every State, Illinois has its challenges, such as addressing crime. But for the last two decades, the murder rate in Illinois has been lower than murder rates in Republican-led States like Missouri, Louisiana, and Alabama. Violent crime is down dramatically in the city of Chicago.

We should work together to build on this success and reduce the crime rate even more. But the President's actions in sending in National Guard troops even from the State of Texas to Illinois is not about public safety; it is about politics. His unjustified and unlawful attempts to deploy troops to Chicago and other American cities are a threat to our basic democratic institutions.

The Supreme Court should reject the President's petition to use these troops in America. There is no emergency that justifies bypassing the regular appeals process and resolving this issue on the Court's shadow docket without the full public scrutiny this issue deserves.

Just last week, I received a heart-breaking message from one of my constituents, PO2 Jessica Wendlandt—a hard-working provider at Lake County Health Department in Waukegan, IL. In her letter, Officer Wendlandt mentioned that some of her patients have stopped showing up for their appointments because ICE officers are camping out in front of the facility.

Picture it, if you will: People, families, taking their children in for a doctor's appointment—afraid to go, leave their car, and walk the short distance to the clinic because ICE officials, in their combat uniforms and masks, in unmarked vehicles, were lurking outside the clinic.

She said in what she wrote to me:

My patients have not been able to come to their medical appointments out of fear of being taken.

These raids are impacting the ability of medical providers to provide basic family treatment.

Jessica also mentioned that she was treating a mother at the health center when the mother "received several phone calls and messages that ICE [agents] had raided the apartment buildings right behind the facility." The patient was so distraught and in tears that treatment could not be completed that day because she needed to rush home to her other children.

Imagine for a moment the fear that a mother must have felt receiving a call from her kids, scared and screaming that masked men are trying to break into their home. Is this America? Can you imagine the confusion and fear those children must have felt seeing those men at their door, wondering who they were and if they were there to help them or hurt them.

It is not just at health centers in Illinois; ICE is camping out in front of city halls, schools, churches, regularly

outside of Home Depot, where they detained a father who was the sole provider for his two children, including a daughter with stage IV cancer.

Do you remember what led us into this situation? You heard it over and over at President Trump's rallies. Rapists, terrorists, murderers, the criminally insane, sexual predators were coming across our border.

Let me tell you, I will sign up with the President. We don't want those people coming into this country. And if they commit a crime while they are here, they should be gone, period.

Now let's talk about the others, the 11 million who have been in America working jobs, raising families, going to church, paying their taxes. They are the ones they are targeting. Seventy percent of the people who have been stopped by ICE in the State of Illinois—70 percent of them have no criminal record whatsoever. They are not rapists and murderers and terrorists. They are people who overstayed a visa. And they may be American citizens. The ICE officers obviously don't distinguish any difference there.

When will my colleagues on the other side of the aisle decide that the cruelty and fear tactics of this administration must stop? This is America. When will they choose to put an end to the racial profiling which is going on and the detention of even American citizens, including veterans of children?

This is all supposed to be about violent crime? It is not. Enough. If this was actually about reducing crime, President Trump would not be slashing programs that actually help local law enforcement. This cruelty is all for show.

While Americans continue to pay inflated prices at the grocery store and face the prospect of skyrocketing healthcare premiums, this is what the President is focused on: tearing families apart and separating kids from their parents.

Our country is better than this. It is better than this cruelty and lawlessness. Now is the time for us to stand up for the rule of law and our Constitution.

President Trump's claims of "invasions," "rebellions," or "emergencies" to justify calling the military into American cities are shameless attempts to bypass our constitutional checks and balances.

It was the Republican Governor of Oklahoma who said last week that if Governor Pritzker of Illinois tried to send his National Guard troops to Oklahoma, the people of Oklahoma and that Governor, a Republican Governor, would resist it. But that is exactly what is happening in my home State of Illinois. This President, without invitation, is sending National Guard troops in from Texas.

The Supreme Court should stand up to this administration's attempt to cut both Congress and the courts out of decisions squarely given to them by the Constitution.

Political opposition, peaceful protests, and nonviolent civil disobedience are not rebellion; they are the bedrock of our democracy.

Local law enforcement officials have proven they are capable, in Illinois and most places, of handling any unlawful or unruly behavior.

Illinois State Attorney General Kwame Raoul explained to the court:

No protest activity in Illinois has rendered the president unable to execute federal law.

If the Supreme Court enables President Trump to deploy troops to American cities over the objection of State officials before the courts rule on the legality of the actions, I fear it is going to cause lasting harm to America.

I ask my Republican colleagues: Are you really prepared in your home State for the next President after President Trump to send in troops to your State without permission, without the consent of your government? Are you ready for masked soldiers to grab your constituents from their homes?

My constituents elected me to represent them in this fight. I implore you to do right by your constituents and push back against the President's illegal power grab before your State is the next victim.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I would love to introduce the Senate to a couple that I know: husband, wife. Both work for the Federal Government—young couple, expecting their first child. This week, they will miss a paycheck—both of them.

You tell me how many people, in their early days of marriage, both spouses could miss a paycheck while they are preparing for their first child. But that is the reality that is being faced by that couple and, I am sure, a lot of other folks that stepped up to serve their Nation, serving in a Federal Agency, but because of a government shutdown, they are not going to get paid.

I would love to introduce this body to a single mom that just, a couple of weeks ago, got the invitation to go to the FAA Academy and to become an air traffic controller—very difficult to get into that school—but has been accepted, is in the process, has quit her job, has canceled her lease and, as a single mom, is taking the risk to be able to step out in a new, great career. But right in the process of stepping out to do that new, great career, there is a government shutdown, and now she has no idea what is about to happen. She has quit her job already. She has canceled her lease already. She was preparing to move to get to the academy. Now what does she do?

For all the folks out there that say this government shutdown is no big deal—or, as my Democratic colleagues in the House have said, some families are going to have to suffer to give us leverage—here are the families that

are actually suffering to give my Democratic colleagues leverage so they can discuss healthcare.

But let me not just talk about the healthcare they want to discuss. Their focus seems to be on a COVID-era subsidy that they created for the Affordable Care Act to try to make it more affordable—because here is the problem in my State. In my State—in Oklahoma—the Affordable Care Act, the cost for it has increased 200 percent in 6 years, while commercial insurance has increased 29 percent in those same 6 years. So the "Affordable" Care Act is only affordable if there is just one subsidy on top of another, on top of another, on top of another, because the structure of the Affordable Care Act is not affordable. It is only affordable if there is more and more and more tax dollars sent to insurance companies to try to cover more and more and more.

My Democratic colleagues say: We are going to keep the government closed until we even get more money on that, and we don't want to discuss anything.

Well, here is the problem. We have a 200-percent increase for one area, a 29-percent increase in the other, and they say just keep dumping more money into it. We actually know, and my Democratic colleagues have told me privately: We know there is a lot of fraud, that there is money being sent to insurance companies that they are then covering people that actually don't even know they have coverage, just because it is cheap for the insurance company.

Everybody knows that exists in it, but they don't want to discuss that; they just want to add more money into it.

We have people making a quarter million dollars a year that are getting subsidies with these additional subsidies they created several years ago. And we have said: "What in the world" that people making a quarter million dollars a year are getting these subsidies.

We also know, the way that my Democratic colleagues created these subsidies, that it went around the Hyde Amendment, which has been very clear: Federal tax dollars do not go to pay for abortions. But they created this very creative system of tax credits so that they could send money to insurance companies to pay for elective abortions. They are asking every Republican now to jump on board and to be able to vote for that.

Listen, there are big issues with this. My Democratic colleagues say: Well, just fund more healthcare; just take care of it. We know there is fraud. We know there are people making half a million. We know there is abortion funding going. We know all these aspects.

So, no, we are not just going to dump more money into it.

We have said something pretty straightforward: Let's keep the government open, at its current status quo,

and let's keep debating all these issues. But why should next week's SNAP recipients no longer get SNAP benefits because there is a fight over all these healthcare issues on this that we have very strong actual policy issues with? Why are they cutting off SNAP benefits? Why are they telling this young couple with an infant child on the way: No, neither of you are going to get paid. Why is that happening?

So here is what we have done. I have proposed a bill that I put out last session. It was very straightforward. This bill just says we will never have another government shutdown—never. Every time we get to another moment like this, automatic funding kicks in. But here is the kicker: Members of Congress are in session 7 days a week, and we can't do anything but appropriations. We have to do appropriations, and we have to be here 7 days a week, House and Senate, until we actually get this solved.

Now, that seems like a pretty reasonable thing.

My Democratic colleagues have been bemoaning the House is not in session. If you would have voted for my bill last session, we would all be here right now negotiating this out. I had 57 votes on that last session—57. We were three votes short of never ever having a government shutdown again—never.

So I am going to bring it again and to say: Let's end the potential of government shutdowns ever, and let's actually stay here and debate the issues and to be able to work things out like grownups.

In the meantime, until we can get that done and until we can get my Democratic colleagues to agree, my colleague RON JOHNSON has brought forward a very simple proposal: Let's pay the people who are working, like this young couple that I mentioned. They are still working, both of them. Let's pay them while they are working, while we continue to be able to negotiate this out.

If you won't, at least, open the government—as we have the last 13 times when we got to this moment—and just have a continuing resolution, at least, pay the people who are working. This is a baby step and an offer to our Democratic colleagues to say: Let's at least do the minimum on this to not punish those folks.

There are folks, today, that are on the road, working for the Federal Government, that are in critical positions, that they are not being paid and they are actually putting their expenses on their credit card, not knowing if they are going to get the chance to pay that off. It is not right.

So let's take the steps. My recommendation is, long-term, let's never have a shutdown ever again. Let's fix the process. We were three votes short last session. Let's actually fix that permanently. Let's get us back open again. But at a minimum, let's at least, while we are arguing, pay Federal workers that are still at the task.

That should be the easiest threshold to be able to step over.

Me and my colleagues are on the floor today because we want to get a chance to be able to offer this to our Democratic colleagues and say: We are going to reach an olive branch out to you; let's get started on some things.

I yield the floor to my colleagues.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mrs. MOODY. Mr. President, we are in day 23 of this shutdown—a shutdown that is sowing more uncertainty across our country by the day. It is one that is leaving our Nation vulnerable to adversaries abroad and seeing our servicemembers left wondering if their next paycheck will go through, as they seek not only to protect us but to support their families—a shutdown that my colleagues and I on the Republican side of the aisle voted against over a dozen times.

We are trying to end the shutdown. Yet we are blocked at every point. Along with a few—very few—courageous Democrats, we voted for a bipartisan continuing resolution to fund the government. The opposing Democrats do so while knowing they are voting against paying our troops for our security, against paying law enforcement for safety, and against paying so many other people that are necessary for critical functions. They vote no.

Republicans have voted to eliminate future shutdowns, to pay our servicemembers and other essential Federal workers, and for a full year of funding for our military. And yet, each time, these same colleagues blocked the efforts. They have now resorted to outright obstruction.

I am the newest U.S. Senator from Florida, one of the newest U.S. Senators for our country. I have been here 9 months, and I am disgusted that we have colleagues coming in here, voting against continuing funding, reciting poetry. They are putting poetry over paying our troops.

Since my arrival in Washington, I have watched every single effort by the Democrats to oppose the will of the American people, to undo the outcome of the election, attempting to paralyze not only the administration but our policy goals to get this country back on the right track.

Now, these tactics have evolved into obstructing government itself, to hold the pay of Federal law enforcement and our military hostage—let alone the thousands of other Federal employees who continue to show up and fulfill their duties without pay. Shockingly, even Senators with States that have large Federal workforces have set aside the interests of those families, beholden to some radical agenda.

I implore my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to remember that the effects of this shutdown go well past the boundaries of DC. In my home state of Florida, we are seeing crisis centers which serve veterans, law enforcement officers, first responders,

some of our most vulnerable that encounter hardships, all because colleagues have refused to open the government. In fact, I have committed to donating my salary every day the government is shut down to a crisis center in Florida because they are suffering as this continues to go on.

The choice is simple for my colleagues at this point: Either you stand for this country, for our servicemembers, and for actually governing this Nation, or you stand against that.

And, finally, I want to take a moment to thank every single Federal employee continuing to work without pay: our servicemembers, Federal law enforcement officers, Coast Guard members, air traffic controllers, so many others—including our own staff, including the staff on the Senate floor that show up and stay up all night as the Democrats recite poetry. Thank you for showing up without pay. Thank you for your patriotism, your work ethic, your embrace of duty and commitment to this Nation.

Throughout history, it is the selfless work of patriots that helped build and sustain this incredible country of ours, and I look forward to the day when our colleagues on the other side of the aisle cease with their partisan games and that they put governing for the people back as their No. 1 priority, that they remember it is an incredible responsibility they undertook when they took the oath to become a Senator. I hope they remember that they were trusted to do this in good faith, on behalf of the people, and I hope that they join us in reopening the government and they join us in our bipartisan, clean continuing resolution to reopen the government. That is the only way forward, and it is the sole path available to continue our work on behalf of the American people.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. President, good morning. Good morning to all my colleagues here today.

Now, as all the Senators know, as all America knows, my friends across the aisle have kidnapped the Federal Government. In fact, they have now voted a dozen times not to reopen the government. And even surprising to most of us, twice they voted against funding the military during these challenging times. I think it is obvious to all America that this is a political shutdown; that this is show biz to them; that this is an opportunity for their left, lazy media to shout and scream at President Trump and to kowtow to their far-left, Marxist base.

Now, when you kidnap somebody or an entity, you have to have a ransom. Now, the opening ransom from the Democrats was an additional \$1.5 trillion added to our national debt, borrowed from my grandchildren—\$1.5 trillion. It was just this week that the Federal Government passed a \$38 trillion level for our national debt. We are

spending a trillion dollars a year on interest alone. So that was the opening ransom.

And now they seem to be locked in on throwing more money at a very broken ACA, the 24 million people on the ACA.

But it is interesting to me how, when they want to talk about healthcare, they hide behind rural hospitals, that they think, "Oh, we are going to help those," when 97 percent of rural America voted for President Trump. And under President Trump's leadership, in our Big Beautiful Bill we have \$50 billion of a health transformation fund for rural America. But the first thing the Democrats want to do is to take that away.

It has been maybe one of the most hypocritical statements I have ever heard. They want to help rural America, help rural hospitals, but they want to take away this \$50 billion transformation fund.

Instead, they want to put all their eggs in one basket on Medicaid. Look, a hospital loses money every time they see a Medicaid patient. Every time a Medicaid patient walks into the emergency room, that hospital is losing money on that patient as well. Despite that, the Republicans, in our Big Beautiful Bill, increased spending on Medicaid to the tune of \$200 billion a year.

We need to work on getting people off of Medicaid. Let's get them back to work and help them get good health insurance as well.

Now, their latest idea is that they want to throw more money at the ACA. They want to throw more money for the 24 million people on the ACA. Look, Democrats own healthcare, right? The ACA has been the law of the land for 15 years. If any hospital fails today, tomorrow, next week, next year, the year after, if anybody's health premiums are going up—and they are—then it is on the backs of Democrats.

The first thing you need to realize is that when you are in a hole, stop digging. When do they think we can stop throwing good money after bad money? Look, I want to fix healthcare. I want to drive down the cost of healthcare.

Now, as my colleague from Oklahoma pointed out, the premiums for the ACA are up 200 percent, is what he mentioned—I think that is a pretty good number—over the last 6 years. But beyond that, the average deductible for the ACA now is \$5,000. Can you imagine you are a family of four—an average salary back in Kansas is \$60,000 a year. And the Democrats think throwing more money at the ACA, which gives you a \$5,000 deductible, is going to solve the problem. Well, of course, it is not.

So we need to address the affordability of the ACA, and we need to address the premiums. Then, beyond that, we need to address the fraud.

Look, this program has grown from a \$50 billion-a-year projection by the famous Congressional Budget Office—

they said it would be \$50 billion. We are spending \$150 billion a year now on the ACA, and we think there is \$25 to \$50 billion of fraud in that.

I think that if you polled Americans and said "Look, there is a Federal program which is paying subsidies for people's premiums, but there is \$50 billion of fraud in that," I think Americans would say "Hey, we sent you to Congress, to the Senate, to fix the darn problem." And we know how to do that. This is a simple fix.

Not one time have you heard a Democrat say: We want to fix what is broken in the ACA. No. All they want to do is throw more money at it. It would be so easy to fix the fraud, and we know how to do it.

How do we address the cost of healthcare? Well, it starts with adding pricetags, right? Can you imagine walking into a restaurant and trying to decide if you want the two all-beef patties, special sauce, lettuce, cheese, onions on a sesame seed bun versus the two quarter-pounders and didn't know the price difference? Of course not. But that is what we are asking Americans to do when they have a procedure done. They have no idea what it is going to cost; they have no idea what outcomes are.

Americans need to realize that you could have a surgery done in one facility for—let's say it is a hip replacement. Maybe one hospital gets \$10,000, but another one, they are reimbursing at \$50,000. I am not making those numbers up. I ran a hospital. Those were the exact numbers just 6 or 7 years ago. By the way, the hospital that was getting reimbursed the lower amount had better outcomes, less infections, and less blood clots.

Look, the Democrats own healthcare right now. These are their policies. When they are ready to do something more than just throw money at one of the most broken systems in the history of America, then we are here to talk to you. But first of all, we need to open the Federal Government.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I am pleased to join my colleagues today.

Today marks the 23rd day of the government shutdown—the 23rd day—now the second longest in our Nation's history. Yet, despite the mounting consequences, our colleagues across the aisle continue to block a clean, non-partisan continuing resolution—one that would simply keep the government open and allow us to continue our work on the appropriations process.

To be clear, there are no Republican priorities included in the CR. Let me repeat again: There are no Republican priorities included in the CR. It simply keeps the government funded. It is the same kind of CR that Democrats passed 13 times under President Biden. Yet now they refuse to vote for it.

Let's just take a minute to review. Here are the 13 clean CRs that were

passed during the Biden administration. Thirteen of them. You can count them.

Oh, gee, how did the Democrats vote? I don't know. Let's check.

Well, here is the percentage of Democrats that voted for each of those 13 clean CRs during the Biden administration.

Now, Mr. President, from sitting way back there—I know your eyes are pretty good; former Navy SEAL. They might be diminished a little bit by now, so I am going to help you out here.

On the first one, 100 percent of the Democrats voted for it. On the second one, 100 percent of the Democrats voted for it. On the third one, 100 percent of the—same kind of clean CR we are looking at right now, but it was under Biden. That is the difference. Third one, 100 percent of the Democrats. Fourth one, 100 percent of the Democrats voted for the clean CR. On the fifth one, 100 percent of the Democrats voted for the clean CR. On the sixth one, 100 percent of the Democrats voted for a clean CR—the same kind that none of them will vote for now. Well, I guess we have three, but we have to get enough to get 60 votes.

I lost count. One, two, three, four, five, six. I think I am at seven—100 percent of the Democrats voted for it. The eighth one, 100 percent of the Democrats voted for it.

Now, on the ninth one, I don't know what happened. Maybe one of them was gone. Who knows? But, gee-whiz, we only got 98 percent of the Democrats on that. Ninety-eight percent voted for that one. But the good news is that they were right back on the next one—100 percent. I think that is No. 10, 100 percent. No. 11, 100 percent. It was 100 percent on No. 12. And, gee-whiz, they finished with only 98 percent of Democrats on the 13th one.

You kind of get the point, right? Come on. What in the world is going on here? And then to have the gall to go out there and say oh, well, you know, they are not shutting down the government. It is ridiculous. I don't know how there could be any doubt about it.

For anybody that thinks this shutdown should be stopped right now, they better call their favorite Democrat on the phone and say: Hey, it is time. It is way, way, way past time.

But right now, instead, our colleagues across the aisle have chosen a different path. They have taken our government hostage, demanding more than \$1 trillion in new spending just to keep the lights on—\$1 trillion just to keep the lights on and to pay people—Federal employees, military, everybody else that is working. That is not compromise. That is called coercion. That is not compromise. That is coercion. That is holding our government hostage.

While this political stalemate drags on, American families are paying the price. Vital programs that hard-working families rely on—programs they

have paid into and depend on—have been shuttered or are dangerously close to running out of money.

Several States are now warning that they will be forced to shut down SNAP—the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program—benefits as soon as November 1 if the shutdown continues. That means millions of Americans could lose access to the assistance that helps them put food on the table.

Meanwhile, our economy is losing \$15 billion in GDP each week as long as this shutdown persists.

Many Federal employees, including critical air traffic controllers—our air traffic controllers are working; they are not getting paid. How about our Border Patrol agents? Pretty dangerous job. They are not getting paid. They are working; they are not getting paid.

How about this group? Our troops. Mr. President, you were a Navy SEAL. You were in harm's way. We have people in harm's way, and they are not getting paid because the Democrats want to say that somehow this clean CR shouldn't be voted for and that somehow they are cooperating—they are trying to collaborate when instead they are holding our government hostage.

Rural America—our farmers, ranchers get left behind. Many are out in the field right now, harvesting, working on bringing in their crops, getting ready for next year. Program services they depend on—the USDA—they can't access. That means more uncertainty at a time when they can least afford it.

Look, the list goes on and on—goes on and on and on—but the bottom line is this: We need to get government—we have offered over and over again, as my colleagues said, to work on any and all issues, but you do it once you get the government open.

This has gone on—I would say long enough but actually way too long. I don't know at what point Democrats are going to decide to come back and start doing their job, which is governing, but we are eagerly awaiting it.

For the American people—the American people are the ones that pay the price when the Democrats take our government hostage. And, as I have made very clear here, there is no doubt but that is exactly what they are doing.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I do want to thank my friend from North Dakota. We see things slightly different, but one thing I think we could probably agree on: Do you know who is getting paid? The House of Representatives, who have been on vacation since the middle of September. And, gosh, wouldn't it be great if they were actually on the floor debating this issue as well, as opposed to getting a taxpayer-paid vacation for over a month?

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 3039

Mr. President, I think one of the things we could all kind of agree on is

that our Nation's public servants are not political pawns.

I say with respect to my friend from Wisconsin, you know, the so-called Shutdown Fairness Act, in my view, is anything but fair. Frankly, this entire year has been anything but fair for all of our Federal employees who show up every single day to serve the American people. Because remember, before Russ Vought even set foot in the Office of Management and Budget, he bragged that he wanted Federal workers—his words, not mine—to increasingly be “viewed as . . . villains” and “put them in trauma.” Think about that. This wasn't some political misstatement or slip of the tongue; it is, frankly, a mission statement.

Unfortunately, that is exactly what we have seen from Mr. Vought, from President Trump, and from those enabling them. In just 9 months, they have forced out or driven into early retirement more than 148,000 Federal employees. That is not efficiency or reform; it is an assault on the very people who work every day for the American people. And God knows we could improve but also make government perform.

Now, let's be clear. It is not this side of the aisle—Democrats who have cherry-picked a few favorite programs to protect. We have been consistent in calling out this administration's totally reckless regard for the vital services the American people rely on to keep them safe and secure and standing up for those folks who deliver those services.

So forgive me when I say I don't think this Shutdown Fairness Act has anything to do with fairness. Once again, Federal employees are being treated not as partners serving the American people but as punching bags for Vought and the President's political agenda.

Right now, the President is trying to RIF another 4,000 Federal employees—not just, I believe, unfairly, but actually illegally, based upon a court's recent decision. Thank goodness the courts have stepped in.

As a matter of fact, many of us were at the OMB headquarters next to the White House just last week, meeting with Federal employees, demanding that Mr. Vought and his team listen not to us—you don't have to listen to us; we are on politically different sides—but listen to the Federal workers and make sure that we get the government reopen, not try to leverage this for some kind of political win.

We are talking about special education programs that support kids with disabilities. We are talking about the CDC, whose experts track outbreaks and try to keep us safe. We are talking about a program called the CDFI Fund at Treasury—a program with broad bipartisan support that helps invest in access to capital in rural communities and in urban communities.

Again, on this one, I have to thank MIKE CRAPO and a whole lot of my Re-

publican colleagues for being willing to push back.

Let's be crystal clear. These actions are not some accident. This is a deliberate choice, a deliberate effort to hold Federal workers hostage in order to jam through an agenda. At the end of the day, it is going drive up healthcare costs for millions of Americans.

Instead of sitting down with us and working to keep premiums affordable, they are using the very Federal workers—I have a ton of them in Virginia—as political pawns. It is wrong, it is cruel, and it is not going to work.

That is why I am proud to join both Ranking Member PETERS, who will be here, I believe, shortly, and my good friend from Maryland Senator VAN HOLLEN on legislation to ensure that not the Trump administration picks and chooses who we ought to go ahead and pay but legislation to ensure that all Federal workers—and, by the way, the contractors who work side by side with them—get paid during this shutdown.

I mean, at the end of the day, this is a moment for every Senator to decide: Are you going to stand with the Federal workers who keep the government running or are you going to stand with those who want to traumatize them and make them all be viewed as villains?

This is an actual chance. In a few minutes, we are going to have to make sure that those workers can feed their families, pay their mortgages, while this Republican shutdown drags on.

There is a lot of language on this floor about who wants to support Federal workers. Well, you are going to shortly have a chance—every Senator will have a chance—to prove whether you are on the side of not selectively paying Federal workers but paying all Federal workers, as we try to bring this shutdown to an end. I urge my colleagues to do the right thing. Let's get it done. And I thank Senator VAN HOLLEN for his leadership on this issue.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I want to thank my colleague from Virginia, Senator WARNER, and other colleagues who are joining together to support the proposal that we are putting forward today.

But I think we should all say that the best way to make sure that Federal employees—all Federal employees—get paid and that the American people get the benefit of their services is to reopen the Federal Government and do it now, which is why I and my Democratic colleagues have voted seven times now—seven times now—to reopen the government without giving Donald Trump a blank check and while making sure that we prevent a healthcare crisis in this country when people's healthcare premiums and costs go through the roof, because when Republicans passed their so-called Big Beautiful Bill, they extended the tax

breaks for billionaires and very wealthy people. The one tax cut they did not extend was the one that allows middle-class families to afford health insurance. And so they left in place a ticking timebomb that is going off now.

We would like to defuse that timebomb. Instead of negotiating on that, the President has been AWOL. He has been engaged in discussions overseas regarding the Middle East. He has been on the phone a lot with Vladimir Putin. That is all good, but you would think the President of the United States could carve out just a little time to help reopen the government, to have a negotiation on reopening the Federal Government.

Instead, he is bringing down Republican Members of the House and Senate to the White House and wining and dining them and patting them on the back and saying: Good job for keeping this government shut down and not entering into a negotiation to bring it to a close.

And, of course, with our House colleagues, the Speaker of the House, Speaker JOHNSON, has essentially got the House on a 5-week—I don't know if we are on 6 weeks—paid vacation. I mean, they are AWOL here in the middle of this shutdown.

What is the President focused on? He is asking the Justice Department to pay him \$230 million for legal bills, right directly into his pocket. He is talking about giving his buddy in Argentina a \$20 billion taxpayer bailout, while farmers across the country are getting hit hard because they can't sell their soybeans to China. And he is demolishing the East Wing of the White House, which is a metaphor for what he is doing to the country and people who worked for him to get him elected. He is betraying the very people he said he was going to stand up for when he said he was going to focus on prices and costs, and yet, when it comes to trying to just prevent this huge spike in healthcare costs that people are experiencing, the President doesn't want to talk about it.

So we should not be punishing Federal employees for something they had nothing to do with. They are not responsible. They are innocent bystanders. They all want to get back on the job and provide services to the American people. And I will be putting forth a proposal to say that they should not be punished and they should be paid.

Now, we will hear later today that we are going to be taking up here in the Senate a piece of legislation from Senator JOHNSON, and that proposal would pay Federal employees who are currently working right now. Our proposal doesn't discriminate among Federal employees.

And here is the really dangerous part, I would argue, about Senator JOHNSON's proposal. We have a President, President Trump, who, along with Russ Vought, who is his, you know, guy in the cockpit at OMB—this

is the guy who said publicly that he wanted to inflict “trauma”—that is his word not mine—inflict “trauma” on the Federal workforce.

If you allow them to decide who they are going to keep on the job in the Federal Government and who they are going to pay, you are giving them also a blank check as to who they are going to send home and who they are going to punish by not paying them.

That is what they have been doing. Much of what they have been doing is illegal, in fact, and we have a Federal court in California that has already said that their layoffs of some of the Federal employees at some of the Agencies are illegal.

But if you just let them decide who is going to get paid and who is not, you weaponize that illegality; you weaponize the Federal Government. And, by the way, I think we all know this: If President Trump gets to keep the folks he wants on the job and pay the folks that he wants who are on the job and nobody else, he will have even less incentive to end the government shutdown. He will have the government he wants, not the one that has been supported on a bipartisan basis by the U.S. Congress.

So giving the President a blank check to decide which Federal employees to punish and which ones not to punish is a very dangerous thing at this moment. That is why the proposal I am putting forward—and Senator PETERS will have an even narrower version that he will be putting forward, if our Republican colleagues don't support the one that I am advancing, along with Senator WARNER, Senator KAINE, Senator ALSOBROOKS, and others—these proposals say that Federal employees should not be punished.

Now, we have already made that decision. We have already made that decision as a Congress in the past. During the first Trump shutdown—that was the 35-day Trump shutdown. During that shutdown, Senator Cardin and myself and others, we passed a piece of legislation that was signed by the President that says: At the end of a shutdown, Federal employees get fully paid. They are held harmless.

Why did we decide to do that? Because we collectively made the right decision that Federal employees who have nothing to do with the government shutdown should not be the ones punished for something they were not culpable in. That was the right decision.

What my proposal and our proposal will do is based on that idea that no Federal employees should be punished for something they had nothing to do with. And not only should they get repaid at the end of this, but why would we say to them that you can't have enough pay to make your electric bills or pay your water bills or provide for your family? Why should Federal employees be the ones who are punished for the government shutdown? Why should they be the ones that have to

overdraft their bank accounts and penalized for that? That is not fair.

So the proposals that we are putting forward say that in this government shutdown, Federal employees and, yes, certain Federal contractors who have nothing to do with this political situation that we face, they should not be the ones to bear the burden, and we certainly shouldn't set up a system where the President of the United States gets to decide what Agencies to shut down, what can stay open, who to pay and who not to pay, who to punish, who not to punish. That just gives him a blank check to put in place political cronies and pay them and send home hard-working civil servants who perform important functions. So that is what our proposal will do.

And for any of our colleagues, regardless of the side of the aisle, who agree that Federal employees should not be the ones who are punished for something they have nothing to do with, I hope we will all agree to support this measure.

Now, I don't know if Senator PETERS wants to talk at all on this particular proposal. He is going to be talking on the next proposal.

I know that some of my colleagues are on the way to the floor, as we speak—Senator KAINE and others—and when they arrive, I will return the floor to them to have them say their piece.

But, at this time, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 3039, introduced earlier today; 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 Wisconsin.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I have come here today on the floor in good faith. I have come here not to argue. I have come here trying to find agreement. And I have listened to the Senator from Virginia, now the Senator from Maryland, and I have to say, I don't know exactly what percentage, but probably 95, 98 percent of what they have said, I agree with.

I do have to point out, and this would be the most—I would say this is a partisan comment. We have voted now 12 times on a measure that would open up the government. It is what the House passed as a clean CR, similar, if not identical, to what happened 13 times during the Biden administration—just a clean CR to open up the government at President Biden's levels, funding levels that Democrats voted for.

By the way, you know, House Republicans could have come to the table with a CR with \$1.5 trillion of spending reductions to match the \$1.5 trillion of spending increase the Democrats wanted, and now there would be areas of compromise.

But the House Republicans basically said here is the deal: Let's not shut

down the government. Let's not make Federal Government workers pay for our dysfunction. So pass a clean CR at President Biden's funding levels.

So, again, that has been voted down 12 times, regrettably. But let me set that aside.

I found out about the Senator from Maryland's proposal last May. I got the language this morning. I have got the bill here. And, you know, first of all, I kind of chuckled because the name of the bill is—I have actually got the true Warren Buffet tax, and we ought to talk about that later on. You might find that interesting. So he has taken my bill, the Shutdown Fairness Act, and now this is his bill, the True Shutdown Fairness Act.

And, again, I haven't done a word comparison, but it is probably like 95 percent of the Shutdown Fairness Act. That is a good thing. That shows there are a lot of areas of agreement.

I come from the private sector. You don't get a whole lot accomplished arguing all the time. It is all about finding areas of agreement. I have got a product; you want to buy it. Now, we will haggle over the price.

I have got a product; you want to buy it. Now, we need to haggle over the price.

Now, the three areas of—the differences in these bills—I think I have got this right. I would ask the Senator from Maryland to confirm that. Your bill is only for this fiscal year. My bill would just end this punishing Federal workers for our dysfunction forever. I mean, I think we should make it permanent.

The Senator from Maryland's bill includes furloughed employees. Now, the fact of the matter is, when all this is said and done, when we finally end this dysfunction, we fund the government through an appropriation, and because of the 2019 Government Fair Treatment Act, they will get paid anyway.

So my bill is obviously targeted to the people we are forcing to work, but I am not necessarily opposed to paying furloughed workers as well. That is something we can talk about.

The last difference is, it limits reduction in force. And I come from the private sector. Nobody likes to terminate employees—nobody.

But in the private sector when a business is facing bankruptcy, sometimes business owners are forced to do that to preserve the other jobs.

The Federal Government is \$38 trillion in debt. I don't think we should limit the President's ability, the Chief Executive's ability, to properly manage the Federal Government and make the tough decisions, sometimes, to reduce the workforce, cut out some government functions.

Again, that is something we can talk about.

So, again, I think, in fairness to the more than 2 million Federal employees that are now being forced to work because—the term is “excepted,” but that means they are essential—they

are protecting our Nation; they are protecting our safety and security; they are writing Social Security checks. We need to see that they get their paycheck so they don't have to work Door Dash, so they don't have to go to food banks, so they are not under that stress.

I am asking in good faith, let's figure out how to get that done.

Now, I mean, I could propose—I will change the name of mine, by the way, if you want to call it “true” because I think it is the True Shutdown Fairness Act.

Today, right now, I would be willing to add furloughed workers because we are going to pay them anyway.

I am just asking: Would you substitute your bill; take my bill, substitute it in? I have actually got my staff to write the language to do this. It is probably not ready for prime time. You really need to get through leg counsel and that kind of stuff. But you would take my bill, add furloughed workers, and say it is a done deal? Is that something you would accept here today?

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. If you are yielding the floor?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes, yes.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. The short answer is, we do want to pay all Federal employees because none of them should be punished, but we also don't want them to be fired and RIF'd during this period of time. You said, in the private sector, people don't like to fire employees.

I know, Senator, you have read the remarks of Russ Vought, the head of OMB. He wants to visit “trauma” on Federal employees, and he wants to fire a lot of them. He has said so.

Mr. JOHNSON. Again, I—

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. But that is an important piece here, right, because—

Mr. JOHNSON. Again, I am trying to keep this—let's not argue. OK? Let's focus on areas of agreement.

So reduction in force, again, I think we probably have a philosophical disagreement there. I am not associating myself with anybody else's remarks. That is something that I think reasonable people can disagree with, and I think reasonable people can come to an accommodation.

Again, we are talking about making sure that 2.8—I think is about the number, 2.8—million Federal employees aren't worried about getting their next paycheck. That so overwhelms, quite honestly, the smaller differences about the length of the bill or what reduction in force.

Again, I am willing to come a long way in terms of—

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Let me speak.

Mr. JOHNSON. I am willing to come a long way in terms of including furloughed workers. So, again, what I am suggesting is the way to do it—by the way, this could be a wonderful example for this body, working on a piece of legislation that, again, you bring it to the floor. We filed it—it got rule XIV'd, but we are doing it the right way. We are

going to ask for a cloture vote on it, get it on the floor, open it up to amendments—perfect it. See what the body of the Senate wants to do with this piece of legislation that, again, we probably agree on 95 percent of it or higher.

The way to do it is, when I offer my bill and we vote on cloture, vote for cloture. Let's get on the bill. Let's start discussing today. I mean, maybe if we are so successful, we find the differences are so slight, we can pass it by UC later in the day.

But we do need to take this back to our conferences. We do need to go to the leg staff. We do need to perfect this. It will probably take it more time.

Passing it by unanimous consent is not the way to do it. I appreciate the attempt. I appreciate the dialogue.

That is not what I am asking. In all sincerity, for the benefit of those 2.8 million workers—our military, our law enforcement—let's take that burden off them today. Let's give them some hope to know this body is going to finally do something in a nonpartisan—I call it nonpartisan—way that we all agree on. We are going to iron out our differences the way you would generally do it, the way it used to be done: By getting onto a bill, voting for cloture, having the will to work its way, and then hopefully pass it early next week. That would be my suggestion.

I would be willing to do it today. I don't think we could probably handle that. There are things to discuss. That is all I am asking.

Would you like to respond?

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Thank you. Look, it would be great to work this out because there seems to be some agreement that Federal employees should not be the ones to bear the burden of a decision they had nothing to do with.

I see the Republican leader is here with us on the floor.

I think the best way to proceed would be to delay moving forward on the cloture vote on the motion to proceed on your bill and let's sit down and let's talk about whether or not we can find that common ground. We may not be that far apart.

I will just say to the Senator. I will say to the Senator that if you give the President the authority, as your proposal currently does, to decide who to send home and furlough and punish—but it sounds like you are willing to change that—but here is the scenario I am worried about.

If you listen to Russ Vought and the President, they would just fire those people during the shutdown. That is what they are doing. In fact, they are illegally firing people during the shutdown.

Mr. JOHNSON. Like I said, I really didn't want to come and argue.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. OK. Why don't we sit down together.

Mr. JOHNSON. I have to dispute that because even the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association, which has endorsed my bill, says

that the bill does not single out favored political functions over its favored ones.

You understand, under the Antideficiency Act, opinions from the Office of Legal Counsel, "excepted employees," it is pretty well standard. There may be some tweaks back and forth, which is what you give latitude to the executive branch.

Again, I am willing to sit down. I am sure the Republican conference is willing to sit down and say: OK. What should we do?

I think Congress has given way too much authority to the executive branch. I don't mind dialing that back a little bit. But, again, the way to approach that is let's get on the bill; let's talk about it; let's offer amendments—amendments that pass by voice vote—and let's get it done.

There is a lot of pressure on all of us. We all want to get this done.

But, again, passing by unanimous consent is not the way to get it done. The way to get it done is the way the process should work. I mean, wouldn't it be wonderful to actually see the process work in the Senate?

You know, again, I realize you don't like—

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I would love to see that.

Mr. JOHNSON. Let's get on the bill. And then let's sit down in good faith. Let's hammer out amendments, and let's get the thing passed next week. Let's do that. That is all I am asking.

I honestly hate to object to this. I don't want to. OK? But, again, this is not the way to pass it.

So, again, I will speak to my bill. I know we have got to get to votes and that kind of stuff. But again, truthfully, in as good of faith as I possibly can be, we have to get this done, and the way to do that is vote to get on the bill. Let's sit down and talk in good faith, and let's hammer out—it might be pretty minor differences when all is all said and done.

With that, Mr. President—

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Let me just say, Mr. President, just to say to Senator JOHNSON: I am more than happy to sit down with you. I think we should do that maybe later today, get our teams together and see if we can resolve some of these points because if we have the shared view that, No. 1, no Federal employee should be punished for something they had nothing to do with—and then, at least for the period of the shutdown, the President should not be able to fire additional people, which is, I think you well know—and this was partly considered by the Federal court already—the President actually has less authority to do it in a shutdown than when the government is open.

But I don't want to debate these issues on the floor right now.

Mr. JOHNSON. Sure.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I am more than happy to sit down with your team and try to resolve this.

Mr. JOHNSON. Let me address that. I think this brinkmanship has got to

end. I have been here 15 years. We should have passed 180 appropriations bills before the end of the fiscal year. We passed six. A lot of people worked in good faith to do that. OK.

It is obviously broken. We have got to start working on appropriations and budget reform. We have to start working on that together. OK?

But my guess is, part of what has happened with the reduction in force is that brinkmanship, trying to get you folks to just agree to what you have done 13 times. Just open up the government, and then we will talk. OK? We are more than open to talk.

But anyway, again, I am literally begging you, please, when we vote on cloture, vote to get on the bill, and then let's go through the amendment process, and let's get it done quickly.

Again, there is not that big of difference. We can get this done.

Again, I hate to do this, but with that, I will object and just, again, beg you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HAGERTY). Objection is heard.

Mr. JOHNSON. Let's get on the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. As I said to the Senator from Wisconsin, I am happy to sit down with him and his team to see if we can put together a proposal based on the principle that no Federal employee should have to bear the burden and the pain of a decision they had nothing to do with as well as many of these Federal contractors who are also involved. So I welcome the chance to sit down with the Senator from Wisconsin.

I also hope that the President of the United States will sit down with Democrats to resolve the overall issue and open the government. That way we wouldn't even have to go through this exercise right now.

With that, I want to yield the floor to my colleague from Maryland Senator ALSOBROOKS.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. ALSOBROOKS. Mr. President, thank you, first of all, to my colleague Senator CHRIS VAN HOLLEN for yielding, and I also want to thank the senior Senator from Maryland for his work on this legislation, the True Shutdown Fairness Act.

Senator VAN HOLLEN is a tremendous partner on this critical issue and an advocate for the thousands of Federal workers in our great State.

Maryland is home for 494,000 Federal workers and Federal contractors and 34,000 uniformed military personnel. Many of these Marylanders have spent their lives serving their fellow Americans, fighting to defend our country, ensuring our food and water are safe, making sure our parents and grandparents get their Social Security checks, and researching cures to cancer.

That they have been characterized by this administration as an enemy wor-

thy of trauma is repugnant. If you live in Maryland, you know a Federal worker. They are your friend. They are your neighbors. They are the people like my grandmother Sarah Daisy.

You see, Sarah Daisy worked as a housekeeper in Washington, DC, but dreamed her entire life of working for the Federal Government. Back then—and many will recall—she had to pass a civil servants exam, which included a typing test, in order to work for the Federal Government, but she couldn't afford a typewriter and didn't know how to type. So she taped a white piece of paper on her refrigerator. She drew a keyboard on that piece of paper and stood in front of her refrigerator in her one-bedroom apartment every night and taught herself the key strokes.

Well, Sarah Daisy passed the exam and got herself a job working in the Federal Government. It was her dream.

She worked in the Hoffman Building. She would always tell me about it. I can vividly remember her saying that she was so proud that she walked past this general and that general in the hallway. She was very, very proud. And I am honored to be her legacy and to be fighting for the countless Marylanders, just like Sarah Daisy, who are being so cruelly targeted by this administration.

Now, thanks to Republicans in this body who have chosen to follow this President's order and shut down the government, many of our Federal workers are working without pay still in service to our country. The rest have been furloughed through no fault of their own.

Our ask today is simple: Pay them for the jobs that they were hired to do.

We are now in day 23 of this Republican shutdown, and let us not mince words. Republicans hold the keys to the kingdom. They have control over the White House. They have majorities in this Chamber and in the House. And what have they done with that power? Has the cost of your groceries gone down? No. Has the cost of housing gone down? No. Has our economy gotten stronger? Absolutely not.

What have they done? Shut down the government. That is it.

This shutdown is on them. We know it; they know it; and the American people know it. It has been 23 days of this administration refusing to come to the table in good faith and negotiate a plan to keep the government open and make sure that healthcare is affordable and accessible for millions of Americans. It has been 23 days of this administration using the shutdown as an excuse to further target Federal workers who are my constituents.

My State is home to 494,000 Federal workers and contractors. All of them are feeling the pain from this President's refusal to do what he supposedly loves to do best, make a deal.

Right before the shutdown began, the very sinister Office of Management and Budget Director Russell Vought instructed Agencies to use a shutdown as

an opportunity to issue permanent government layoffs. Vought then began circulating a memo that would seem to challenge the legality of furloughed workers receiving backpay.

By the way, Congress passed a bipartisan law ensuring their backpay during the last Trump administration.

Yet this administration continues to disregard the rule of law. Just last week, Vought ominously tweeted: "The RIFs have begun." He then directed Federal Agencies to begin illegally terminating thousands of Federal employees.

This is a man who is outwardly, in a very sinister way, taking pleasure in harming Federal workers.

Hours later, President Trump and Secretary Kennedy fired more than 1,700 more people from the Department of Health and Human Services, including staffers that work to prevent measles outbreaks, before admitting they had sent nearly half of the notices to employees at the CDC in error.

Imagine that, with a family to support, you get a notice that you are fired before getting another email, hours later, telling you that your RIF has been rescinded. The chaos and the cruelty are unconscionable. Thousands of dedicated civil servants have been shown the door by an administration that, in the words the Office of Management and Budget Director Russell Vought, has said that it is his intention—he said he hopes that Federal workers will no longer want to come to work because they will be in so much "trauma." He also said that he hoped they would feel like villains.

So there has been a systemic dismantling of our Federal Government, a witch hunt targeting patriotic people across this country who raised their hand to serve the American people.

All of this chaos is needless. It is a manufactured crisis. So many Marylanders would like to show up to work today and serve the American people, but they have been left behind by this administration. Hundreds of thousands of civil servants have been either furloughed or forced to work without pay, all because this President decided to shut down the government instead of lowering healthcare costs for Americans.

We need to ensure our workers are paid. The truth of the matter is we are now just 9 days away from open enrollment beginning, when Americans will begin to sign up for their healthcare plans for next year, and they are already facing sticker shock.

Even with the State stepping in, a 60-year-old couple living in Salisbury, MD, making \$90,000 a year, will pay \$1,100 more per month—per month—for healthcare. They will have to pay \$1,100 more per month next year. For a family of four in Maryland, making around \$128,000 a year—and for context, that is the combined salary of a firefighter and a teacher—they will be paying \$1,427 per month next year versus \$916 this year.

If the President and our colleagues on the other side of the aisle get their wish and allow the tax credits to expire, nearly 90,000 Marylanders could be priced out of their health insurance all together. So we will keep fighting for healthcare because it is what Americans deserve.

But this chaos is unsustainable, and we must have faith that, soon, this season will be over.

I know, soon, there will be a morning not like the morning we have awakened to today. Today's morning brings about chaos and fear and confusion and division. But I know soon there will be another morning where Americans will wake up across our country and not fear that they will not be able to afford rent, groceries, and healthcare.

Right now, it is our duty as Members of the U.S. Senate to pay our Federal workers. Our government will cease to function if we do not. And the damage, I fear, is irreparable.

Yet, just like Russ Vought, my colleagues today are picking winners and losers, putting forth legislation that made sure only excepted workers are paid, instead of the entirety of the Federal and military workforce that has been held hostage by this Republican shutdown.

We cannot cherry-pick who gets paid during a shutdown based on our perception of the political affiliations of our patriotic civil servants. We must pass legislation that ensures our Federal workers receive the paychecks that they have earned.

Around 750,000 Federal employees have been furloughed this month at no fault of their own. Hundreds of thousands of these employees live in our region—in Maryland, Virginia, and the District. Senator JOHNSON's bill would ignore these dedicated workers, leaving them to continue to go without a paycheck while President Trump refuses to get back to the bargaining table.

They cannot afford to wait for the President to tire of throwing celebratory picnics or tearing down the White House for a gilded ballroom. They cannot afford to wait for Speaker JOHNSON and House Republicans to actually show back up to work.

In case some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have forgotten, Federal workers don't just serve Democrats. They serve every American citizen who needs their help. Researching cures for cancer isn't just for people who live in blue States. Making sure that people get their Social Security checks isn't some leftwing conspiracy.

I would assume that everyone in this body agrees that Americans should get paid for their labor. Well, if you believe that, you will support our bill.

It took courage and dedication for my grandmother, Sarah Daisy, to learn a new skill in order to serve her country. Each day, our armed servicemembers and civil servants show courage and dedication to serve and protect our country from harm, to make it a better place. Let's show courage today, work

together, and pay all Federal workers because we all know Federal workers are Republicans, Democrats, and Independents. They are not political pawns. They are patriots.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have myself and Senator JOHNSON be permitted to complete our remarks prior to the scheduled rollcall vote.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 3043

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I rise, today, to request unanimous consent to pass my Military and Federal Employee Protection Act.

I understand my colleague from Wisconsin objected to Senator VAN HOLLEN's proposal. While I support my colleague from Maryland's legislation, I am going to offer an alternative, an alternative that is very, very straightforward.

It seems to me that we all agree in this Chamber that we want to pay our Federal workers. My bill will do just that and nothing else.

The Military and Federal Employee Protection Act provides pay for members of the military, Federal employees, and Federal contractors who have been denied paychecks during the government shutdown.

Let's be honest on why we are all here. The shutdown is not an accident. Republicans, right now, are refusing to negotiate with Democrats on a bipartisan solution to help address the healthcare crisis. As a result of that, Federal workers are paying a price. My bill ensures that no worker is left behind during this difficult period.

Congress has already guaranteed that all employees receive their paycheck when a shutdown ends. In 2019, Congress voted overwhelmingly for a bill to provide all employees backpay once a shutdown ends, and, actually, President Trump signed that bill into law. So the government is already required to pay all of its workers.

What my bill does, very simply, is it just ensures that these workers can actually, now, pay their bills that are coming due this month. Those bills aren't going to be postponed. They need to be paid this month.

While I appreciate my colleague's interest to ensure all workers are paid—I appreciated the comments that Senator JOHNSON made—my legislation will provide pay for all servicemembers, Federal employees, and contractors that have missed paychecks due to the shutdown. But it doesn't do other stuff that his bill does, which gives President Trump an unlimited blank check to pick winners and losers. We are just focused on what I think all of us agree on.

This legislation that I am offering is the absolute simplest path forward to pay our workers. We all say we agree on this. So let's just pass this bill now and get workers their paycheck.

I am going to continue to work to end the shutdown and address the healthcare crisis. But in the meantime, let's protect our servicemembers and our Federal employees, not put other stuff in the bill, just pay them so they can meet their bills as they arise.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 3043, introduced earlier today; 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 Wisconsin.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, again, I will condense my remarks because so much of what I want to say I already said to the Senator from Maryland.

I think it is interesting that the Senator from Michigan supports the Senator from Maryland's bill, which is a more comprehensive bill, I think. I only saw this now and hope I get it right. But I think yours is just limited to the time period from the shutdown until the bill is passed, and then we are in the same situation: The shutdown continues.

Hopefully, it won't. You know there is a way of doing it. Just vote for the clean CR.

But, again, I really don't want to object to these bills, but in this case, I understand the way to pass this into law—as I was speaking to the Senator from Maryland today, as he exited the Chamber: Wouldn't this be a wonderful demonstration for the Senate, the Congress, for America of how you pass a piece of legislation? If you take the bill—I realize you don't 100-percent agree with my Shutdown Fairness Act. Fine. I think we are 90-plus percent in agreement on it.

You vote for cloture to get on the bill. Then you work in good faith on the areas of disagreement. Let the Senate work its will through the Member process.

This is a small piece of legislation. It is an incredibly important piece of legislation. It is incredibly important because we all agree that we don't want to make Federal employees pay for the dysfunction of this body.

Let's first demonstrate that this body can actually function the way it is intended to function, which is to write a bill, get it filed, have the leader file cloture on it, and have the body vote to proceed to the bill with 60 votes.

We don't need all of you. We need about seven of you, eight of you. OK? Have eight of you agree to get on the bill. Then we will work in good faith and make sure that we don't make Federal employees pay for our dysfunction.

Again, I do have to object. But, again, I am urging—I am begging—colleagues from the other side of the aisle to vote for cloture, and let's iron out these differences and make the Federal employees whole.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I appreciate the comments of my colleague from Wisconsin. We have worked on a lot of bills together. We have come together to find common ground on some, at times, contentious issues.

I agree about the 90 percent comment that Senator JOHNSON mentioned. What I am actually proposing right now is that 90 percent. It is really simple. This is as simple a bill as you can get.

We can show the American people that we come together on a bill that is really straightforward—no gotchas, no language that might trip people up. Pay folks. Make sure they are made whole, if this passes, so they can pay their bills, and we can continue to deal with the other issues of the day.

I think this would be an example of bipartisan, coming together unanimously to say that here is a bill that will pay servicemembers and Federal employees and contractors, make them whole so they can make their bills.

We don't need to have a protracted process. This is a simple issue if we focus on the 90 percent we agree on, and that is what this bill is. It is the 90 percent.

I would hope we can pass it today and put the minds at ease of hundreds of thousands of folks all across the country.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. JOHNSON. So now we will proceed to the cloture vote on the Shutdown Fairness Act.

In response to this, quickly. It is unrealistic to expect almost any piece of legislation to pass by unanimous consent, a bill that has just been introduced that exact morning. No matter how simple it is, there are going to be people who are going to object. So that is why the process is to file a bill, to file for cloture, and to proceed to get on the bill, to have the amendment process, and to go through the process. It can go very quickly, but doing this by unanimous consent is just unreasonable. So that is unfortunate. Again, the solution here is to vote for cloture to get on the bill, the Shutdown Fairness Act.

Now, I will try and keep my remarks reasonably short. I was allotted 20 minutes, but I know people are already here on the floor to vote, so I am mindful of that, but this is just a quick, little history of my experience since I got here in 2011.

This is our fourth shutdown now, and we are on the 23rd day. We have had 55 continuing resolutions. Again, I didn't vote for all of them, but I voted for many of them. You know, other colleagues on both sides have voted for those. I mean, generally, the fight is over. Let's just have a clean CR; let's not junk it up with policies. That is the loggerhead here. One side refuses to

just do a clean CR. We have had 12 either increases or suspensions of the debt ceiling, and we have just surpassed \$38 trillion in debt.

I realize people work in good faith on the budget process. I am on the Budget Committee and have been on the Appropriations Committee. I see the former chair and ranking member of the Appropriations Committee on the floor here. The sad fact is, since I have been here, we should have passed 180 appropriations bills prior to the end of the fiscal year that we are going to fund, but we have only passed 6. That is a 96.7-percent failure rate. It is clearly broken. The budget and appropriations process is broken.

Rather than spending weeks arguing over how do you get the government back open, I would much rather sit down in a nonpartisan way and go, How can we fix this? Can we go to 2-year appropriations cycles? I mean, what can we do to the budget process? I mean, I would much rather talk about that.

I understand that there is a lot of bipartisan agreement on proposals, but we will never get to that if we are literally mired down. Last year, it took us 6 months to finally fund the government with a continuing resolution. This is beyond ridiculous. So, again, this is a bipartisan problem here. I am not placing blame anywhere. It is just a bipartisan problem.

Unfortunately, we haven't passed any appropriations. I have pointed out before that the Democrats voted 13 times during the Biden administration for a clean CR at Biden's spending levels. Now they are saying, no, they won't.

Of course, their leader, in doing that on January 16, 2024, said:

Passing a clean CR this week is important for two main reasons: First, passing the CR will avert a harmful and unnecessary government shutdown. No reasonable Member of either side, Democrat or Republican, wants a government shutdown.

That was not Leader THUNE saying that. That was then-Leader SCHUMER saying that, and now he has, obviously, completely changed his tune.

I did point this out, and this is important to understand because the other side is saying: Look, why don't you sit down and negotiate and compromise?

The House could have passed a CR with \$1.5 trillion in spending cuts to match the CR proposed by the Democrats of \$1.5 trillion in new spending. OK. There you go. Now you have got something to compromise on. That is not what the House did. The House said: Well, let's do what we did 13 times under the Biden administration. Let's just pass a clean CR at Biden's level and really beg the Democrats to say yes, but they haven't been willing to do that.

Again, I know people are waiting to vote, and I am not going to talk about the issue: you know, the fact that ObamaCare is causing premiums to skyrocket and what they are demanding, in terms of extending the enhanced

subsidies that were supposed to be temporary. They set the expiration date. It is ObamaCare that is causing premiums to be unaffordable, and they want those enhanced premiums to mask the failure of ObamaCare, but I won't get into detail on that.

I will talk about—this is day 23. We are forcing about 2.8 million Federal workers to work—military, law enforcement, people who write Social Security checks, and air traffic controllers who are keeping our skies safe—but we are not paying them. That is absurd. What is even more absurd is they will get paid. Whether they are working or furloughed, they will get paid because of the Government Employee Fair Treatment Act of 2019. Once this ends—I am assuming it will end with an appropriation—they will get paid.

With the Shutdown Fairness Act, all it asks—all it does—is to recognize that reality. It shouldn't cost a dime. The CBO has an alternate universe score on this. There is a zero score. This doesn't cost the Federal Government a dime. It just pays the workers who are being forced to work. Pay them now and not later. It makes incredible common sense.

I will end with a surprising support letter I got from the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association that pretty well battens down all the arguments against this bill. It doesn't change the government's obligation to pay furloughed employees. They will get paid. It does not single out favored political functions over disfavored ones. Again, President Trump is, by and large, honoring the past opinions of the Office of Legal Counsel's Antideficiency Act.

They say that they don't believe that it is empowering the administration to pick and choose what activities it carries out. It includes to say that the American public relies on the full scope of Federal Agency missions that are funded via appropriations, and political pressures that exist to advance appropriations bills will remain to encourage resolution.

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Vote?

Mr. JOHNSON. No, we are not there yet. I am sorry. I will conclude quickly.

The bottom line is, as I talk to the Senator from Maryland, the way to pass this law—the way to protect Federal workers—isn't with the unanimous consent request of a bill nobody has ever seen; it is to vote for cloture on the Shutdown Fairness Act. Let's work out the differences. We agree on 95 percent of it. Let's work out those differences and vote for cloture. We can get this passed, I think, early next week. With that, I will conclude my remarks on that.

NOMINATION OF REBECCA L. TAIBLESON

Mr. President, I should be speaking for about 5 minutes on the wonderful nomination of Rebecca Taibleson, but I know everybody wants to vote.

She did a wonderful job in Judiciary. She is a highly qualified lawyer. She

will make a wonderful judge for the Seventh Circuit. I urge all of my colleagues to vote for cloture on her nomination.

With that, I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The 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. 191, S. 3012, a bill to appropriate funds for pay and allowances of excepted Federal employees for periods of work performed during a lapse in appropriations, and for other purposes.

John Thune, Ted Budd, Katie Boyd Britt, Ron Johnson, Roger Marshall, Tommy Tuberville, Jon Husted, Bernie Moreno, David McCormick, Roger F. Wicker, Rick Scott of Florida, Pete Ricketts, Steve Daines, Joni Ernst, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Shelley Moore Capito, Mike Rounds.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to proceed to S. 3012, a bill to appropriate funds for pay and allowances of excepted Federal employees for periods of work performed during a lapse in appropriations, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Montana (Mr. SHEEHY).

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 54, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 585 Leg.]

YEAS—54

Banks
Barrasso
Blackburn
Boozman
Britt
Budd
Capito
Cassidy
Collins
Cornyn
Cotton
Cramer
Crapo
Cruz
Curtis
Daines
Ernst
Fetterman

Fischer
Graham
Grassley
Hagerty
Hawley
Hoeven
Husted
Hyde-Smith
Johnson
Justice
Kennedy
Lankford
Lee
Lummis
Marshall
McConnell
McCormick
Moody

Moran
Moreno
Mullin
Murkowski
Ossoff
Paul
Ricketts
Risch
Rounds
Schmitt
Scott (FL)
Scott (SC)
Sullivan
Tillis
Tuberville
Warnock
Wicker
Young

NAYS—45

Alsobrooks
Baldwin
Bennet
Blumenthal
Blunt Rochester

Booker
Cantwell
Coons
Cortez Masto
Duckworth

Durbin
Gallego
Gillibrand
Hassan
Heinrich

Hickenlooper
Hirono
Kaine
Kelly
Kim
King
Klobuchar
Luján
Markey
Merkley

Murphy
Murray
Padilla
Peters
Reed
Rosen
Sanders
Schatz
Schiff
Schumer

Shaheen
Slotkin
Smith
Thune
Van Hollen
Warner
Warren
Welch
Whitehouse
Wyden

NOT VOTING—1

Sheehy

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 54, and the nays are 45.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is not agreed to.

The motion was rejected.

The majority leader.

MOTION TO RECONSIDER

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I enter a motion to reconsider.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is entered.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume executive session to consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant executive clerk read the nomination of Stephen Chad Meredith, of Kentucky, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Kentucky.

NOMINATION OF STEPHEN CHAD MEREDITH

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I strongly oppose the nomination of Stephen Chad Meredith to serve as a judge on the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Kentucky.

Like several of President Trump's other judicial nominees, Mr. Meredith has a long history of taking extreme positions on women's reproductive rights.

As a Republican political appointee in Kentucky, he sought a functional ban on the most common second-trimester abortion procedure and attempted to shut down what was, at the time, the last remaining abortion clinic in the State.

And he insulted women everywhere when he argued, in court, that doctors should be required to provide certain information to female patients because these women "don't understand" their own medical needs.

In addition to his extreme record on reproductive rights, Mr. Meredith's involvement in pardoning a host of violent offenders—and his total lack of candor on this issue—is disqualifying.

Then-Kentucky Governor Matt Bevin pardoned hundreds of violent offenders during his last days in office. Mr. Meredith served as Governor Bevin's chief deputy general counsel during this time.

There is incontrovertible written evidence that Mr. Meredith worked on at

least some of these pardons. Yet, during his hearing, he swore to this committee, under oath, that he had no involvement.

He testified, "I learned about the Governor's last minute controversial pardons in the media after we left office." He also testified that he didn't have anything to do with Governor Bevin's controversial pardons. This is demonstrably untrue.

In written questions, Mr. Meredith admitted that, at Governor Bevin's request, he had personally gone to a prison to inform two inmates, in person, that they had received pardons.

One of those inmates had committed vehicular homicide. The other had been convicted of sexually abusing his six-year-old stepdaughter.

Mr. Meredith has radical views far outside the mainstream and was not forthright with this Committee about his record. I cannot support his nomination.

VOTE ON MEREDITH NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Meredith nomination?

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. 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 Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), the Senator from Montana (Mr. SHEEHY), and the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE), and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 48, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 586 Ex.]

YEAS—48

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

NAYS—45

Alsobrooks	Gallego	Merkley
Baldwin	Gillibrand	Murphy
Bennet	Hassan	Murray
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Ossoff
Blunt Rochester	Hickenlooper	Padilla
Booker	Hirono	Peters
Cantwell	Kelly	Reed
Coons	Kim	Rosen
Cortez Masto	King	Sanders
Duckworth	Klobuchar	Schatz
Durbin	Lujan	Schiff
Fetterman	Markey	Schumer

Shaheen	Van Hollen	Welch
Slotkin	Warnock	Whitehouse
Smith	Warren	Wyden

NOT VOTING—7

Blackburn	Murkowski	Warner
Kaine	Sheehy	
Moran	Sullivan	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JOHNSON). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 471, Rebecca L. Taibleson, of Wisconsin, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Seventh Circuit.

John Thune, John Barrasso, Jon Husted, Tom Cotton, Bernie Moreno, John Boozman, James Lankford, Markwayne Mullin, Katie Boyd Britt, John Cornyn, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Kevin Cramer, Pete Ricketts, Tim Sheehy, Jim Banks, Eric Schmitt, Chuck Grassley.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Rebecca L. Taibleson, of Wisconsin, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Seventh Circuit, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS), and the Senator from Montana (Mr. SHEEHY).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) and the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) are necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 50, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 587 Ex.]

YEAS—50

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

Sullivan	Tillis	Wicker
Thune	Tuberville	Young

NAYS—45

Alsobrooks	Heinrich	Peters
Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Reed
Bennet	Hirono	Rosen
Blumenthal	Kaine	Sanders
Blunt Rochester	Kelly	Schiff
Booker	Kim	Schumer
Cantwell	King	Slotkin
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

NOT VOTING—5

Moran	Schatz	Sheehy
Rounds	Shaheen	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 50, the nays are 45.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Rebecca L. Taibleson, of Wisconsin, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Seventh Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARSHALL). The majority leader.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, just to remind our colleagues, we have had now a series of three votes, with a couple of them on judges, but one of the votes in there was on a Senator JOHNSON proposal that would have paid all Federal employees who are currently working in the middle of the shutdown.

Now, I don't know how you explain—if you have any Federal employees—how you would vote against something that would make sure, in the middle of a government shutdown, that, if they continue to work, they will get paid. That is all it was—very simple, very straightforward. For the life of me, again, I think the other side is in a very bad headspace right now to vote against something like that.

If you have any Federal employees in your State—obviously, a lot of them are here or are in this area, and all of our staffs are currently not getting paid—Senator JOHNSON tried to correct that today by calling up a bill, which we just voted on and which, once again, Democrats here in this Chamber voted against.

Now, we have had in front of us a dozen votes now on a continuing resolution that would open up the government, and it has been sitting at the desk now for some time. The House has passed it. We need five Democrats to join us and send it to the President. He will sign it into law. The government opens up. It is clean. It is nonpartisan. It has no policy riders and no partisan gimmicks attached to it. It is a straightforward continuing resolution to fund the government until a certain time.

Senator JOHNSON's was even more straightforward than that, really, because it simply said, if you are a Federal employee and you are currently working today, like everybody here in this Chamber, you will get paid.

Again, I can't explain what is going on on the other side of the aisle, but they consistently come down here and vote against paying people who are working—who are working every single day—and not getting paid. So that was the vote we had just a couple of votes ago.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the postcloture time with respect to the Taibleson nomination be expired and the Senate vote on confirmation of the nomination at a time to be determined by the majority leader in consultation with the Democratic leader no earlier than Monday, October 27; further, that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

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 Executive Calendar No. 295.

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 Jordan Emery Pratt, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Florida.

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. 295, Jordan Emery Pratt, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Florida.

John Thune, Pete Ricketts, Markwayne Mullin, John Barrasso, Tim Sheehy, Ted Budd, Bill Hagerty, Bernie Moreno,

John R. Curtis, Jon A. Husted, Jim Justice, Ashley B. Moody, Roger Marshall, Joni Ernst, Roger F. Wicker, Ron Johnson, John Boozman.

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 Executive Calendar No. 457.

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 Edmund G. LaCour, Jr., of Alabama, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Alabama.

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. 457, Edmund G. LaCour, Jr., of Alabama, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Alabama.

John Thune, Bernie Moreno, Katie Boyd Britt, Chuck Grassley, James Lankford, Pete Ricketts, Markwayne Mullin, Tim Sheehy, Jon A. Husted, Eric Schmitt, Jim Justice, James E. Risch, Tom Cotton, Steve Daines, Ted Budd, John R. Curtis, John Boozman.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ERNST). The Senator from South Carolina.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. GRAHAM. Madam President, there are a couple of topics that I would like to talk about. The first is the government shutdown.

I don't know what my friends on the other side expect. We will talk about the Affordable Care Act at the right time, starting with the idea that it is not affordable. You created a law without any Republican votes. You had the subsidies, and they expire. That was your choice. Most of us believe that the ObamaCare Program you created is very expensive, and we are not going to extend it. We would look at trying to make it better. The President has a brilliant idea of how better to use the money to help consumers.

Senator MARSHALL just left. So, whether you open the government up

or not, I am not going to change my vote. I am not going to vote to authorize these subsidies as they are. I am not going to vote to repeal the good work we did under the Big Beautiful Bill. So let's open up the government and talk. If you don't want to do that, then a lot of people are going to have their lives turned upside down for no good reason.

I do not feel like we should be held hostage here to get a legislative outcome to open up the government. We tried that as Republicans: You have got to build a wall or we won't open the government. It was probably not a good idea for us. It didn't work out well for us. If nothing else, learn from what we did.

So I am hoping the government will open soon. It is a dangerous time to have the Federal Government not functioning in the security space, and it is a danger for air travel, but if you haven't noticed, the world is a pretty dangerous place.

CHINA AND RUSSIA

So, Madam President, I want to talk about two things: China and Russia.

President Trump is traveling to South Korea, and I think he is going to meet the Chinese President Xi. I don't mind talking with people that I disagree with. I like the fact that President Trump has reached out to adversaries and tried to find common ground to end conflicts that have been very destructive.

When it comes to President Trump and Russia, he has made a full-court press to try to get Russia at the table to find a way to end the bloodbath in Ukraine, to make it an outcome that is acceptable to all parties. I don't think President Trump is out to humiliate Putin at all, but he does want to end the war in a way that we don't have a third invasion. So I appreciate what he has done, and it has been a very aggressive effort to engage the parties.

In the past, we have kind of ignored Putin. I don't think that is the right solution. But we have come to a point now where every time President Trump talks about a proposal to end the bloodbath, Putin has a reason not to get there.

The latest proposal by President Trump is to have a cease-fire in place, stop the fighting, stop the killing at the line of contact, go back to your respective sides, and we will sit down and find a way forward to get a comprehensive deal. That is the best proposal I have heard from anybody. Ukraine said yes. Europe said yes. Putin says no.

Putin continues to attack Ukraine. They show no indication of wanting to stop this war until they meet their war aims.

Let me tell Russia: Your war aims are not going to be accepted by the United States and Ukraine.

Putin said today that he would respond fiercely if we increase the lethality of the Ukrainian military.

Well, you have said that a lot. I want the war to end. I don't want anything

Russia has. I just want the war to end in an honorable and just way. So if you expect Ukraine to give you territory that you don't occupy today that would create a pathway to Kyiv in the future, make them very vulnerable to a third invasion, it is not going to happen.

I know Putin could care less about how many Russians die. They say a million casualties—I don't know. Who knows? I know this: His respect for life is pretty low. North Koreans, people from all over the Russian provinces have been thrown into the meat grinder, and he could really care less. He does care about his own lifestyle. Beyond that, I don't think he could care less.

His economy is selling cheap oil and gas to fuel his war machine. He is selling gas and oil well below market prices—Putin—to get the money to continue the attack on Ukraine. So President Trump and myself and many others here are suggesting to those who buy cheap Russian oil and gas: Stop it so we can find a way to get Putin to the peace table.

The largest three customers buying Russian oil and gas that do not help Ukraine are China, India, and Brazil. If those three customers told Putin that it is time to wind this war down, then I think the war would be over pretty quickly because without oil and gas money, he can't prosecute the war.

I understand wanting to buy cheap Russian oil, but I don't understand a country that buys cheap Russian oil knowing it is going to be used to kill innocent people and acquire land from others by force of arms.

I have been told that our friends in India are very proud.

You have a lot to be proud of.

I have been told that our friends in India are trying to find a way to be less dependent on Russian oil.

To our friends in India: Well done.

Before the invasion by Putin, India was buying 3 percent of their oil from Russia. After the invasion, it went up to almost 30 percent. Why? They were buying it at below market prices from Russia, refining it in India, and selling it at a profit. That is not something to be proud of.

I am hopeful that you are going to abandon that practice to get us to a place where we can end the war in Russia and stop the killing. So there is some progress there.

As to China, if President Xi called Putin tomorrow and said "It is now time to wind this conflict down; you need to get to the peace table," I think Putin would not have much of a choice. China is the No. 1 customer of Russian oil. If they made a decision tomorrow to change that practice, then I think Putin's ability to prosecute the war would hit a wall.

President Trump is going to talk to Xi hopefully here soon, and there will be a lot of issues on the table.

As to China, it is a communist dictatorship. I am no fan of the Chinese

Communist Party. To say otherwise would be misleading. Having said that, there are times we could do business with China for the betterment of all of us. This is one of those times.

I am hoping that when President Trump meets with President Xi, if that happens, that he will be able to persuade President Xi: It is now time to end the bloodbath in Ukraine. I need your help to get Putin to the table.

To China: If you are able to do that, I think it would open up opportunities between you, the United States—China and the United States—and the Western world to have a better relationship.

If China wants to be a meaningful member of the international community and wants to be treated better, then act better.

If you want to be treated normally, act normal.

To China: You have the power to help end this war. I would urge you to work with President Trump to achieve that goal.

It will make the world a better place, and I think it would inure to the benefit of China.

Sanctions were put on two of the largest oil companies in Russia yesterday by Secretary Bessent at the direction of President Trump. I think President Trump has come to believe that Putin doesn't want a cease-fire at the line of contact, and everybody but him does. I hope President Trump's new policy will be: I am not going to talk to Russia anymore until they agree to a cease-fire at the line of contact like Ukraine has. Once that agreement is reached, then we would sit down and try to end this war.

I hope he will tell President Xi: If you have the chance to help me in this war, please do.

I, along with the Presiding Officer of the Senate and many of us—85 cosponsors—we have legislation allowing President Trump, at his choice, to impose tariffs on countries that buy cheap Russian oil to prop up Putin's war machine that don't help Ukraine, and that would be China. So President Trump has used tariffs robustly, I think, to the benefit of our country. If he decides to go down the road of going after Putin's customers, he would have the blessing of the Congress, the House and the Senate.

I can't think of an issue that has brought us together as a body in the Senate more than the desire to end this war in Ukraine and to use all the tools available to help President Trump get Putin's attention.

The fact that Democratic colleagues, who are probably not a big fan of this President, are willing to empower the President to have tariff authority given to him by the Congress that would be bulletproof in court speaks well to them, and it speaks loudly to the idea that the Senate is united when it comes to standing up to Putin and those who prop him up to end this bloodbath.

This bill has been around for a long time. People ask me all the time: What is going to happen?

I think President Trump has made a decision that a cease-fire in place is the right way to start discussions about how to end the war, and I hope he will stick with that position.

I would expect the Senate to move the legislation I have just described—the Russian Sanctions Act that allows secondary tariffs against countries that buy cheap Russian oil—I would expect us to move that fairly soon.

The Senate also has passed legislation making Russia a state sponsor of terrorism under U.S. law. There are four countries that fall into that category. Russia would be the fifth for kidnapping over 19,000 Ukrainian children in the occupied areas.

This is a very big deal to many of us. We have gone to Ukraine. We have heard the stories that Russia has occupied about 20-something percent of Ukraine, and they have literally taken Ukrainian children from their families and sent them to Russia, to indoctrination camps to turn these Ukrainian children against their own country. It is despicable. And it is not 200; I do believe the number is closer to 20,000. We have a lot of evidence, and I will have a hearing in the Foreign Operations Subcommittee about it.

The bill making Russia a state sponsor of terrorism for kidnapping the children went through the Foreign Relations Committee yesterday unanimously. It is ready to come to the floor.

I can't think of a better description of Putin's Russia than a "state sponsor of terrorism."

You have earned that distinction. Now, if you will turn the children over, that goes away.

But he denies, really, the fact that he has taken Ukrainian children away from their families to Russia, but he is lying. He is lying through his teeth.

So that is coming.

There is \$300 billion of frozen Russian assets overseas, and we have legislation here—Senator KENNEDY and others—that would take that money for the benefit of Ukraine.

All three of these pieces of legislation are ripe. They are ready to go. After this last rebuff by Putin of President Trump, now is the time to act.

There was supposed to be a meeting in Budapest between President Trump and President Putin. Well, that is off now because the goal was to have a cease-fire at the line of contact. Ukraine said yes immediately. Come to find out that Russia has not changed its position at all. So I don't think that meeting is going to occur, and that is a good thing. No more meeting Putin until he changes his behavior.

I think now is the time to put pressure on Putin's war machine economically. Now is the time to make Ukraine more lethal when it comes to defending itself—the Tomahawks. President Trump is right—it is a complicated weapon system—but I would like to see some Tomahawks transferred to Europe and start a training program so

that Ukrainians would one day be able to utilize these weapons.

Now, why do we want that weapon? It could go deep into Russia and knock out factories that make drones that come from Iran and to destroy missile factories that are used to terrorize the Ukrainian people at night.

I think we have a moment here to act decisively with our European partners. I appreciate what President Trump has done to try to solve this conflict through diplomacy. I appreciate what he has done to make Ukraine more lethal, providing more weapons by selling to Europe weapons to the benefit of Ukraine. I appreciate the sanctions that were imposed yesterday, and I think they are having a beneficial effect already. But I think we need to do more.

So as President Trump engages President Xi, it is my hope that the Chinese would change their position about this war and work with President Trump to get Putin's attention to find a way to end the bloodbath honorably and justly.

Why do I keep talking about China? There is no way Putin can prosecute this war if China decided to isolate Russia and stop buying their oil. And we would find ways to help China with their oil needs so they wouldn't be at a loss. If that happened, then this war would end pretty quickly.

To President Trump: Good luck. I am glad you are talking to China about a bunch of things, including trade. I am sure you will talk about the recent efforts of the Chinese Communist Party to go after Christians in an unprecedented way in China. The Christian church is under assault.

We have a lot of differences with China, but if China wants to change its relationship with the United States, you have a chance in the next few days to do it in a positive way.

To China: If I and others believed that you used your influence with Putin to end this bloodbath in Ukraine, it would be to the benefit of you over time, and I would respond differently than I have in the past. I think Western Europe would respond differently than they have in the past.

So this is an opportunity for China to do something good for the world. You have it in your power to get Putin's attention unlike anybody else on the planet. I would urge you to use that power to end the bloodbath.

If you choose to continue to buy cheap Russian oil to fuel Putin's war machine, to benefit your economy, then you should not be surprised that we push back hard. It is your choice.

But I am speaking for most everybody in this body, where we believe the time has come for China, India, and Brazil to stop profiting off this war. The time has come to end this bloodbath.

To China, India, and Brazil: You have the power, if you would use it, to get Putin's attention like no one else on the planet.

To India: You are definitely moving in the right direction.

China made some announcements today about maybe reducing their purchases of Russian oil. All of this is good.

The reason I keep talking about this is I concluded that, unlike anybody else on the planet, China can, if they choose to, help us end this war better than anybody. So I am appealing to President Xi to help President Trump end a war that should have been ended a long time ago.

I am very concerned that if this war continues, then the relationship between the United States and China is going to get worse, not better. And I seek it to be better.

The Presiding Officer has been involved in everything I have just said.

You have been one of the leading champions of protecting the Ukrainian children kidnapped by the Russians. You are one of the first people that sponsored the legislation. You have been to Ukraine numerous times. I know the Presiding Officer has a personal relationship with Ukraine that goes back to a long time ago when you were actually involved in Ukraine and Ukrainian families, spending some time there. You have been a strong, consistent voice that Russia needs to stop; we need to end the war, not continue the war.

My Senate colleagues, you have been asking me a long time: When are we going to move your bill?

It is not my bill; it is our bill. The time has come. I am hoping—and I believe the majority leader agrees—that the time has come. We will wait to see what happens in China, but if nothing changes in China, then we need to have a week, I believe, of where this body focuses on applying pressure against Russia to end this conflict to the betterment of the world.

With that, I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

REMEMBERING RICHARD MOE

Ms. SMITH. Madam President, I rise today to honor my friend and great American Richard Moe, whom we lost to Parkinson's disease at the age of 88 on September 15 of this year.

Dick leaves behind a legacy that shaped Minnesota and our country and my own life and career.

Madam President, I understand that some of Richard Moe's family are visiting us in the Gallery today, and I want to, through the Presiding Officer, welcome them to the Chamber.

From leading Minnesota's Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party at only 32, to serving as chief adviser to Walter Mondale in the Senate and the White House, to spending 17 years as president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Dick leaves behind a remarkable legacy of public service.

Dick was born in Duluth, MN—fondly called the San Francisco of the Great Lakes, to those of us who love it. He was born there in 1936. He became ac-

tive in Minnesota politics at a very young age, at 24, and right out of college, he volunteered to be a driver for Minneapolis mayor Hubert Humphrey when he was running first for the Senate. Dick was, as I said, Humphrey's driver and reportedly was so nervous driving the great man around that he drove Humphrey right into a gate at one point—an event that, thankfully, was not a career-ending move for him.

A few years later, when he was only 32, Humphrey recruited Dick to lead Minnesota's Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party, and there, Dick showed really exceptional political intuition and skill, where he led Minnesota Democrats to win majorities in the State legislature for the first time ever.

His political and organizing skills caught the eye of Senator Walter Mondale, who recruited Dick to come work on the Washington staff, and soon Dick became Mr. Mondale's chief of staff and one of his closest advisers.

Among his many accomplishments, Dick continued to show prescient political insight by hiring a bright-eyed, young Minnesotan named AMY KLOBUCHAR to be an intern for Walter Mondale. AMY will be here to tell you the rest of the story.

I think it is fair to say that Dick loved the Senate, and he believed strongly in the power of this institution to do good in people's lives. He understood that politics is about making the very most of the power that you have, for good.

One of my favorite stories comes from 1976, when Jimmy Carter was considering Walter Mondale to be Vice President. Fritz balked at the idea at first. He had heard some of the horror stories about how LBJ treated his friend Hubert Humphrey, and he was very negative to the idea of the Vice Presidency. But Dick encouraged Mondale to keep an open mind, and then he invited Humphrey over to the Senate to talk the whole idea through. And Humphrey was really clear. He said: Fritz, you will get more done up there in 2 days than you will get done here in 2 years.

So Fritz and Joan and Dick, as I understand it, went down to Plains, GA, to meet the Carters. Now, Fritz always said that Joan charmed the Carters and that sealed the deal, and I am sure that there is a lot of truth to that, but after that meeting, Dick told Mr. Mondale that he needed to write down on paper what he wanted the job of Vice President to be. So the two of them talked, and then Dick drafted a memo that laid out the template for the modern Vice Presidency.

After the election, they presented their ideas to President-elect Carter, and Carter agreed. With that memo, what had been a torture to Hubert Humphrey was reimagined by Walter Mondale and Jimmy Carter, thanks to Dick Moe.

Vice President Mondale had an office in the West Wing because they understood that proximity to the Oval and

to decision making was essential. Mondale got the information and the security briefings and the respect that allowed him to truly be a true adviser and trusted confidant to the President, not just a ribbon cutter and somebody who was designated to go to funerals. And Richard Moe became Chief of Staff to the Vice President and Senior Adviser to President Carter.

Many years later, when Gov. Mark Dayton asked me to be his Lieutenant Governor, I consulted my friend Walter Mondale: Did he think this was a good idea? Characteristically, Mondale was a little skeptical at first, but then he called me down to his office, and he had a mission in mind. I came in and I sat down, and Mondale shouted out to Linda, his longtime personal assistant—he said, “Linda, get me Dick’s memo.”

So he handed me Dick Moe’s 11-page revolutionary tract on how to change the role of the second in command.

“Take a look at this,” says Mondale, in his understated way. “I think it might give you a few ideas.”

So I used that memo to write my own memo to Governor Dayton so that together we were able to transform that role of Lieutenant Governor in Minnesota. And I remember saying to Mark: You are no Jimmy Carter and I am no Walter Mondale, but I think there are some good things for us to take to heart here. And that changed my life.

I love this story because, at its heart, I was a chief of staff and Dick was a staffer, and as a former staff, I appreciate great staff. And he was the consummate staffer, Dick Moe.

But what happens next in his story is how Dick left behind the role of adviser and became a principal in his own right. When the Carter-Mondale ticket lost, badly, in 1980, Dick regrouped. He practiced law for a while, and he dedicated himself to his love of American history.

He wrote a book called “The Last Full Measure” about Minnesota’s famous First Regiment and the Battle of Gettysburg, and this led him to leading the National Trust for Historic Preservation, where he served as president for 17 years. In that role, he had a significant hand in preserving some of our country’s most precious buildings and historic sites and shaping how cities and small towns preserve the unique Main Streets and downtowns that give these communities a sense of place.

His book “Changing Places” changed how downtowns were imagined, and he called out how big-box stores were destroying what is precious and unique about these communities that we love.

He marshalled famous historians and grassroots organizers to protect the Manassas Battlefield from being overrun by a Disney theme park, and he was one of the first people to go to New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina to highlight the need to restore the historically Black neighborhoods decimated by the storms.

His fondest achievement was the restoration of a gothic revival home that President Lincoln used as a refuge for his family during the hot Washington summers of the Civil War. You can all visit President Lincoln’s cottage in Washington, DC, thanks to Dick. In fact, Madam President and Senator KLOBUCHAR, I believe we had a women’s Senate dinner there ourselves and enjoyed that beautiful place that Dick protected and restored for all of us.

When I came to the Senate in 2018, Dick reached out to me immediately, and he became a trusted adviser to yet another Minnesota Senator. He gave me wise counsel and in so many ways helped me to learn how to be a Senator but maybe most especially around the importance of protecting Minnesota’s Boundary Waters wilderness area.

The Boundary Waters is one of the great places on this planet. It is a million acres of lakes and bogs and forests and streams. And as Vice President Mondale’s Chief of Staff when they were in the Presidency, Dick helped Mondale and President Carter shepherd through Congress the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness Act of 1978. This was the culmination of years of grassroots efforts to protect this place.

After all these years, Dick was still engaged in protecting the Boundary Waters from copper, nickel, and sulfide mining. Dick understood the North Country of Minnesota. It was in his history, it was in his blood, and he understood the power of leadership to protect this special place.

Madam President, I can tell you, he was relentless. I remember once, I took a call from him on New Year’s Day morning. I was still in bed, and he is calling me on New Year’s Day: Starting a new year, Tina. Time for us to think about what you can do to help to protect the Boundary Waters. Leadership, he said, makes a big difference. And he was right.

Dick loved Minnesota. He loved this country, and he believed passionately in the idea that the U.S. Senate has the power to do good. He was steadfast in believing that individual leaders have an obligation to do their best and be their best and live up to our highest values.

I can see him sitting across from me in the Senate Dining Room. There we were—the elder statesman and junior Senator. He would lean in and say to me: Tina, I have been thinking about something that I think you could do that would make a big difference. Let me tell you about it.

Even as Parkinson’s took its toll—and it did—he kept at it. One of the last conversations I had with him was about a speech he wanted me to give on Minnesota’s value of civic participation and our collective responsibility to work together for the good of all of us.

After the tragic and wrenching murders of Melissa Hortman and Mark, her husband, and the shooting of State senator John Hoffman and his wife Yvette,

Dick could still see the through line of our Minnesota story—from Minnesota’s First Regiment sacrificing everything at Gettysburg, to Humphrey and Mondale, through civil rights and farmers and laborers, to this moment. For Dick, this was the story of regular people called on to do the hard work of holding our democracy together—not out of partisanship but in the spirit of building a more perfect Union.

So I have yet to deliver the speech that Dick had in mind, but I am working on it. And I am missing the inspiration of my friend and mentor Dick Moe. We all should have someone like Dick in our corners—someone wise, kind, telling us what we need to hear, and pushing us to do better and do more for the good of all of us.

Dick is loved and missed by his wife of 60 years, Julia Neimeyer Moe, by his daughter Alexandra and son Andrew, his sister Elizabeth, his two granddaughters, and many, many other family and friends, and those whose life he expanded by being a part of it.

May his memory be a blessing to all of us who knew and loved him.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BUDD). The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I first want to thank my colleague and friend Senator SMITH for her beautiful remarks and for her friendship with Dick to the end.

I am sure you hear his voice all the time when you are trying to make decisions, and having that kind of person that is so grounded, not just in Minnesota but in his values that he brought with him to Washington and that he brought with him to the Vice President’s office, couldn’t be more important, and especially at a time like this.

I just kept thinking, as Senator SMITH spoke, about how Dick cherished history instead of trampling on it like we have seen right now. He understood that you could learn from history and that history can teach you lessons that help guide you when you have to make decisions in the now.

As Senator SMITH mentioned, Dick was born in Duluth, not actually far away from where my dad grew up, in Ely. So there was a lot of good stock up there. He was the son of Russell and Virginia Moe, and he grew up surrounded by the values that define our State: hard work and service to others, and especially northern Minnesota.

He then goes on to the University of Minnesota and gets his start in a big way by running the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party, and he helped to lead that party to victory, time and time again, because, like I said, he was grounded in doing the right thing, but he also was a mastermind of how to win elections and how to follow up for people and get things done.

That is the path that led him to my mentor, Walter Mondale, whom we all miss very, very much. I literally got to see Mondale at his highest peaks, when

he was Vice President and I was an intern in the office, hired by Dick when he was Chief of Staff.

And then I got to see him back in Minnesota, where he was, literally, working at the law firm with me, and I saw him in grocery lines, where he would engage in long discussions with the clerk at the grocery station on how we could get, say, peace in the Middle East or what we should be doing about an economic crisis.

And Mondale had that same thing that drew Dick Moe to him, and that was a grounding in the people that you represent.

So we all know what a great job he did running that office and his Norwegian sense of humor—I know those words don't always go together, but it was a very dry sense of humor—and just this belief in decency.

Senator SMITH recounted how Dick helped Fritz prepare for that meeting with Jimmy Carter. And I had one interesting perspective on how prepared Walter Mondale was for that meeting.

When I actually went to Plains, a few years back, and met with President Carter and Mrs. Carter, what they told me, over the pimento and cheese sandwiches that the former First Lady made, was that it was Walter Mondale that knew that her name was pronounced “Rosalynn” and not “Rosalynn.” And I have a very strong feeling that Dick Moe drilled that into Mondale's head when running down there. And Carter actually said that really stood out because a bunch of the candidates mispronounced his wife's name.

Among other things, as Tina explained, this was a model that they, after getting elected, embarked on, and Dick Moe became Vice President Mondale's Chief of Staff. He crafted that 11-page memo that redefined the Vice Presidency, giving an active role in shaping policy, and he also served on President Carter's senior staff, which was very unique.

That is when I got to be an intern at that time. I still remember writing in, sending in my letter, and interviewing over the phone. I have this cherished picture in the Vice President's home backyard that Dick Moe is in with all the interns, which included me and Tom Nides, who went on to be our Ambassador to Israel. It was quite an intern class, and he was there. I remember it was the first time I ever had lobster; so it is very memorable to me.

I was so eager when I got there to do these policy memos that I had talked to Dick about and write all of these very smart ideas for them. And they, in fact, assigned me to do the furniture inventory of every piece of furniture in the Vice President's office and write down the numbers on a spreadsheet and make sure that they were all there and turn it into some government office. And I literally crawled around on the floor for 2 weeks, checking serial numbers on desks and chairs.

So the first thing I learned from all that is that Walter Mondale and his

Chief of Staff, Dick Moe, were scrupulously honest, and nothing was missing and, second, was to take every job seriously. I often share that with young people, including the interns in the Capitol.

That internship that Dick Moe hired me for was my first government job in Washington, DC, and this was my second. So I remind them: Take those internships and the people you work with and the relationships, even if they are fleeting, that you form as you are meeting people and getting to know them, because they are oftentimes the key to your future. And never complain about what assignments you get.

So Dick Moe believed in preparing the next generation of public servants. I think Senator SMITH's story of that just really says it all. And then, in his later years, when he is not feeling as good, he takes that time to be such a mentor to her.

So we talked about the longest serving president for the National Trust for Historic Preservation—a 17-year tenure. He led the efforts to rebuild so many historic neighborhoods in New Orleans, after Hurricane Katrina. Working on restoring President Lincoln's cottage is such an amazing thing. To think it had not been restored, but Dick Moe knew how important that was.

I don't think he saw preservation as nostalgia. I think he saw it as honoring our country and honoring the Americans that had served.

There was a lot about that book, “The Last Full Measure,” that I just love, and it is now recognized as the definitive history of the First Minnesota Regiment, which, as we know, fought for the Union in the Civil War, before Minnesota was even a State.

There had been another book, the historical novel “The Killer Angels,” which, OK, won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1975, but Dick felt it did not correctly account for the bravery of the Minnesotans in the First Minnesota, and he more than righted that wrong.

So that story that I have often quoted around our State about the 262-member First Minnesota Regiment, which held the line against 1,600 Confederate troops while desperately needed reinforcements were brought in on the Union side, is truly worthy of the book that Dick wrote.

I went with a number of Senators, including Senator KING and a number of Republican Senators, to take a 1-day deep dive on the Gettysburg battlefield site, Monday. It was led by the head of the War College and another veteran member of that War College. And we went to that site.

We first talked about Maine and the historic story of Maine, and then we went to the Minnesota site, which is a very big monument, but it is not nearly as much visited.

The head of the War College, at the time, actually started to shed a tear when he told the story because he said,

as Dick knew, the story of the First Minnesota was a story like no other.

They asked them to hold the line—262 men, 200—and they didn't pause. They went and did it. And we saw that open field. And 215 of them were struck down by bullets, an 82-percent casualty rate, the highest percentage of casualty suffered by any Union regiment in a single engagement in the entire war.

That sacrifice, which Dick researched and captured, is summed up by a Churchill quote:

Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.

Those ragtag soldiers that didn't even have proper uniforms, that were farmers, that were laborers, that were part of a regiment from a State that wasn't even a State, stood up when it couldn't be more of a difficult burden, and they didn't hesitate, and they did their jobs.

That is what Dick honored with that story, and it is something I think we all should be thinking about right now. What is truly sacrificed? What does it mean to be an American? What does it mean to stand up for your country?

So Dick's wife Julia and his kids Alexandra and Andrew, and the granddaughters, we send our love and gratitude. Our State is so much better and our country is so much better because of Dick Moe. He showed us, and clearly Senator SMITH, that public service is worth it, that this devotion to history is not just some ancient thing in a dusty book. It matters to now.

He showed us that the ties that bind us—whether it is small towns and historic preservation of buildings, like Lincoln's Cottage—mean something in the now; that history matters. And I think we all need to remember that today.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, it is day 23 of the Schumer shutdown, making this the second longest shutdown in modern history. While Senator SCHUMER says “every day gets better” for Democrats, the stunt is taking a real toll on Americans. Closing the government may be a game for Washington politicians, but it is not fun for the folks in Iowa who work hard and expect Congress to do the same.

A social service provider in Sioux City is facing challenges providing shelter for the homeless because the Social Security Administration is closed.

The wife of a civilian employee at the Rock Island Arsenal worries that if he doesn't get paid, the family may have to dip into their daughter's college funds to make ends meet.

Another frustrated constituent in Council Bluffs says:

We have families here living paycheck to paycheck. They cannot afford food, much less healthcare.

An employee of the Farm Service Agency in Taylor County, which is a

neighboring county to my county, Montgomery, in rural southwest Iowa, says the shutdown is putting a strain on beginning farmers as well as the elderly producers in her community.

And the closure of USDA service centers is financially impacting farmers, which will have ripple effects on everyone for months to come. Thousands of families in Iowa are already facing the real possibility of not being able to put food on the table.

Recipients of SNAP will not receive benefits next month, and WIC—Women, Infants, and Children—support for mothers and babies will also run out very soon.

And Iowans aren't alone in this.

If Democrats do not allow the government to reopen, half of our States will run out of money to provide SNAP benefits in November. That means millions of children across the country will have food taken away from them by the Schumer shutdown. This is a particularly cruel way to make a political point, especially at Thanksgiving time.

So most folks here in this body really understand that there are a lot of families that mean a lot to me, not only my families in Iowa but then also all of our military families across the United States.

So my daughter and my son-in-law serve on Active-Duty Army. My daughter and I talk just about every day, either by FaceTime or by phone, and the shutdown is really impacting her younger soldiers. So every day my daughter and I go through those discussions of where will the soldiers find food. Her discussion with me today centered around a talk she had with their military chaplain yesterday. She was typing up a letter so that her soldiers could receive gift cards before Thanksgiving from the chaplain's funds. But unfortunately, the chaplain said: I don't even know that we will have funds so that we can give the gift cards for the families because of the shutdown.

One of the military units has actually started its own internal food bank so that soldiers can go to that food bank and get food for their families. Anyone that has served in the military or knows someone that serves in the military understands that already our military men and women, many of them qualify for SNAP even though they are employed by the military.

These are families that are currently serving every single day with the inability to get paid. Now, thankfully, the President was able to scratch together dollars from the Department of Defense to pay them their first check, but this is a long-term problem we are facing now. And the President won't be able to keep doing that.

So we have all of our Federal employees, our military men and women that are not getting paid. They can't literally put food on the table. One of my daughter's soldiers has had to drop out of college. This NCO works full-time

during the day and tries to do better by going to college at night. And she can't afford to pay the tuition now that is required, and there are no appropriated funds to move forward with her college. And so she had to pull her enrollment yesterday.

So we are impacting families in all of our home States. We are impacting the men and women that are defending our Nation. This standoff is a fight for survival. But what I am doing here, I am fighting for the folks who are continuing to work hard every single day without a paycheck or going without the help they need just simply to get by. But the Democrats are fighting for their own political survival.

We witnessed here on this very floor earlier today the majority of Democrats vote no on paying these essential workers in the Federal Government. Air traffic controllers, our military men and women, the Capitol policemen that protect this complex, the staff that we see here sitting today. They voted no. One Democrat Senator candidly confided to *The Hill* newspaper that if Democrats vote to reopen the government, "people are going to get hammered" by their liberal base.

Another admits there are enough Democrats who would vote to reopen the government "if people were not terrified of getting the guillotine."

Apparently, the socialist uprising within the Democrat party is turning into a modern-day French revolution, folks.

And playing the role of Marie Antoinette proclaiming, "Let them eat cake," is Senator SCHUMER.

The truth is, Democrats are literally—I mean literally—taking food out of the mouths of babes to save themselves from their own unhinged voters, instead of bending to the loud-mouthed, liberal lunatics and socialist sociopaths who make up their base. Democrats should listen to their colleague Senator FETTERMAN of Pennsylvania.

Senator FETTERMAN called the shutdown "bad political theater," adding that "there are no winners here. It's not getting better every day here. People are going to start to get really hungry."

He is absolutely right, folks, and the Democrats know it is causing pain. In fact, that is the whole point of this exercise. Congresswoman KATHERINE CLARK, the second in line, the second in line in the House Democratic leadership, said the quiet part out loud, stating: "Families are going to suffer because of the shutdown."

She calls that suffering "leverage." Leverage. The American people and their suffering babies are leverage. Using the suffering of the very people we were elected to serve as political leverage is just plain sick.

Perhaps Republicans need to start using our own leverage: the Senate schedule. If CHUCK SCHUMER cancels Thanksgiving for millions of families across America who can't feed their

children, the holidays should be canceled for the Senate as well.

We should all be prepared to stay here until we reopen the government so no child will go to bed hungry because of Schumer's shutdown shenanigans.

This is a serious job, folks. We need to take it seriously. We need to act seriously. And we need to ensure the shutdown ends.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

REMEMBERING BRUCE SAGAN

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, local papers are the lifeline of our communities. They inform citizens of not only what is going on in their city halls, but their wedding halls as well. These papers connect Americans and remind us that we are part of a community greater than ourselves. This was something that Bruce Sagan understood well, and for more than 70 years, he saved newspapers, theatres, and helped preserve Chicago's cultural vibrance. Bruce was the embodiment of an engaged citizen; he was someone who constantly strived to support his community, and it is with great sadness that I share the news of his passing.

Bruce was born in Summit, NJ, and at just 16 years old, he moved to Chicago to study at the University of Chicago in Hyde Park. While professors may have missed Bruce in the classroom, they could not miss him in the pages of the *Chicago Maroon*, UChicago's newspaper. Bruce was an avid writer and supporter of the *Maroon*, constantly working to ensure that the paper covered the important issues of the day.

On UChicago's campus, the issue of racial discrimination was dominating the discussion. A group of students were working to expose the medical school's practice of rejecting Black students, and while students lined the streets in protest, Bruce was busy behind a typewriter, working to publicize their efforts and shine a light on discrimination. His work at the *Maroon* in support of integration was an early sign of the values Bruce brought to journalism.

Bruce's passion for journalism couldn't be satisfied by a student paper, so he left college and the *Chicago Maroon* to go work for the *City News Bureau*. Known across Chicago as the "reporter's boot camp," *City News*

was a consortium of newspapers that coordinated routine coverage. It was an incubator of journalistic talent that helped launch the careers of legendary Chicago journalists like Mike Royko and Seymour Hersh. At City News, Bruce was one of the overnight editors, working from midnight to 8 a.m., or as he described, “the mafia assassination beat.”

But 2 years after he joined City News, Bruce received an offer that would change the course of his career. One of Illinois’ oldest local papers, the Hyde Park Herald, was failing, and a group of concerned citizens asked Bruce if he would buy the Herald to keep it in circulation. While the prospect of buying and saving a paper was daunting, 24-year-old Bruce charged ahead and took out a \$2,500 loan to purchase the Herald. Thanks to Bruce, the paper did not miss a single issue. This began Bruce’s long career as an owner and manager of local papers. Soon after Bruce purchased the Hyde Park Herald, he acquired the Southtown Economist, which he grew into dozens of local newspapers spanning across the Chicago suburbs. Under Bruce’s leadership, these papers reached hundreds of thousands of Illinoisans as Bruce modernized their printing processes and pushed them to take a moral stand on the issues.

What made Bruce so successful was that he recognized the civic value of newspapers. In a Time Magazine interview, Bruce once decried how it was harder for someone to know what is going on in their own city than to find out what Khrushchev is doing in Cuba. Bruce wanted to demystify what was happening in Illinois. He took on topics that impacted every part of civic life, ranging from the corruption of political machines of Springfield to the protection of Frank Lloyd Wright’s famous Robie House. Anyone who worked at the Herald often would see Bruce’s office light on late into the night, a symbol of his tireless work in support of his city.

But Bruce’s commitment to public life in Chicago did not stop at the edge of the bullpen; he also was a passionate supporter of the arts. In 1965, Bruce bought the Harper Theatre to create an “off-Broadway” experience in Chicago. Bruce moved the Hyde Park Herald’s offices to the second floor of the theater and renovated the space as a “monument to urban renewal.” For decades, the Harper Theatre supported local musicians, dancers, and actors as they honed their crafts and shared their talents with the city. The Harper Theater was also where Bruce saw the Joffrey Ballet for the first time as part of the first modern dance festival in the Midwest, which he organized. Three decades later, Bruce helped facilitate the Joffrey Ballet’s move from New York to Chicago.

While mentioning all of Bruce’s contributions to support and save Chicago’s various cultural institutions would be difficult, his efforts did not go

unnoticed. In 2022, then-President Biden awarded Bruce with the National Medal of Arts. Cheering that selection was David Axelrod, who got his start working as a cub reporter for Bruce. I can think of no one more deserving of this honor than Bruce, a man who spent seven decades fighting to strengthen the ties of community and the richness of cultural life in Chicago.

But Bruce did not work alone. His wife Bette Cerf Hill was Bruce’s faithful partner as they both engaged in and supported every aspect of Chicago’s art scene, from literature festivals to architectural centers. Loretta and I send our deepest condolences to Bette; their five children Paul, Alex, Catherine, Teresa, and Diana; their 12 grandchildren; and their 9 great-grandchildren.

Chicago will be forever grateful for all that Bruce has done to enrich our cultural heritage. While we will miss Bruce dearly, his legacy will continue to benefit our city for generations. Whether someone watches a play at the Steppenwolf Theatre or reads the latest article in the Hyde Park Herald, I hope they take a moment to remember Bruce.

S. 3012

Mr. OSSOFF. Mr. President, the Senate remains at an impasse over the renewal of soon-to-expire health insurance premium tax credits under the Affordable Care Act. Americans’ health insurance premiums will skyrocket in 2026 unless the Congress acts to renew these subsidies. Time is running out to solve this problem. The enrollment period for next year’s insurance plans opens in just 9 days. The Trump administration’s intransigent refusal to work across the aisle to negotiate a solution has resulted in the ongoing government shutdown.

During this shutdown, military servicemembers, air traffic controllers, and TSA employees are among those who simply must come to work despite the lapse in congressional appropriations. They should be paid for that work. That is why today I voted to proceed to consideration of S. 3012, the Shutdown Fairness Act, sponsored by the Senator from Wisconsin. Senators from both parties should work together to ensure payment of military servicemembers and others in critical roles, including controllers, TSA workers, and those working at Georgia’s CDC. Debate of this bill should include an amendment process to improve the bill, including by limiting the President’s unilateral authority to determine which Federal workers are paid and which are not. Such authority could be abused by an executive determined to pay favored Federal workers and deny disfavored Federal workers pay without regard for congressional appropriations.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, yesterday evening, I missed rollcall

vote No. 583, the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Stephen Chad Meredith to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Kentucky. Had I been present, I would have voted no.

Yesterday evening, I missed rollcall vote No. 584, confirmation of the nomination of William W. Mercer to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Montana. Had I been present, I would have voted no.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO STACEY MORTENSEN

• Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, I rise today to celebrate the distinguished career of Stacey Mortensen, a dedicated leader who has helped transform public transportation in California’s Central Valley and strengthened rail systems all across our State.

For more than three decades, Stacey has championed transportation and rail infrastructure in California. As a native of the region, she knows firsthand how important these investments are for families and businesses in our communities.

Thanks to Stacey’s work, thousands of Californians have enjoyed better transportation options. Among these is the Altamont Corridor Express, which launched in 1988 with just two weekday roundtrips. Thanks in no small part to her vision and determination, ACE now serves 10 stations and nearly 3,000 riders every day.

In the mid-2000s, Stacey spearheaded a Memorandum of Understanding among 20 different agencies in Merced, Stanislaus, San Joaquin, and Sacramento Counties to coordinate and streamline planning for service expansions between Merced and Sacramento. These collaborative efforts laid the foundation for what is now known as the Valley Rail Program. She also played a pivotal role in the creation of the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority, establishing a regional governance model for service in the San Joaquin Valley.

Throughout her more than 30 years of service in Stockton, Stacey has held an unwavering belief in the extraordinary potential of the Central Valley and its people.

Stacey’s work has led to one of the largest rail infrastructure improvements in the Nation—exceeding \$500 million—and helped secure nearly \$2 billion in funding for the Valley Rail Program, which will ultimately connect with California’s high-speed rail network in Merced.

Her leadership advanced key agreements with Valley Link and the California High-Speed Rail Authority, formally designating the rail commission and the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority as prospective operators for future rail services.

And in 2024, Stacey supported the creation of the Rail Academy of Central California, a vital workforce development initiative designed to train the next generation of rail professionals.

Throughout her career, Stacey has demonstrated a unique ability to unite people around a shared vision and inspire others to deliver meaningful, sustained progress and change.

As Stacey retires from her role as executive director of the San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission, on behalf of all Californians, I thank her for her outstanding commitment to public service. I also thank her spouse Leah for supporting Stacey over all these years.

As she transitions to the next chapter of her life, I thank my colleagues for joining me in recognizing Stacey and applauding her outstanding contributions and her exemplary service.●

RECOGNIZING DK DONUTS

● Mr. RISC. Mr. President, as a member and former chairman of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, each month I recognize and celebrate the American entrepreneurial spirit by highlighting the success of a small business in my home State of Idaho. Today, I am proud to honor DK Donuts in Boise as the Idaho Small Business of the Month for October 2025.

DK Donuts first opened its doors in the 1980s and has become a beloved institution in the Treasure Valley. The current owner Angkearot Long took over operations in 2004 and purchased the business 5 years later. Under his ownership, Angkearot has kept DK strong by maintaining the old-school donut shop everyone knows and loves. Offering a variety of sweets, from traditional cakes and glazed donuts to their famous bacon maple bar, DK Donuts is a Boise staple, even drawing customers from across State lines.

When leasing troubles for the 40-year-old donut shop arose last year, many fans worried the iconic store might close for good. Fortunately, Angkearot was able to work out a deal, signing a multiyear lease and continuing the delicious DK legacy that loyal customers keep coming back for.

Earlier this year, DK Donuts opened a second location in Nampa, managed by Angkearot's daughter Vimean Rath. Embracing innovation, Vimean expanded the menu to include baked goods, sandwiches, and a range of drink options, allowing customer to enjoy their goods all day long.

Congratulations to Angkearot Long, Vimean Rath, and all the employees at DK Donuts on being recognized as the Idaho Small Business of the Month for October 2025. Your dedication to excellence makes Idaho proud, and I look forward to your continued growth and success.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to

the Senate by Ms. Holstead, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

In executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-2067. A communication from the Secretary of Defense, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, a letter relative to Executive Order 14347, "Restoring the United States Department of War" listing officials and organizations using secondary titles; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-2068. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report of the continuation of the national emergency with respect to significant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia that was declared in Executive Order 12978 of October 21, 1995; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-2069. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on the continuation of the national emergency that was originally declared in Executive Order 13413 of October 27, 2006, with respect to the situation in or in relation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-2070. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report of the continuation of the national emergency with respect Sudan that was declared in Executive Order 13067 of November 3, 1997; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-2071. A communication from the Director for Public Affairs and Congressional Relations, Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Office of the Comptroller's 2024 Office of Minority and Women Inclusion Annual Report to Congress; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-2072. A communication from the Director, Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Imposition of Special Measure regarding Huilone Group, as a Foreign Financial Institution of Primary Money Laundering Concern" (RIN1506-AB68) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 21, 2025; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-2073. A communication from the Associate General Counsel for General Law, Office of the General Counsel, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, thirteen (13) reports relative to nominations, vacancies, designations of service in acting roles, discontinuations of service in acting roles and actions on nominations for positions covered by the Federal Vacancies

Reform Act of 1998, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 16, 2025; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2074. A communication from the General Counsel, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Supply Chain Risk Management Reliability Standards Revisions; Equipment and Services Produced or Provided by Certain Entities Identified as Risks to National Security" ((RIN1902-AG22) (Docket No. RM24-4-000)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 16, 2025; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2075. A communication from the Congressional and Public Affairs Specialist, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Revision of Firearms License Requirements" (RIN0694-AJ46) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 16, 2025; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-2076. A communication from the Congressional and Public Affairs Specialist, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Expansion of End-User Controls to Cover Affiliates of Certain Listed Entities" (RIN0694-AK11) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on October 16, 2025; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

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. COTTON:

S. 3034. A bill to amend the Federal Power Act to require the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to review regulations that may affect the reliable operation of the bulk-power system, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mr. CRAMER, and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. 3035. A bill to amend the Natural Gas Act to provide for expanded natural gas exports, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. SCOTT of Florida:

S. 3036. A bill to prohibit the Secretary of the Treasury from engaging in transactions involving the exchange of Special Drawing Rights issued by the International Monetary Fund that are held by the Chinese Community Party; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. SCOTT of Florida (for himself, Mr. TUBERVILLE, and Mr. JUSTICE):

S. 3037. A bill to prohibit United States persons from engaging in financial transactions with AliPay; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN:

S. 3038. A bill to establish a real-time data dashboard for graduate medical education training positions to improve health care workforce planning and distribution for the purposes of alleviating physician shortages in medically underserved communities; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. VAN HOLLEN (for himself, Mr. PETERS, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. WARNER, Ms. ALSOBROOKS, Mr. KAIN, Mr. KIM, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. LUJÁN, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. GALLEGO,

MR. COONS, Ms. WARREN, Mr. MARKEY, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER, Mr. WELCH, Ms. SMITH, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. KELLY, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. WARNOCK, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. SCHIFF, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 3039. A bill to appropriate funds for pay and allowances of Federal employees during the lapse in appropriations that began on October 1, 2025, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Mr. BANKS):

S. 3040. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to modify the requirements of the Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. CORTEZ MASTO (for herself and Mr. MULLIN):

S. 3041. A bill to allow the U.S. Marshals Service to assist in certain Tribal criminal matters, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

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

S. 3042. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress each year an annual report that contains data and information on the causes of deaths among veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. PETERS (for himself, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. SMITH, Ms. ALSOBROOKS, Mr. KAINE, Mr. WARNER, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. LUJÁN, Mr. KIM, Mr. KELLY, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Mr. GALLEGO, Mr. PADILLA, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. KING, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. COONS, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. BENNET, Ms. WARREN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. WELCH, Mr. OSSOFF, Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. WARNOCK, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. SLOTKIN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. SCHIFF, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. 3043. A bill to appropriate funds for pay and allowances of Federal employees, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Appropriations.

By Mr. CURTIS (for himself and Ms. LUMMIS):

S. 3044. A bill to amend the Clean Air Act to modify the handling of air quality monitoring with respect to prescribed fires, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

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

S. 3045. A bill to require the Secretary of the Interior to take certain actions with respect to certain qualified coal applications, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself and Ms. ROSEN):

S. 3046. A bill to amend title 28, United States Code, to require the Attorney General to submit an annual report to Congress on gang activity, reporting, investigation, and prosecution, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. HYDE-SMITH (for herself and Mr. SCHIFF):

S. 3047. A bill to provide for the treatment of certain critical access hospitals; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WARNER, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. KAINE, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr.

LUJÁN, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. FETTERMAN, Mr. KELLY, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. GALLEGO, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WELCH, and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 3048. A bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act to allow for the use of telehealth in substance use disorder treatment, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. LEE:

S. 3049. A bill to amend the Clean Air Act to repeal a provision concerning citizen suits, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. RISCH, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. HAGERTY, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. WELCH, Mr. GRASSLEY, and Mr. KENNEDY):

S. 3050. A bill to amend the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, as amended, to modify requirements under that Act relating to exemptions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

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

S. 3051. A bill to build the capacity of the armed forces of Mexico to counter the threat posed by transnational criminal organizations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

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

S. 3052. A bill to promote recruiter access to secondary schools; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. CORNYN:

S. 3053. A bill to require a plan to modernize the nuclear security enterprise; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. GRAHAM, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. TILLIS, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. BUDD, Mr. TUBERVILLE, Mr. SCHMITT, and Mrs. BRITT):

S. 3054. A bill to amend the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008 and the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to enhance efforts to combat the trafficking of children; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

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

S. 3055. A bill to amend the Investment Advisers Act of 1940 to require proxy advisory firms to register as investment advisers under that Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mr. COONS, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. GRAHAM, and Mr. GRASSLEY):

S. Res. 463. A resolution expressing condemnation of the Chinese Communist Party's persecution of religious minority groups, including Christians, Muslims, and Buddhists and the detention of Pastor "Ezra" Jin Mingri and leaders of the Zion Church, and reaffirming the United States' global commitment to promote religious freedom and tolerance; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mrs. HYDE-SMITH (for herself, Mr. PETERS, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. DAINES, and Mr. PADILLA):

S. Res. 464. A resolution designating September 2025 as "National Cholesterol Edu-

cation Month" and September 30, 2025, as "LDL-C Awareness Day"; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina (for himself and Mr. REED):

S. Res. 465. A resolution designating September 2025 as "National Childhood Cancer Awareness Month"; considered and agreed to.

By Ms. WARREN (for herself and Mr. SCHIFF):

S. Res. 466. A resolution condemning President Trump's pardoning of Binance founder Changpeng Zhao, who had violated United States anti-money laundering laws, and calling for Congress to use its authority to stop this form of corruption; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 339

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) was added as a cosponsor 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. 364

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

S. 401

At the request of Mr. CRAMER, the name of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. McCONNELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 401, a bill to amend the Federal Reserve Act to prohibit certain financial service providers who deny fair access to financial services from using taxpayer funded discount window lending programs, and for other purposes.

S. 906

At the request of Mr. HICKENLOOPER, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 906, a bill to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to carry out a pilot program to support evidence-based mental health peer support activities for students.

S. 932

At the request of Mr. MULLIN, the names of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. HUSTED), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. KIM) and the Senator from Montana (Mr. SHEEHY) were added as cosponsors of S. 932, a bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act with respect to molecularly targeted pediatric cancer investigations, and for other purposes.

S. 986

At the request of Mr. KAINE, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 986, a bill to address and take action to prevent bullying and harassment of students.

S. 1098

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. OSSOFF) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1098, a bill to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to enhance the Comprehensive Opioid Abuse Grant Program, and for other purposes.

S. 1336

At the request of Mr. KING, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. OSSOFF) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1336, a bill to require the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a grant program to address forestry workforce development needs, and for other purposes.

S. 1404

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. MULLIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1404, a bill to combat organized crime involving the illegal acquisition of retail goods and cargo for the purpose of selling those illegally obtained goods through physical and online retail marketplaces.

S. 1538

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. GALLEG0) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1538, a bill to amend the Animal Welfare Act to expand and improve the enforcement capabilities of the Attorney General, and for other purposes.

S. 1716

At the request of Mr. CRAMER, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1716, a bill to amend title XXVII of the Public Health Service Act to improve health care coverage under vision plans, and for other purposes.

S. 1748

At the request of Mrs. BLACKBURN, the names of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. KIM) were added as cosponsors of S. 1748, a bill to protect the safety of children on the internet.

S. 1833

At the request of Mrs. BLACKBURN, the names of the Senator from Alabama (Mrs. BRITT) and the Senator from California (Mr. SCHIFF) were added as cosponsors of S. 1833, a bill to require the Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office to establish and carry out a pilot program to expedite the examination of applications for certain patents, and for other purposes.

S. 1877

At the request of Mr. TILLIS, the names of the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. GALLEG0) were added as cosponsors of S. 1877, a bill to direct the Securities and Exchange Commission to promulgate rules with respect to the electronic delivery of certain required disclosures, and for other purposes.

S. 1924

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from North Caro-

lina (Mr. BUDD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1924, a bill to add suicide prevention resources to school identification cards.

S. 2042

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2042, a bill to provide lasting protection for inventoried roadless areas within the National Forest System.

S. 2355

At the request of Mr. MARSHALL, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2355, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for hospital and insurer price transparency.

S. 2452

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2452, a bill to amend the Indian Law Enforcement Reform Act to provide for advancements in public safety services to Indian communities, and for other purposes.

S. 2612

At the request of Mr. JUSTICE, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2612, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to include physical therapists and occupational therapists as health professionals for purposes of the annual wellness visit under the Medicare program, and for other purposes.

S. 2684

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2684, a bill to support countries in Latin America and the Caribbean that maintain official diplomatic relations with Taiwan, to counter efforts by the People's Republic of China to coerce or pressure governments into breaking such ties, to deepen coordination with Taiwan on diplomatic, development, and economic engagement in the Western Hemisphere, and for other purposes.

S. 2806

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mrs. MOODY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2806, a bill to provide for automatic continuing appropriations.

S. 2827

At the request of Mr. KAINE, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2827, a bill to amend the Fair Housing Act to prohibit discrimination based on source of income, veteran status, or military status.

S. 2903

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the names of the Senator from California (Mr. SCHIFF) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) were added as cosponsors of S. 2903, a bill to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to require a group health

plan or health insurance coverage offered in connection with such a plan to provide an exceptions process for any medication step therapy protocol, and for other purposes.

S. 2907

At the request of Mrs. BLACKBURN, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2907, a bill to prohibit health care professionals, hospitals, or clinics from participating in the chemical or surgical mutilation of a child and to provide a private right of action for children and the parents of children whose healthy body parts have been damaged by medical professionals practicing chemical and surgical mutilation.

S. 2913

At the request of Ms. ALSOBROOKS, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2913, a bill to prohibit the use of appropriated funds to eliminate, consolidate, or otherwise restructure any office within the Department of Education that administers or enforces programs serving individuals with disabilities.

S. 2965

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the names of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH), the Senator from Maryland (Ms. ALSOBROOKS), the Senator from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN), the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) and the Senator from California (Mr. SCHIFF) were added as cosponsors of S. 2965, a bill to prohibit the use of the Exchange Stabilization Fund of the Department of the Treasury to bail out Argentina's financial markets.

S.J. RES. 1

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 1, a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relative to limiting the number of terms that a Member of Congress may serve.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

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

S. 3055. A bill to amend the Investment Advisers Act of 1940 to require proxy advisory firms to register as investment advisers under that Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, today, I am joined by Senator TILLIS in introducing the bipartisan Corporate Governance Fairness Act to ensure investors can continue to rely with confidence on the advice of proxy advisory firms by requiring the Securities and Exchange Commission, SEC, to regulate all major proxy advisory firms under the Investment Advisers Act. This advice is critical for investors as they decide how to vote their shares on

important corporate governance matters, such as director elections or whether to sell the company.

Indeed, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters has stated that the “independence of the research provided by proxy advisors is a critical element of our right, as shareholders, to hold the board of directors accountable and to cast informed proxy votes on corporate governance and proxy voting policies.” According to the Council of Institutional Investors, proxy advisers “support their clients by making the research gathering and analysis process more efficient to minimize costs for the ultimate beneficiaries, including pension recipients and retail investors.” And the National Association of State Treasurers has emphasized the need to “maintain the integrity and efficacy of the relationship between institutional investors and proxy advisory firms.” In short, proxy advisory firms are an important tool for investors.

But the current regulation and accountability for proxy advisory firms is inadequate. The purpose of the bipartisan Corporate Governance Fairness Act is to improve this state of affairs. Under our legislation, all major proxy advisory firms would be required to register as investment advisers under the Advisers Act. They will owe a fiduciary duty to their clients, and that duty will be enforceable under Federal law. So as to not discourage new entrants into the proxy advisory business, our bill provides smaller proxy advisory firms the choice to voluntarily register under the Investment Advisers Act but does not require them to do so. The legislation also directs the SEC to conduct periodic examinations, which must include a serious review of the conflicts of interest policies of registered proxy advisory firms and whether firms knowingly made false statements to any of its clients.

Lastly, our bill requires the SEC to consult with all relevant stakeholders and report back periodically to the Senate Banking Committee and the House Financial Services Committee with recommendations for any additional investor protections beyond continued access to proxy advisory firms so that investors have the tools to make informed investment decisions and exercise their rights as shareholders. In short, the intent of this legislation is to preserve the critical role played by proxy advisory firms and to hold them accountable to investors.

I would like to thank Senator TILLIS for working with me in crafting this bipartisan legislation, and I urge all of our Senate colleagues to join us in working to pass the Corporate Governance Fairness Act.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 463—EXPRESSING CONDEMNATION OF THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY’S PERSECUTION OF RELIGIOUS MINORITY GROUPS, INCLUDING CHRISTIANS, MUSLIMS, AND BUDDHISTS AND THE DETENTION OF PASTOR “EZRA” JIN MINGRI AND LEADERS OF THE ZION CHURCH, AND REAFFIRMING THE UNITED STATES’ GLOBAL COMMITMENT TO PROMOTE RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND TOLERANCE

Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mr. COONS, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. GRAHAM, and Mr. GRASSLEY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 463

Whereas, on October 10, 2025, international news outlets reported that the Chinese Communist Party (referred to in this preamble as the “CCP”) abducted Pastor “Ezra” Jin Mingri, who is the founder of Beijing Zion Church, from his home in Guangxi Province, China;

Whereas CCP authorities also abducted more than 20 other pastors and church members from Zion Church;

Whereas the CCP’s actions mark the largest coordinated, nationwide crackdown against a Christian urban house church in more than 40 years;

Whereas thousands of Zion Church members and millions of Christians and other religious adherents who reside in the People’s Republic of China seek to peacefully worship God and care for their neighbors without the threat or fear of persecution;

Whereas the imprisonment of Pastor Jin is the latest instance of CCP persecution of a large number of religious minorities, including Christians, Muslim Uyghurs, Hui Muslims, and Tibetan Buddhists;

Whereas, in 2016, President Xi Jinping promised to “Sinicize” religion in China by allowing authorities to burn Bibles, imprison believers, and tear down Christian crosses, and by forcing religious organizations and adherents to conform to the ideology of the CCP;

Whereas, in 2021, the Trump administration determined the CCP had committed crimes against humanity and genocide against predominately Muslim Uyghurs and other members of ethnic and religious minorities in Xinjiang and that the CCP has continued to subject religious minorities to restrictions on religious practices and freedom of expression, arbitrary imprisonment, forced sterilization torture, and forced labor;

Whereas the CCP has made consistent efforts to erode the religious, linguistic, and cultural identity of Tibetans, including by closing Buddhist monasteries and limiting entry or practitioners;

Whereas Congress unanimously passed the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-292), which established, as the official policy of the United States—

(1) to condemn violations of religious freedom;

(2) to promote, and assist other governments in the promotion of, the fundamental right to freedom of religion;

(3) to stand for liberty and with the persecuted;

(4) to use and implement appropriate tools in the United States foreign policy appa-

ratus, including diplomatic, political, commercial, charitable, educational, and cultural channels; and

(5) to promote respect for religious freedom by all governments and peoples;

Whereas, under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom has designated the People’s Republic of China as a “country of particular concern for religious freedom” every year since 1999;

Whereas Congress unanimously passed the Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act (Public Law 114-281) in 2016 to enhance the capabilities of the United States to advance religious liberty globally through diplomacy, training, counterterrorism, and foreign assistance;

Whereas the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act (subtitle F of title XII of Public Law 114-328), enacted by Congress in 2016, gives the President the authority to impose targeted sanctions on individuals responsible for committing human rights violations;

Whereas the People’s Republic of China is a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, done at Paris December 10, 1948, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, done at New York December 19, 1966, which recognize freedom of religion as a fundamental human right;

Whereas Article 36 of the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China explicitly states that citizens of the People’s Republic of China enjoy freedom of religious belief; and

Whereas the United States must show strong international leadership when it comes to the advancement of religious freedoms, liberties, and protections: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) strongly condemns the Chinese Communist Party’s persecution of religious minorities, including Pastor “Ezra” Jin Mingri and other leaders and members of Zion Church and other faith communities;

(2) reaffirms the commitment of the United States to promote religious freedom and tolerance around the world and to help provide protection and relief to religious minorities facing persecution and violence;

(3) calls on the Government of the People’s Republic of China to release the members of Zion Church, including Pastor Jin, and all other wrongfully detained religious leaders; and

(4) demands that the Government of the People’s Republic of China—

(A) respect the internationally recognized human right to freedom from religious persecution; and

(B) end all forms of violence and discrimination against religious minorities and entities.

SENATE RESOLUTION 464—DESIGNATING SEPTEMBER 2025 AS “NATIONAL CHOLESTEROL EDUCATION MONTH” AND SEPTEMBER 30, 2025, AS “LDL-C AWARENESS DAY”

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH (for herself, Mr. PETERS, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. DAINES, and Mr. PADILLA) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 464

Whereas cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death for men and women in the United States;

Whereas projected rates of cardiovascular disease are expected to increase significantly in the United States by 2060;

Whereas, compared to urban areas, rural areas in the United States have higher death rates for cardiovascular disease and stroke, and a 40 percent higher prevalence of cardiovascular disease;

Whereas risk factors contributing to cardiovascular disease and poor health outcomes include elevated low density lipoprotein cholesterol (referred to in this preamble as “LDL-C”), high levels of lipoprotein(a) cholesterol, hypertension, obesity, low awareness of personal risk factors, genetics, geographic location, and inequitable access to care;

Whereas lipoprotein(a) cholesterol is predominantly genetically inherited and can build up in the walls of blood vessels, creating cholesterol deposits, or plaques, and lead to atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease;

Whereas LDL-C is a modifiable risk factor for cardiovascular disease, and having lower LDL-C is associated with a reduced risk of heart attack and stroke;

Whereas more than 25.5 percent of adults in the United States have high LDL-C;

Whereas more than 200 studies with more than 2,000,000 patients have broadly established that elevated LDL-C causes atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease;

Whereas atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease is the build-up of cholesterol plaque within the walls of arteries and includes acute coronary syndrome, peripheral arterial disease, and events such as heart attacks and strokes;

Whereas the resources needed to bend the curve on cardiovascular disease exist, yet 71 percent of hypercholesterolemia patients at high risk of a cardiovascular event never achieve recommended LDL-C treatment guideline thresholds;

Whereas only 33 percent of individuals with atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease who are taking statins, a guideline recommended lipid-lowering therapy, actually achieve LDL-C goals;

Whereas, although clinical guidelines recommend that a patient hospitalized for heart attack receive an LDL-C test in the 90 days following discharge from a hospital, only 27 percent of patients receive the test;

Whereas African-American adults are less likely to receive an LDL-C test in the 90 days following discharge from a hospital, despite having a higher prevalence of cardiovascular disease;

Whereas significant gaps in care may lead to subsequent cardiovascular events;

Whereas the Million Hearts program seeks to improve access to and quality of care to reduce heart disease, stroke, and death; and

Whereas September is recognized as National Cholesterol Education Month to raise awareness of cardiovascular disease and the importance of individuals knowing their LDL-C number: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) encourages all individuals in the United States to know their low density lipoprotein cholesterol (referred to in this resolution as “LDL-C”) number;

(2) designates September 2025 as “National Cholesterol Education Month”;

(3) designates September 30, 2025, as “LDL-C Awareness Day”;

(4) recognizes the urgent need for screening and treating of elevated LDL-C to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease and cardiovascular events, including heart attacks and strokes.

SENATE RESOLUTION 465—DESIGNATING SEPTEMBER 2025 AS “NATIONAL CHILDHOOD CANCER AWARENESS MONTH”

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina (for himself and Mr. REED) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 465

Whereas each year more than 14,500 children under the age of 19 in the United States are diagnosed with cancer;

Whereas every year approximately 1,600 children in the United States lose their lives to cancer;

Whereas childhood cancer is one of the leading causes of death from disease after infancy and one of the leading causes of death overall for children in the United States;

Whereas the 5-year survival rate for children with cancer in the United States has increased from 58 percent in the mid-1970s to 85 percent in 2025, representing a significant improvement from previous decades;

Whereas 60 to more than 90 percent or more of children in the United States who survive cancer will develop at least one chronic health condition, and some survivors may face a late effect from treatment that can be severe or life-threatening; and

Whereas childhood cancer occurs frequently and spares no racial or ethnic group, socioeconomic class, or geographic region: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates September 2025 as “National Childhood Cancer Awareness Month”;

(2) requests that the Federal Government, States, localities, and nonprofit organizations observe the month with appropriate programs and activities, with the goal of increasing public knowledge of the risks of childhood cancer;

(3) encourages survivors of childhood cancer to continue to receive ongoing monitoring and care throughout their adult lives;

(4) recognizes the human toll of childhood cancer and pledges to make the prevention of and cure for childhood cancer a public health priority;

(5) reminds the people of the United States of the bravery of children who are diagnosed with cancer; and

(6) commends and honors the courage of such children.

SENATE RESOLUTION 466—CONDEMNING PRESIDENT TRUMP’S PARDONING OF BINANCE FOUNDER CHANGPENG ZHAO, WHO HAD VIOLATED UNITED STATES ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING LAWS, AND CALLING FOR CONGRESS TO USE ITS AUTHORITY TO STOP THIS FORM OF CORRUPTION

Ms. WARREN (for herself and Mr. SCHIFF) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 466

Whereas, on November 21, 2023, Changpeng Zhao (known as “CZ”) and referred to in this resolution as “Zhao”) pleaded guilty to willfully failing to maintain an effective anti-money laundering program while CEO of Binance;

Whereas Binance itself pleaded guilty to multiple criminal charges and was required to pay a total financial penalty of more than \$4,300,000,000;

Whereas Binance’s willful failures allowed money to flow to terrorists, foreign adversaries, child abusers, and other criminals;

Whereas, on April 30, 2024, Zhao was sentenced to prison time for his crime;

Whereas, on March 13, 2025, the Wall Street Journal reported that representatives of President Trump’s family were in negotiations to purchase a financial stake in the United States arm of Binance, of which Zhao remains the largest shareholder;

Whereas, in April 2025, Zhao formally applied to President Trump for a pardon;

Whereas, in May 2025, Zhao was involved in the most significant use to date of USD1, a stablecoin issued by the Trump family’s cryptocurrency company, World Liberty Financial, when a United Arab Emirates investment firm called MGX used USD1 to purchase a \$2,000,000,000 stake in Binance;

Whereas, on October 23, 2025, President Trump granted a full pardon to Zhao for his crime; and

Whereas, hours following the President’s pardon, the value of the Trump family’s cryptocurrency company, World Liberty Financial, spiked: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) strongly condemns and denounces President Trump’s pardoning of Binance founder Changpeng Zhao for violating United States anti-money laundering laws; and

(2) calls on Congress to use its authority to stop this form of corruption.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, I have four 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 FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, October 23, 2025, at 10:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

The Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, October 23, 2025, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, October 23, 2025, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CHEMICAL SAFETY, WASTE MANAGEMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE, AND REGULATORY OVERSIGHT

The Subcommittee on Chemical Safety, Waste Management, Environmental Justice, and Regulatory Oversight of the Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, October 23, 2025, at 10:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

WETLANDS CONSERVATION AND ACCESS IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2025

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Environment and Public Works be discharged and the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 2316.

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

The senior assistant executive clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2316) to amend the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act to provide that interest on obligations held in the Federal aid to wildlife restoration fund shall become available for apportionment at the beginning of fiscal year 2033.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Ms. ERNST. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (H.R. 2316) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

FOREIGN ADVERSARY COMMUNICATIONS TRANSPARENCY ACT

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 110, S. 259.

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

The senior assistant executive clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 259) to direct the Federal Communications Commission to publish a list of entities that hold authorizations, licenses, or other grants of authority issued by the Commission and that have certain foreign ownership, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill which was reported from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Ms. ERNST. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time.

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

Ms. ERNST. I know of no further debate on the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate on the bill?

Hearing none, the bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass.

The bill (S. 259) was passed as follows:

S. 259

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 "Foreign Adversary Communications Transparency Act".

SEC. 2. LIST OF ENTITIES HOLDING FCC AUTHORIZATIONS, LICENSES, OR OTHER GRANTS OF AUTHORITY AND HAVING CERTAIN FOREIGN OWNERSHIP.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) APPROPRIATE NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY.—The term "appropriate national security agency" has the meaning given such term in section 9 of the Secure and Trusted Communications Networks Act of 2019 (47 U.S.C. 1608).

(2) COMMISSION.—The term "Commission" means the Federal Communications Commission.

(3) COVERED COUNTRY.—The term "covered country" means a country specified in section 4872(f)(2) of title 10, United States Code.

(4) COVERED ENTITY.—The term "covered entity" means—

(A) the government of a covered country;

(B) an entity organized under the laws of a covered country; and

(C) a subsidiary of an entity described in subparagraph (B), regardless of whether the subsidiary is organized under the laws of a covered country.

(b) PUBLICATION OF LIST.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Commission shall publish on the internet website of the Commission a list of each entity—

(1) that holds a license issued by the Commission pursuant to—

(A) section 309(j) of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 309(j)); or

(B) the Act of May 27, 1921 (47 U.S.C. 34 et seq.; commonly known as the "Cable Landing Licensing Act") and Executive Order 10530 (3 U.S.C. 301 note; relating to the performance of certain functions vested in or subject to the approval of the President); and

(2) with respect to which—

(A) a covered entity holds an equity or voting interest that is required to be reported to the Commission under the ownership rules of the Commission; or

(B) an appropriate national security agency has determined that a covered entity exerts control, regardless of whether such covered entity holds an equity or voting interest as described in subparagraph (A).

(c) RULEMAKING.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Commission shall issue rules to obtain information to identify each entity—

(A) that holds any authorization, license, or other grant of authority issued by the Commission (other than a license described in subsection (b)(1)); and

(B) with respect to which a covered entity holds an equity or voting interest that is required to be reported to the Commission under the ownership rules of the Commission.

(2) PLACEMENT ON LIST.—Not later than 1 year after the Commission issues the rules required by paragraph (1), the Commission shall place each entity described in such paragraph on the list published under subsection (b).

(d) PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT EXEMPTION.—A collection of information conducted or sponsored by the Commission to implement this section does not constitute a collection of information for the purposes of subchapter I of chapter 35 of title 44, United States Code (commonly referred to as the "Paperwork Reduction Act").

(e) ANNUAL UPDATES.—The Commission shall, not less frequently than annually, update the list published under subsection (b), including with respect to any entity required to be placed on such list by subsection (c)(2).

Ms. ERNST. I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

STRENGTHENING SUPPORT FOR AMERICAN MANUFACTURING ACT

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 35, S. 99.

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

The senior assistant executive clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 99) to require the Secretary of Commerce to produce a report that provides recommendations to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of Department of Commerce programs related to supply chain resilience and manufacturing and industrial innovation, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill which was reported from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Ms. ERNST. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (S. 99) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 99

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 "Strengthening Support for American Manufacturing Act".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS.—The term "appropriate committees of Congress" means—

(A) the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives.

(2) COVERED OFFICES AND BUREAUS.—The term "covered offices and bureaus" means offices and bureaus of the Department of Commerce identified under section 3(a)(1).

(3) CRITICAL SUPPLY CHAIN.—The term "critical supply chain" means an end-to-end system that converts raw materials into finished products in critical sectors, including in—

(A) the defense industrial base;

(B) the public health and biological preparedness industrial base;

(C) the information and communications technology industrial base;

(D) the energy sector industrial base;

(E) the transportation industrial base; and

(F) agricultural supply chains.

(4) CRITICAL SUPPLY CHAIN RESILIENCE.—The term "critical supply chain resilience" means mitigating gaps and vulnerabilities in critical supply chains, including by—

(A) reducing risk of malicious sabotage or external or internal manipulation; and

(B) improving the ability to withstand supply chain interruptions such as logistical challenges and workforce, materials, equipment, or product shortages.

(5) MANUFACTURING AND INDUSTRIAL INNOVATION.—The term "manufacturing and industrial innovation" means—

(A) providing assistance, resources, or services to manufacturers or manufacturing workers in the United States;

(B) offering expertise, improvements, research, and development or other assistance in technological innovations or advanced manufacturing in partnership with or for use by manufacturers in the United States; or

(C) developing policy that substantially impacts the manufacturing sector in the United States.

(6) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Commerce.

SEC. 3. STUDY RELATING TO MANUFACTURING PROGRAMS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE.

(a) ASSESSMENT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall produce a report that—

(1) identifies offices and bureaus of the Department of Commerce with responsibilities related to—

(A) critical supply chain resilience; and

(B) manufacturing and industrial innovation;

(2) identifies the duties, responsibilities, programs, and expertise relevant to critical supply chain resilience and manufacturing and industrial innovation of each covered office and bureau;

(3) identifies and assesses the purpose, statutory authority, effectiveness, efficiency, and limitations of each covered office and bureau;

(4) identifies gaps between offices with duplicative duties, responsibilities, programs, and expertise within the Department of Commerce that are implementing activities related to critical supply chain resilience and manufacturing and industrial innovation; and

(5) provides recommendations to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of each covered office and bureau, including recommendations to—

(A) optimize operations within or across covered offices and bureaus;

(B) improve coordination across covered offices and bureaus; and

(C) improve coordination with Federal agencies implementing similar activities related to critical supply chain resilience and manufacturing and industrial innovation.

(b) NATIONAL ACADEMY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION.—The Secretary shall contract with the National Academy of Public Administration in producing the report under subsection (a).

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date on which the Secretary produces the report under subsection (a), the Secretary shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress—

(1) the report produced under subsection (a);

(2) recommendations for potential legislative action addressing recommendations in the report produced under subsection (a); and

(3) a response from the Secretary to the recommendations included in the report produced under subsection (a).

RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TODAY

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following resolutions, which are at the desk: S. Res. 464, S. Res. 465.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolutions en bloc.

Ms. ERNST. I ask unanimous consent that the resolutions be agreed to, the preambles be agreed to, and that the

motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, all en bloc.

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

The resolutions were agreed to.

The preambles were agreed to.

(The resolutions, with their preambles, are printed in today's RECORD under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

ORDERS FOR MONDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2025

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today it stand adjourned until 3 p.m. on Monday, October 27; 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, and the Senate be in a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each; finally, at 5:30 p.m., the Senate execute the orders with respect to the Taibleson and Lewis nominations.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senators WELCH and WHITEHOUSE.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

GAZA CEASE-FIRE

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, every single one of us—every Member of the U.S. Senate, my fellow Vermonters, all Americans, people around the world—are absolutely thrilled by the cease-fire in Gaza.

After 2 years of relentless bombing, after 2 years of horror for the hostages and their families, the bombing has largely stopped, and the hostages are home. This is extraordinary. I salute everyone involved in getting us to this day, including President Trump.

But let's be clear, there is more work to be done. The only way this cease-fire will succeed is if it is the beginning of a relentless, tireless process that aims to get us to the two-state solution—two states for two peoples; a safe and democratic Jewish state of Israel alongside a sovereign state for the Palestinians that are indigenous to the land where they now live as envisioned in the President's 20-point plan and has been U.S. policy for over 50 years.

So the question before us is, Will all who are involved, particularly the U.S. Government, Prime Minister Netanyahu, and the Palestinian Au-

thority, U.S. partners in the Gulf, and our European allies—will everyone do every single thing possible to make that success of a lasting peace through a two-state solution a likelihood?

Let me be candid. I am extremely alarmed at what we are already seeing since the cease-fire. On the Israeli side, Mr. Netanyahu is continuing to dial-up or down the delivery of urgently needed food or medicine depending on what his political desires of the moment are. After 2 years of already having kept food out, largely for starving kids, that has to be provided with the 600 trucks a day unabated, continuously, and regularly. At the same time, Hamas is score-settling, is committing public executions, and intimidating the Palestinians who yearn for peace and a return to some degree of normalcy.

The impediments to peace are deep, and they are clear. So we need to ask ourselves: What do we need to do to make sure that the violence and the destruction does not resume? In Gaza, one thing is absolutely essential. Mr. Netanyahu must stop blocking the medicine and the food for starving kids and Palestinians. We cannot condone Israeli military and the instructions of the Netanyahu government from illegally blocking international food aid from getting through Rafah. Yet we see a continuation of children facing severe malnutrition and hunger. We also see kids who are sick and had the promise of getting healthcare, cancer treatment, women who need maternity facilities or basic medicines and treatments still not having access to them.

The Netanyahu government cannot be allowed to, once again, turn on and off the supply of food and medicine and use it as a military tool. Withholding fruit and vegetables and other food from a million hungry kids is not a military response; it is a collected punishment.

Next, Mr. Netanyahu must finally—finally, once and for all—stop the bombing in Gaza. The IDF's own data shows that more than five out of six people killed by IDF bombs supplied by the U.S. over the past 2 years were civilian casualties. Those government bombings that have been renewed in Gaza this week, killing nearly a hundred and injuring even more after two soldiers were killed in Rafah, has to stop.

These types of response bombings that were so frequent before the cease-fire—disproportionate and illegal, by and large—are no more legal and as disproportionate when they are occurring after the cease-fire and jeopardize the stability and survivability of the cease-fire.

So we should be calling on the Netanyahu government to reopen the medical evacuation corridor so that those Palestinian kids in Gaza with traumatic war wounds—bullets in their bodies and missing limbs—can be evacuated to Palestinian church hospitals in Jerusalem.

The violence and settler attacks on the West Bank also represent an ominous threat to the cease-fire and a threat to fulfilling a true vision of peace. Gaza and the West Bank are part of what will be a separate Palestinian State. That violence occurring at the hands of settlers has to be stopped by the Netanyahu government.

Just this week in the West Bank, we saw violent attacks by mass club-wielding settlers on Palestinian villagers and harvesters. They even attacked the very same village that our Ambassador, Mike Huckabee, had visited and promised to protect only a few months before.

This photograph, taken only a few days ago, is the result of an illegal Israeli settler beating a 55-year-old woman who was harvesting olives on her family's ancestral lands, beating her with that club without mercy, without restraint. Her name is Afaf Abu Alia. She is a mother, and she is a victim of violence. This just happened days ago.

By the way, October marks the start of the olive harvest season across the West Bank. Since the start of the harvest, where folks have to go from their homes to the fields, illegal Israeli settlers have reportedly staged 158 assaults against Palestinian farmers, and they destroyed nearly 800 trees. These trees, as you know, are nurtured over generations, just like the ones on the Mount of Olives. Many Palestinian families depend on them as their only source of income.

The violence, by the way, also impacts Americans. If Mr. Netanyahu is serious about working with the President in supporting the cease-fire that he did agree to, he will take action to hold accountable those responsible for the Americans killed by Israeli forces and illegal settlers; Americans like Saif Musallet, a Florida teenager who was on vacation visiting family when he was attacked, and he was killed by illegal settlers.

Mr. Netanyahu must also finally help the United States investigate the killing of the American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, who was shot by an Israeli sniper from a couple of hundred yards away, nowhere near any Israeli troops.

The Palestinian State envisioned by the cease-fire requires that Mr. Netanyahu also end the constant expansion of settlements into the West Bank. The Israeli Government must stop demolishing Palestinian homes, sometimes using bulldozers paid for by American taxpayers. Yet the Netanyahu government is going full steam ahead. This is an immense impediment to peace.

And to be certain, Hamas, too, must lay down its arms. It must refrain from violence. That is an incredible threat to the cease-fire. Ultimately, Hamas has got to go. Hamas violence is that threat to peace. It is a threat to the Palestinians living in Gaza who yearn for peace and yearn for an opportunity to rebuild where they live and have

their kids be back in school and to be safe.

The cease-fire acknowledges that there must be a force that has sufficient authority to quell Hamas violence. This is the peacekeeping force that was in the 20-point Presidential plan. If we are going to be successful, we have to redouble our efforts to stand that force up and make certain that all the signatories to that peace plan do their part to make certain that can happen.

President Trump's leadership to help achieve a cease-fire—that leadership must be redoubled to achieve a durable peace and a lasting peace for the Israelis and the Palestinians. To have this stop on the day the agreement was signed without then redoubling efforts to face the difficult challenges that await resolution after the cease-fire will result in failure. So I call on the President and I urge all of us to do every single thing we can to stay focused on the implementation of the peace plan and not turn away as though this is yesterday's problem because if we don't do that, it will be tomorrow's problem once again.

I urge all of us to accept the burden of leadership that is absolutely required for the well-being of the entire region but for the promise of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state and for the promise of the Palestinian people living alongside in peace with Israeli neighbors.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I rise here for the 302nd time to urge this somnolent, compromised body to wake up to the dangers of climate change—again, with my trusted and increasingly battered chart. This time, my focus is on the fossil fuels industry's corrupting influence over the Trump administration and what that means for Americans.

When I stood before you for the 296th time back in January, I predicted that the fossil fuel looters and polluters would take over the Federal Government. I am saddened but not surprised that my grim forecast has already come true. It is only October, and already it is clear that the fossil fuel industry bought, paid for, and now straight up owns the Trump administration, and it is only going to get worse.

For years, I warned that if we let fossil fuel money pour into our politics unchecked, that if we let dark money run rampant, and that if we let polluters sabotage science, then one day the government would cease to belong to "we the people" and instead belong to them, the polluters. Well, that day has arrived.

Last month, I set out the fossil fuel industry's four phases of climate denial:

Phase 1: Bury the evidence. Refuse to disclose what they knew, what their own scientists were telling them.

Phase 2: Actively mislead the public when the evidence they had buried ultimately comes out.

Phase 3: Flood the political zone with dark money to buttress the climate denial fraud, using unlimited funding—unleashed by Citizens United.

Now we are in phase 4, where an increasingly desperate fossil fuel operation switches from defense and blockade to attack.

Today, I will do a deep dive on phase 4—the corruption and weaponization of government phase—and how it is playing out across the corrupt Trump administration.

Phase 4 is different. They are not just hiding or misleading or politically obstructing any longer. In phase 4, the fossil fuel industry fully corrupts the entire executive branch and uses the power of government to go after and crush its clean energy competition. Behind this plot are the creepy billionaires who run the industry, who are out to get even richer at the expense of the American people.

Let me be blunt. The Trump administration does not work for you, the American people; it works for fossil fuel billionaires and their sprawling, dark money corruption machine, which—no coincidence—helped put Trump in office for a second time.

Don't take my word about whom they work for. An official from the White House's own, new, so-called National Energy Dominance Council offered "concierge, white glove service" to help keep polluting coal plants open and mines in operation. That official, by the way, previously worked for Shell Oil and Valero Energy.

Every Agency, every decision, every policy of this corrupt administration is in the service of its fossil fuel donors and patrons. Fossil fuel's looters and polluters are running the U.S. Government for their own benefit, from the inside. President Trump, EPA Administrator Zeldin, Energy Secretary Wright, Interior Secretary Burgum—the whole lot of them are bought and paid for. So settle in, and I will walk you through it from the offer and acceptance, to the return on fossil fuel's political investment, to the costs to the American people.

Let's start with the moment of sale.

It was April 2024, early April. Candidate Trump was desperate. His criminal trial would begin in 4 days, and his best shot at staying out of jail was winning the Presidency. But the unpopular politician's unpopular policies just weren't moving the needle.

There was one thing left to do. It was time to make a deal. Cornered and starved for cash, Trump invited the fossil fuel donor elite to Mar-a-Lago. Sensing an opportunity, into those faux-gilt halls strolled the oil barons, the gas tycoons, the petrochemical magnates, the pipeline moguls. If you have struck oil or gas in America, you likely received an invitation.

By the way, they were a little desperate themselves because their business model was failing against the relentless pressure of cheaper, cleaner, more popular renewable energy.

There at his club, Candidate Trump delivered his offer. It was not subtle—no think tank jargon or super PAC euphemisms, no speaking in code. He looked out at those assembled fossil fuel billionaires and made a simple pitch: Give me \$1 billion, and I will do anything and everything you want.

The fossil fuel billionaires were only too happy to take that deal. Harold Hamm, the fracking kingpin, opened his checkbook. Jeffery Hildebrand, the Texas oilman, poured in millions. Kelcy Warren, a pipeline magnate, joined. Other familiar players, like George Bishop, Tim Dunn, and the Wilks brothers—they all lined up.

The fossil fuel donor elite understood the corrupt bargain: Invest just \$1 billion and maybe not all of that \$1 billion. They are at hundreds of millions. We are not sure. But let's say it was \$1 billion that ended up coming through—\$1 billion to preserve the annual \$700-plus billion subsidy that fossil fuel's free-to-pollute business model relies on; \$1 billion once for \$700 billion a year. On top of that, they could reap untold added billions in new tax subsidies, pollution deregulation, protection from legal accountability for misdeeds, and even a government-backed war they could run against their feared clean energy competition.

This was not just a fundraiser. This was no boisterous campaign rally. This was a deal—a \$1 billion, quid pro quo deal.

This corrupt deal marked a turning point in American history. Before, fossil fuels influenced using political dark money and dark money threats and promises. They lied, using a decades-long campaign of denial, deception, and doublespeak to hide the harmful effects of their products.

Those two operations—the climate denial fraud operation and the dark money corruption operation—together had blocked any meaningful, bipartisan climate legislation. They killed that dead the instant Citizens United gave them that power.

The 2024 elections gave the fossil fuel barons full control. Under the Trump regime, the U.S. Government has acted exactly as you would expect a corrupted government to act—every Agency captured, climate and energy laws and regulations rewritten, all the inconvenient science ignored, silenced, or worse—erased completely. Say goodbye to government for “we the people” and hello to government for them, the polluters. The entire Trump administration works for its fossil fuel donors.

On January 20, 2025—day one in office—President Trump issued industry-drafted Executive orders designed to kneecap fossil fuel's clean energy competition and prop up fossil fuel. One Executive order even wrote wind energy and solar energy out of the defini-

tion of “energy.” These Executive orders are now implemented by Federal Agencies that are in the hands of the stooges of the big polluters.

Let's start with the Environmental Protection Agency. There is so much rot over there, it is hard to know where to begin, so I will start with personnel.

Atop the Agency is Lee Zeldin. You may know him as the erstwhile Congressman from New York or as the failed gubernatorial candidate, but did you know of his role as the errand boy for billionaire Trump donor and oil executive Tim Dunn? Until January, Zeldin had a cushy role at the America First Policy Institute—a pro-Trump, so-called think tank founded by oilman Dunn. AFPI is hell-bent on increasing fossil fuel production, reducing fossil fuel regulation, and protecting the free-to-pollute fossil fuel business model. Dunn was thrilled to have his boy Zeldin slide slimily into the EPA.

Then there is EPA Deputy Administrator David Fotouhi and head of the Office of Air and Radiation Aaron Szabo, who, before joining the EPA, spent years defending polluting industries in court or making polluters' pitches to us in Congress.

Steven Cook, Principal Deputy Assistant in the EPA's Office of Land and Emergency Management, recently represented the American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers in its legal challenge to an EPA cleanup rule. Now he is the regulator he just fought in court.

Nancy Beck, Trump's EPA chemical safety adviser, used to help run the chemical manufacturers' main trade association, the American Chemistry Council.

And Sean Donahue? Well, he is the EPA's top lawyer even though he has never taken a deposition, tried a case to verdict, argued a motion, or authored and signed a legal pleading. But his partner was Deputy Director of Personnel at the White House, and fossil fuel deregulation depends on usefully incompetent lawyers.

The foxes are literally guarding the EPA henhouse. Once the pride of American environmental stewardship, the EPA is now turned inside out. Instead of writing rules to protect the public from pollution, it is writing rules to protect polluters from public accountability.

The EPA's most striking betrayal to date was its move to repeal the endangerment finding—the scientific and legal cornerstone that acknowledged greenhouse gases are a threat to public health and welfare. Without that finding, EPA would have no authority or obligation to regulate climate pollution, which is precisely the whole point.

This is not about science; this is not about law; this is about doing the bidding of the polluting fossil fuel industry, which doesn't want to be regulated and which must pollute for free to survive—never mind the enormous cost and harm that dumps onto American families.

To justify its proposed repeal of the endangerment finding, EPA leaned on a junk Department of Energy so-called climate report—a cooked-up document so baseless that more than 85 real climate scientists issued a comprehensive rebuttal of it as “fundamentally flawed,” “biased, full of errors, and not fit to inform policymaking.” The American Meteorological Society condemned it as misleading and dangerous.

Of course, the so-called climate report was not science; it was propaganda, fossil fuel propaganda. With 99 percent consensus in peer-reviewed scientific literature that fossil fuel emissions are dangerously changing our climate, you would be hard-pressed to find five climate scientists who would downplay or deny climate change. Trump's corrupt Department of Energy found all five. They weren't hard to find, though, because they all worked for fossil fuel front groups. They were chosen precisely because they would deny established science.

Get a load of this crew: Dr. Roy Spencer, previously a visiting fellow at the climate denialist Heritage Foundation, funded—no surprise—by ExxonMobil, DonorsTrust, the Koch Foundation, and the Sarah Scaife Foundation—all fossil fuel companies or dark money outfits pushing fossil fuel's pollute-for-free agenda; Dr. John Christy, linked to conservative front group Competitive Enterprise Institute, funded with dark money from the American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers, the Charles Koch Institute, DonorsTrust, the Heritage Foundation, Marathon Petroleum, and Murray Energy; Dr. Judith Curry, who charges \$400 per hour for consulting services to petroleum companies, electric utilities, and natural gas energy traders—a frequent face also here in Congress spewing fossil fuel-funded propaganda in committee hearings; Dr. Steven Koonin, formerly at British Petroleum, now a fellow at the Hoover Institute—a conservative-leaning research organization funded by ExxonMobil, DonorsTrust, and the Sarah Scaife Foundation; finally, Dr. Ross McKittrick of the Cato Institute, funded by Charles Koch, DonorsTrust, ExxonMobil, Murray Energy, and the Scaife Family Foundations, and he is also a senior fellow at the Fraser Institute, funded by the Charles G. Koch Foundation, ExxonMobil, and the Sarah Scaife Foundation. If you are sensing a pattern, you should be.

Everyone knew the report was nonsense, but it gave the polluters a figleaf behind which EPA could try to deregulate fossil fuel pollution. No surprise, the group of climate deniers was disbanded before they had to answer to the public under the Administrative Procedure Act for their junk report.

Trump's corrupt EPA is also repealing methane standards, undoing auto emissions rules, abandoning air pollution safeguards, scrapping limits on toxic emissions, cutting protections

against pollution from coal plants like mercury and carbon dioxide, even clawing back billions in appropriated funding for clean energy. Hell, EPA literally provided polluters with a special email address to get exemptions from air toxics rules—concierge service indeed.

Trump's EPA had to really bend the rules to roll back State safeguards, like California's Clean Air Act waiver created a half century ago in recognition of California's then-immense air pollution challenges and its early leadership in improving air quality. Waivers allow California and other States, like Rhode Island, that follow California's lead to set tougher pollution standards for cars and trucks sold inside their borders. But tougher pollution standards mean selling less gasoline, and so they went at the California waiver.

There was a trick here. Trump's EPA submitted California's waivers to Congress as so-called final rules, which they weren't and which had never been done before. But it made them vulnerable to undoing by simple Senate majority here under the Congressional Review Act—a trick, by the way, suggested by fossil fuel industry lawyers in the Polluter Page of the Wall Street Journal.

GAO and the Senate Parliamentarian rejected the effort to falsely label the waivers as “rules,” so our fossil fuel-funded Republican friends went nuclear, overruled the Senate Parliamentarian, and killed the State waivers—a sour joke from a party that in other circumstances claims to be all about States' rights, States' ability to self-govern, and cooperative federalism.”

Thanks to the corrupt billion-dollar deal, the Environmental Protection Agency is now clearly the “Polluter Protection Agency,” bought and paid for. Goodbye, again, to “we the people”; hello to them, the polluters.

Let's talk about the Trump Justice Department, perhaps better called “Oil, Gas, and Coal, LLP.” You can't understand the corruption at EPA without understanding how Trump weaponized the Justice Department to become the fossil fuel industry's taxpayer-funded law firm.

One example: From the get-go, EPA Administrator Zeldin was hell-bent on clawing back more than \$20 billion in clean energy grants Congress had appropriated. But he had a problem: There was no legal basis to do so.

Enter Trump's corrupted DOJ, which tried to cook up a fake criminal investigation to provide a pretext to freeze the funds. Zeldin echoed the theme with multiple phony and likely defamatory allegations of criminal and fraudulent behavior by grant recipients, who, by the way, included among them nefarious organizations like Habitat for Humanity.

Next problem: The evidence was so weak that the Chief of the DC U.S. Attorney's Office Criminal Division resigned rather than authorize the fake

criminal investigation, and no other career attorney in the whole office would sign on. So Trump's since-fired interim U.S. attorney personally submitted a warrant application with no career cosigner. And guess what. He got shot down by the magistrate judge for lack of probable cause. Any Federal prosecutor can tell you how unusual and how embarrassing that is.

Desperate, Trump's DOJ tried to shop the same failed investigation to other U.S. Attorney's Offices, hoping somebody—anybody—would pursue the failed warrant. In case that wasn't enough, meanwhile, in another courtroom, back in the same DC courthouse, Department of Justice lawyers in a civil matter were denying that they alleged fraud in the use of those funds.

What a mess. Seeking warrants without proof, prompting career officials to resign, making fake public assertions of criminality, failing in court, making inconsistent legal arguments in the same courthouse—all of that to claw back money duly appropriated by Congress and properly obligated to grantees, all to help grow the clean energy sector and reduce air pollution? None of that is normal DOJ. This is weaponized DOJ.

Just last month, DOJ's fossil fuel's law firm went to Federal court in New York to strike down a State law requiring the largest fossil fuel polluters to pay into a fund to redress New York's climate damages for infrastructure, adaptation, for disaster recovery.

DOJ—the U.S. Department of Justice—went to court to argue the polluters' case, that the law was an unconstitutional overreach that Federal courts should rein in. The Justice Department of the United States, paid for by U.S. taxpayers, used its resources to give a taxpayer freebie to the likes of ExxonMobil, Chevron, BP, Shell, and Koch Industries—companies with plentiful armies of lawyers of their own.

Trump's corrupted DOJ also sued Vermont to strike down a similar State law and even sued Hawaii and Michigan to stop those States from suing fossil fuel companies before the States' complaints had even hit the docket. This is not normal DOJ; this is weaponized DOJ.

Why is DOJ acting so strangely? As a former prosecutor, I am telling you, this makes no sense, unless you follow the money.

After the billion-dollar quid pro quo deal, DOJ has become the polluters' taxpayer-funded law firm. Goodbye to “we the people” as the DOJ client; hello to the new client, them the polluters.

Third, is Trump's Department of Energy. It is run by Chris Wright, the former CEO of an oil and gas services company, handpicked to lead DOE by—guess who—oil billionaire Harold Hamm, who organized the Mar-a-Lago billion-dollar-deal donor dinner.

DOE should be advancing clean energy, supporting energy innovation, and funding the energy technologies of

tomorrow, as Congress has authorized it to do. Instead, this Department of Energy has become a fossil fuel industry lackey.

You have got to recognize, in looking at what is going on over there, that Trump's Executive orders, supposedly to unleash American energy, are written in code. It is not a complicated code.

In the code, the word “energy” is code for “fossil fuel.” Understand that, and the rest becomes obvious.

Look at the behavior. The Department of Energy cut clean energy grants for low-carbon technologies and for reducing emissions. Department of Energy slashed funding for solar energy by 87 percent and wind energy by 78 percent. The Department of Energy created a \$625 million bailout fund for expensive, polluting, coal-fired powerplants.

During the current shutdown, Trumpsters are piling on for fossil fuel polluters, so far scrapping \$7.56 billion in clean energy grants, all of them—I am sure, by coincidence—in 16 States where Kamala Harris won the Presidential election.

(Mr. HUSTED assumed the Chair.)

All of this will raise costs for people. DOE knows how grids work. They know that suppressing clean energy means that the grid has to call up expensive, polluting fossil fuel plants—plants that might otherwise be idle because they are too expensive to run. They know that this moves billions from utility customers' pockets to the pockets of the fossil fuel industry.

This is not a glitch. This is the goal. Oh, and don't forget that it was DOE that cooked up the junk science report and teed up EPA to ditch its duty to regulate fossil fuel emissions. Thanks to the billion-dollar deal, Trump's corrupted Department of Energy is, by its own coded definition, not the Department of Energy; it is the “Department of Fossil Fuel.”

Again, good-bye to “we the people”; hello to “them the polluters.”

Next is the Department of the Interior, once a steward of America's public lands and waters. The billion-dollar deal turned it into a leasing agent for fossil fuel. Trump's Interior Secretary, Doug Burgum, another Cabinet member selected by Big Oil's Harold Hamm, is busy as he tries to crush offshore wind, expanding offshore drilling, opening vast stretches of the Gulf of Mexico and Alaska's Cook Inlet to his oil and gas industry clientele.

Onshore, he is handing out leases across the West. Never mind the effects these projects will have on the climate, on water resources, or on nearby communities. Trump's Interior is even lowering royalty fees and environmental standards to make sure drillers get maximum profit at minimum responsibility. Lowering royalty fees, which are already lower than what most private landowners charge, obviously takes money directly from taxpayers and hands it to oil and gas barons—looting and polluting.

At the same time, Trump is out to assassinate clean, reliable wind energy. In New York, Interior halted work on a fully permitted, under-construction 810-megawatt offshore wind farm on justifications so dubious they are almost entirely redacted out of FOIA'd documents.

Off Rhode Island and Connecticut, someone at Moscow Central told Interior to slap a stop work order on Revolution Wind, when it was nearly finished.

Get this: Government lawyers had to go into court and make arguments exactly opposite to arguments they had made defending the same project, in the same courthouse, just weeks before.

No surprise: The fake stop work order cratered in court, but those corrupt shenanigans cost the project at least \$60 million.

Here, it is not just blue States. Out west in Idaho, Interior reversed approval of Lava Ridge, a 1,000-megawatt wind project that suddenly had "legal deficiencies."

Why would the Federal Government sabotage clean energy projects on their way to completion? Follow the money. It goes to fossil fuel donors. Every electron from clean energy that gets delayed is an electron that gas and coal barons get to burn fossil fuel to sell.

And since wind and solar energy are actually cheaper, your utility bills go up. It is the direct transfer of cash from American families to fossil fuel companies and their billionaire owners.

Interior has even started to auction off wildlife refuges, treasured places that should be sanctuaries for threatened species. Oil and gas companies are now invited to bid on land set aside for conservation. National parks face budget cuts, lost protections, and industrial projects right at their borders.

Trump's corrupt Interior is no longer about preserving these landscapes for future generations but about what can be extracted from them now by big donors. The public loses cherished lands and protections that took decades to establish, all for a short-term fossil fuel payday.

Interior ignores Tribal consultation, pressing forward with drilling projects on ancestral lands without meaningful dialogue or consent. Tribal governments and Native communities—just obstacles to be brushed aside, rather than sovereign partners with legal rights.

This behavior echoes a long, shameful history of disregard for indigenous voices when fossil fuel profits are at stake.

This is no all-of-the-above energy strategy, as the administration claims. It is a fossil-fuel-first strategy that kneecaps clean power while supercharging oil and gas.

The Interior Department is now basically the auctioneer for oil and gas leases. Public lands are no longer treasures for the people. They are commodities for the polluters.

So, again, good-bye government for "we the people"; hello government for "them, the polluters."

Last, we have the State Department. Under visionary leaders like John Kerry, the State Department once led America's global engagement on climate, helping secure the landmark Paris Agreement and accomplishing impressive and enormous international oceans protections from the climate threat.

Now, with Trump calling the shots and Marco Rubio dutifully implementing his whims, the United States has exited the Paris Agreement and impedes cooperation on climate action. Just last week, using unprecedented tactics, the Trump administration bullied the International Maritime Organization into delaying a carbon-based levy for shipping emissions.

Just so you can put this in context, shipping is responsible for more global carbon pollution than all but five countries and is completely unregulated. Shipping emissions degrade air quality around ports like Los Angeles, meaning millions of people breathe dirty air.

There are clean alternatives to maritime fossil fuels. The technologies are ready, and the shipping industry wanted to make this transition. Plus, there is almost no cost to consumers. There is almost no American ship involved. But the Trump administration wouldn't have it because every ship that runs on green ammonia or some other pollution-free fuel means one fewer ship that runs on bunker oil or LNG, and that means less money into the pockets of Trump's fossil fuel donors. Plus, it was a threat. It was a threat to the free-to-pollute business model that fossil fuel wrongfully depends on.

So we will find out more about this, but with truly unprecedented tactics, the corrupt Trumpsters went full Al Capone—or maybe it should be called "Oil Capone"—to crush it.

I should add that when I said, "Last, we have the State Department," that wasn't completely accurate because Trump has put the whole of government in the service of his fossil fuel donors, not just the Cabinet Agencies. I will just give one example: the Army Corps of Engineers.

The Army Corps has a long and proud history, with a primary role to build and maintain flood control and safety infrastructure—levees, seawalls, and the like. The Army Corps also has a role in permitting energy projects. Last month, it announced that it would prioritize projects that are "energy dense"—"energy dense"—in other words, those that generate a large amount of power on a relatively small footprint of land.

"Energy dense" is a made-up thing. It is a fake concept, reverse-engineered from the result that they want to achieve through it to favor supposedly energy-dense fossil fuel projects over wind and solar farms that are more spread out—except it is fake.

Energy density, if it were real, would count the spread of pollution from fossil fuel plants, like soot particulates that can travel hundreds of miles or greenhouse gases causing global harm. If it were real, it would count the huge supply footprint these fossil fuel plants require to run, the mining and drilling for coal and oil and gas and all the related environmental destruction—the trucks, railroads, and pipelines spewing and leaking that deliver the fuels.

In real life, the wind and sunshine that power renewable powerplants have no footprint at all.

The real-life footprint of fossil plants, it is far larger than renewable plants. Yet in fake, corrupted Trump world, fossil fuel plants will get their permits expedited, while the corrupt Trump administration stalls renewable facilities over made-up energy density.

Seriously, does "energy density" sound like a policy based in reason, or is it based on campaign cash?

So that is a quick tour of the fossil fuel industry's deep corruption of the Trump administration, of its oily tentacles sliding slimily into Federal Agencies that should be working for the American people.

But this is also a story about who picks up the bill, who pays when government is corrupted.

Spoiler alert: It is you, the regular, hard-working American public.

It is bad enough that the billion-dollar deal allowed our government to be bought and paid for by the fossil fuel industry. Add on that every favor and freebee given to the fossil fuel industry costs the American people.

Let's start with disaster costs. Extreme natural disasters cost Americans between \$99 billion and \$126 billion in the first half of this year alone. NOAA's database of billion-dollar disasters shows the line going up and up and up—storm after storm, flood after flood, fire after fire.

So the Trump administration wants to end that database, as if silencing the burglar alarm will make the burglary end.

Each disaster means billions in Federal aid, billions in rebuilding costs, billions in uncompensated harm to Americans, billions that taxpayers and homeowners have to pay or suffer because polluters pollute for free.

Increasing disaster costs bring something along with them: increasing homeowners insurance problems—problems both in affordability and availability. Premiums are soaring far faster than the rate of inflation.

In Florida, the average premium is \$14,000 per year and climbing; in Louisiana, already \$11,000 per year. Insurance companies are leaving or abandoning customers, with nonrenewals to homeowners doubling or worse in many States over the last 6 years.

If Americans can't get homeowners insurance, then their property can't get a mortgage, and that spells trouble for property values in climate-exposed communities across the country. About

6 months ago, Fed Chair Jay Powell testified in the Senate that within 10 to 15 years, there would be whole regions of the United States where mortgages were no longer available. That is not coming from a green group; that is coming from the Fed. And it hits home. Families dropped from coverage are left in uninsurable homes that they might have worked a lifetime to buy whose values plummet when mortgages can't be had.

This is all fine fun and games if you are a Palm Beach billionaire selling your mansion all cash to another billionaire, but in real life, it is devastating for hard-working people—say a tradesperson living near Orlando, trying to sell their family's biggest single investment. They bought that home with a mortgage. They need to sell it to someone who can get a mortgage. If they are going to get their price with no mortgage, the price crashes.

This is a cascade. It starts with fossil fuel emissions, which amp up climate risk, creating an insurance crisis, making properties unmortgageable, crashing homeowners' property values, and cascading into full-on economic rescission.

The warnings of this abound, and if fossil fuel weren't so powerful in this building, they would be listened to. Your premiums go up or your coverage disappears and your home value plummets. And what does the Trump administration have to say about this? Well, they are not listening to you. They are lying to you because they are so deep in the pockets of the polluters who caused it all.

Energy bills. Energy bills are getting out of hand. Several things drive this.

First, we subsidize fossil fuel, locking in fossil dependence, so consumers get roasted whenever the international oil cartel jacks up global commodity prices, which we see them do all the time.

Second, U.S. consumers pay more when the fossil fuel industry decides to export oil and gas for higher prices overseas. There is less domestic supply because it got exported, and when there is less domestic supply, that predictability raises prices.

The Trump administration forcing utilities to run aging and expensive coal and gas plants that were slated for retirement will likely add \$3 billion per year to your electricity bills—\$3 billion. But your added cost is fossil fuel's added revenue. You are the one getting cheated.

The biggest hit will come from Trump sabotaging clean energy technologies—technologies that already produce electricity at lower cost. Here is how it works: When less expensive clean energy can't get on the grid, expensive, polluting fossil fuel plants that would otherwise be idle as too expensive to run get called up instead. Those more expensive plants then set the price for the grid, and your costs go up.

The trick is that the fossil interests that own and fuel those cost-setting plants get an enormous payday. With clean energy on the grid, their revenue can drop to zero because that plant is too expensive to run. But you back out the cheaper clean energy or you don't let new clean energy on the grid, and suddenly, that plant roars back to polluting life, and the money flows to the plant owner, and the money flows to the fossil fuel dealers that bring the fuel to the plant.

It is a direct transfer from ratepayers' pockets to fossil fuel barons, and they are hoping you won't figure that out, that you will blame it on the electric utility and not notice how the grid is being gamed by fossil fuel. Working families and small businesses are getting stuck paying the bill for a system that has been rigged by the Trump administration for Big Oil's benefit.

Climate brings health dangers, and those health dangers are real. Fossil fuel production and combustion release toxins—benzene, hydrogen sulfide, particulate matter, to name just a few—and they have an effect. Children near fossil fuel-fired powerplants and oil and gas wells suffer higher rates of asthma. Nearby communities experience higher rates of cancer, heart disease, and neurological damage. Air pollution just from fossil fuel production and combustion costs the average American about \$2,500 in extra healthcare expenses.

Even if you don't suffer from heart or respiratory disease, you still pay more, as health insurance companies spread around their customer base those added costs. Nationwide, that added cost is around \$820 billion annually.

That is the cost of fossil fuel. It is a cost of fossil fuel that fossil fuel doesn't pay even though economics says externalities like this should be in the price of the product. But that is the pollute-for-free business model. The industry externalizes their pollution costs, even in the hundreds of billions of dollars, onto families, onto hospitals, onto taxpayers, onto you. You pay for the mess they won't clean up.

Of course, given the control of this building, fossil fuel companies benefit from enormous tax breaks and loopholes. This lost tax money means lost school funding, lost infrastructure funding, lost healthcare dollars. Real people lose real benefits.

Just for one example, the corporate welfare polluters get just from direct fossil fuel subsidies could provide 3 million families with SNAP benefits, food for their kids and families. The billion-dollar deal at Mar-a-Lago takes tax money straight from regular American taxpayers and hands it to billionaire oil barons.

Last, let's consider lost opportunity. Because of fossil fuel corruption here at home, the industries of the future are now developing more overseas, abroad. The jobs of the future are being

created abroad. The technologies of the future are being developed abroad.

Here in the United States, fossil fuel is diligently out to destroy these opportunities, and the jobs and the future that comes with them, to protect its dying business model that cheats in the market while making our air smoggy and our water dirtier—polluting for free.

China races ahead in renewable energy, electric vehicles, and clean technology as America is dragged further and further behind by fossil fuel political interference.

That dirty deal day at Mar-a-Lago was a turning point. Donald Trump put our government up for sale, and the looters and polluters wrote the checks. And now every Agency, every policy, every decision reflects their ownership. EPA is their protector. DOJ is their law firm. The Department of Energy is their henchman. Interior is their leasing agent. The State Department is their industry diplomat, their "Oil Capone."

The repeal of clean energy programs Trump got in his "Beautiful for Billionaires Bill" is expected to cost the U.S. economy \$1.1 trillion by 2035—in a decade, \$1.1 trillion lost to the U.S. economy. That is a loss to all of us.

Meanwhile, fossil fuel CEOs rake in as much as \$40 million a year. Their companies make \$30 billion a year, and the industry sponges up government subsidies of over \$700 billion a year. That \$700 billion is the bill the American people foot every year in more disasters, higher insurance premiums, higher electricity and fuel costs, worse family health, lost good jobs, and a dwindling economic future.

With less clean energy, there will be more emissions, and with more emissions, there will be more disasters, pushing us toward the great climate insurance collapse.

Everywhere are warnings from insurers, from economists, from bankers, from regulators, from "The Big Short" guy who predicted the great recession, from The Economist magazine, even from climate-shy Fed Chair Jay Powell. Warnings abound. Warnings are everywhere of climate economic disaster ahead.

Is it too late to wake up?

I hope not. Though, for sure, our pathway to climate safety is narrowing. If we are going to solve the climate danger, we are going to have to take on the democracy danger. We do not have to accept the United States of America turning into a petrostate. We can still act. We can pass the DISCLOSE Act to expose the dark money that enables fossil fuel corruption.

We can call out and spotlight the climate denial fraud operation that has for so long deceived the American people. We can and must end the fossil fuel industry's corrupt, pollute-for-free business model—a model that violates the laws of economics as well as morality and decency. Why should polluter costs fall on taxpayers? It is simple; they shouldn't.

Democracy also should not be for sale—not to fossil fuel billionaires, not to Exxon, not to Chevron, not to Koch Industries, not to the American Petroleum Institute, not to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, nor to the National Association of Manufacturers, for damn sure not to DonorsTrust or to Leonard Leo.

For a whole lot of reasons, with our climate safety right up at the top of the list, we have got to end the corruption. We have got to spotlight the dark money front groups and the armada of special interest organizations spreading fraud.

Democracy needs to belong to the people—not to the highest bidder. When people understand what was done to them by fraud and corruption and dark money, there will be a mighty reckoning, and it cannot come too soon.

So I conclude, once again, as I have in 301 of these speeches, now for the 302nd time: Time to wake up.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL MONDAY,
OCTOBER 27, 2025, AT 3 P.M.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 3 p.m. on Monday.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 4:43 p.m., adjourned until Monday, October 27, 2025, at 3 p.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

IN THE COAST GUARD

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT AS COMMANDANT OF THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD, AND TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 14, U.S.C., SECTION 302:

To be admiral

ADM. KEVIN E. LUNDAY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY IN THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD, AND TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 14, U.S.C., SECTION 305:

To be vice admiral

REAR ADM. JO-ANN F. BURDIAN
REAR ADM. JOSEPH R. BUZZELLA, JR.

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT AS DEPUTY COMMANDANT FOR OPERATIONS, A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY IN THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD, AND TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 14, U.S.C., SECTION 305:

To be vice admiral

VICE ADM. NATHAN A. MOORE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT AS CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE COAST GUARD, A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY IN THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD, AND TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 14, U.S.C., SECTION 305:

To be vice admiral

REAR ADM. DOUGLAS M. SCHOFIELD

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT AS VICE COMMANDANT OF THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD, AND TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 14, U.S.C., SECTION 304:

To be admiral

VICE ADM. THOMAS G. ALLAN, JR.

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 14 U.S.C., SECTION 212(D):

To be rear admiral

REAR ADM. (LH) MICHAEL E. CAMPBELL
REAR ADM. (LH) RUSSELL E. DASH
REAR ADM. (LH) AMY B. GRABLE
REAR ADM. (LH) MATTHEW W. LAKE
REAR ADM. (LH) RALPH R. LITTLE
REAR ADM. (LH) JEFFREY K. RANDALL
REAR ADM. (LH) WILBORNE E. WATSON

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate October 23, 2025:

THE JUDICIARY

STEPHEN CHAD MEREDITH, OF KENTUCKY, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF KENTUCKY.