



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 119th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 172

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2026

No. 36

Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable KATIE BOYD BRITT, a Senator from the State of Alabama.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, we lift our hearts to You, invoking Your blessings upon this day.

Lord, You have made us one in our need of You, one in our yearning for You, and one in our quest for Your peace. Cleanse our hearts, open our minds, and fill us with Your Spirit that Your truth may enter our lives.

Today, give our lawmakers the strength to do Your will. Help them to serve one another so that they may reflect Your spirit, goodness, and love.

And, Lord, we thank You for George Washington, the first President of this great land. We pray in Your loving Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

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

The senior assistant executive clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,

Washington, DC, February 24, 2026.

To the Senate:

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

appoint the Honorable KATIE BOYD BRITT, a Senator from the State of Alabama, to perform the duties of the Chair.

CHUCK GRASSLEY,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. BRITT thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

READING OF WASHINGTON'S FAREWELL ADDRESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the Senate of January 24, 1901, as modified by the orders of February 11 and February 23, 2026, the Senator from Virginia, Mr. KAINE, will now read Washington's Farewell Address.

Mr. KAINE. Madam President, I rise today to continue an important Senate tradition. Each year, beginning in 1896, on a day near in time to George Washington's birthday, a Senator, alternating between parties, stands in the Senate to read Washington's Farewell Address, presented 100 years earlier as our first President neared the end of his second term.

During the 130 years of this tradition, seven Virginia Senators have preceded me in reading the Address, which was written by the archetypal son of our Commonwealth, with the assistance of close confidants Alexander Hamilton and another Virginia native son James Madison. Those Virginians who read the Farewell Address on the Senate floor are: John Daniel, Claude Swanson, Carter Glass, John Warner—twice—Paul Trible, Chuck Robb, and George Allen.

It is particularly appropriate that this year's reading is delivered in the Senate Chamber hours before President Trump is set to deliver his State of the Union Address in the House Chamber.

Washington's words demonstrate the mixture of wisdom, patriotism, and selflessness that should serve as a model for all Presidents and set the expectations for all Americans for how a President should approach the sacred

trust of serving as America's Chief Executive.

Washington's Farewell Address to the people of the United States.

Mr. KAINE, at the rostrum, read the Farewell Address as follows:

To the people of the United States:

FRIENDS AND FELLOW-CITIZENS: The period for a new election of a citizen to administer the executive government of the United States being not far distant, and the time actually arrived when your thoughts must be employed in designating the person who is to be clothed with that important trust, it appears to me proper, especially as it may conduce to a more distinct expression of the public voice, that I should now apprise you of the resolution I have formed, to decline being considered among the number of those out of whom a choice is to be made.

I beg you at the same time to do me the justice to be assured that this resolution has not been taken without a strict regard to all the considerations appertaining to the relation which binds a dutiful citizen to his country—and that, in withdrawing the tender of service which silence in my situation might imply, I am influenced by no diminution of zeal for your future interest, no deficiency of grateful respect for your past kindness, but am supported by a full conviction that the step is compatible with both.

The acceptance of, and continuance hitherto in, the office to which your suffrages have twice called me have been a uniform sacrifice of inclination to the opinion of duty and to a deference for what appeared to be your desire. I constantly hoped that it would have been much earlier in my power, consistently with motives which I was not at liberty to disregard, to return to that retirement from which I had been reluctantly drawn. The strength of my inclination to do this, previous to the last election, had even led to the preparation of an address to declare it to you; but mature reflection on the then

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



Printed on recycled paper.

S627

perplexed and critical posture of our affairs with foreign nations, and the unanimous advice of persons entitled to my confidence, impelled me to abandon the idea.

I rejoice that the state of your concerns, external as well as internal, no longer renders the pursuit of inclination incompatible with the sentiment of duty or propriety and am persuaded, whatever partiality may be retained for my services, that in the present circumstances of our country you will not disapprove my determination to retire.

The impressions with which I first undertook the arduous trust were explained on the proper occasion. In the discharge of this trust, I will only say that I have, with good intentions, contributed towards the organization and administration of the government the best exertions of which a very fallible judgment was capable. Not unconscious in the outset of the inferiority of my qualifications, experience in my own eyes, perhaps still more in the eyes of others, has strengthened the motives to diffidence of myself, and every day the increasing weight of years admonishes me more and more that the shade of retirement is as necessary to me as it will be welcome. Satisfied that if any circumstances have given peculiar value to my services, they were temporary, I have the consolation to believe that, while choice and prudence invite me to quit the political scene, patriotism does not forbid it.

In looking forward to the moment which is intended to terminate the career of my public life, my feelings do not permit me to suspend the deep acknowledgment of that debt of gratitude which I owe to my beloved country for the many honors it has conferred upon me, still more for the steadfast confidence with which it has supported me and for the opportunities I have thence enjoyed of manifesting my inviolable attachment by services faithful and persevering, though in usefulness unequal to my zeal. If benefits have resulted to our country from these services, let it always be remembered to your praise and as an instructive example in our annals that, under circumstances in which the passions agitated in every direction were liable to mislead, amidst appearances sometimes dubious, vicissitudes of fortune often discouraging, in situations in which not unfrequently want of success has countenanced the spirit of criticism, the constancy of your support was the essential prop of the efforts and a guarantee of the plans by which they were effected. Profoundly penetrated with this idea, I shall carry it with me to my grave as a strong incitement to unceasing vows that Heaven may continue to you the choicest tokens of its beneficence; that your union and brotherly affection may be perpetual; that the free constitution, which is the work of your hands, may be sacredly maintained; that its administration in every department may be stamped with wisdom and virtue; that,

in fine, the happiness of the people of these states, under the auspices of liberty, may be made complete by so careful a preservation and so prudent a use of this blessing as will acquire to them the glory of recommending it to the applause, the affection, and adoption of every nation which is yet a stranger to it.

Here, perhaps, I ought to stop. But a solicitude for your welfare, which cannot end but with my life, and the apprehension of danger natural to that solicitude, urge me on an occasion like the present to offer to your solemn contemplation, and to recommend to your frequent review, some sentiments which are the result of much reflection, of no inconsiderable observation, and which appear to me all important to the permanency of your felicity as a people. These will be offered to you with the more freedom as you can only see in them the disinterested warnings of a parting friend, who can possibly have no personal motive to bias his counsel. Nor can I forget, as an encouragement to it, your indulgent reception of my sentiments on a former and not dissimilar occasion.

Interwoven as is the love of liberty with every ligament of your hearts, no recommendation of mine is necessary to fortify or confirm the attachment.

The unity of government which constitutes you one people is also now dear to you. It is justly so; for it is a main pillar in the edifice of your real independence, the support of your tranquility at home, your peace abroad, of your safety, of your prosperity, of that very liberty which you so highly prize. But as it is easy to foresee that, from different causes and from different quarters, much pains will be taken, many artifices employed, to weaken in your minds the conviction of this truth; as this is the point in your political fortress against which the batteries of internal and external enemies will be most constantly and actively (though often covertly and insidiously) directed, it is of infinite moment that you should properly estimate the immense value of your national Union to your collective and individual happiness; that you should cherish a cordial, habitual, and immovable attachment to it; accustoming yourselves to think and speak of it as of the palladium of your political safety and prosperity; watching for its preservation with jealous anxiety; discountenancing whatever may suggest even a suspicion that it can in any event be abandoned; and indignantly frowning upon the first dawning of every attempt to alienate any portion of our country from the rest, or to enfeeble the sacred ties which now link together the various parts.

For this you have every inducement of sympathy and interest. Citizens by birth or choice of a common country, that country has a right to concentrate your affections. The name of American, which belongs to you in your national capacity, must always exalt the just

pride of patriotism more than any appellation derived from local discriminations. With slight shades of difference, you have the same religion, manners, habits, and political principles. You have in a common cause fought and triumphed together. The independence and liberty you possess are the work of joint councils and joint efforts—of common dangers, sufferings, and successes.

But these considerations, however powerfully they address themselves to your sensibility, are greatly outweighed by those which apply more immediately to your interest. Here every portion of our country finds the most commanding motives for carefully guarding and preserving the Union of the whole.

The *North*, in an unrestrained intercourse with the *South*, protected by the equal laws of a common government, finds in the productions of the latter great additional resources of maritime and commercial enterprise and precious materials of manufacturing industry. The *South* in the same intercourse, benefitting by the agency of the *North*, sees its agriculture grow and its commerce expand. Turning partly into its own channels the seamen of the *North*, it finds its particular navigation invigorated; and while it contributes, in different ways, to nourish and increase the general mass of the national navigation, it looks forward to the protection of a maritime strength to which itself is unequally adapted. The *East*, in a like intercourse with the *West*, already finds, and in the progressive improvement of interior communications by land and water will more and more find a valuable vent for the commodities which it brings from abroad or manufactures at home. The *West* derives from the *East* supplies requisite to its growth and comfort—and what is perhaps of still greater consequence, it must of necessity owe the secure enjoyment of indispensable outlets for its own productions to the weight, influence, and the future maritime strength of the Atlantic side of the Union, directed by an indissoluble community of interest as *one nation*. Any other tenure by which the *West* can hold this essential advantage, whether derived from its own separate strength or from an apostate and unnatural connection with any foreign power, must be intrinsically precarious.

While then every part of our country thus feels an immediate and particular interest in union, all the parts combined cannot fail to find in the united mass of means and efforts greater strength, greater resource, proportionably greater security from external danger, a less frequent interruption of their peace by foreign nations; and, what is of inestimable value! they must derive from union an exemption from those broils and wars between themselves which so frequently afflict neighboring countries not tied together by the same government, which their

own rivalships alone would be sufficient to produce, but which opposite foreign alliances, attachments, and intrigues would stimulate and embitter. Hence likewise they will avoid the necessity of those overgrown military establishments, which under any form of government are inauspicious to liberty, and which are to be regarded as particularly hostile to republican liberty. In this sense it is, that your Union ought to be considered as a main prop of your liberty, and that the love of the one ought to endear to you the preservation of the other.

These considerations speak a persuasive language to every reflecting and virtuous mind and exhibit the continuance of the Union as a primary object of patriotic desire. Is there a doubt whether a common government can embrace so large a sphere? Let experience solve it. To listen to mere speculation in such a case were criminal. We are authorized to hope that a proper organization of the whole, with the auxiliary agency of governments for the respective subdivisions, will afford a happy issue to the experiment. It is well worth a fair and full experiment. With such powerful and obvious motives to union affecting all parts of our country, while experience shall not have demonstrated its impracticability, there will always be reason to distrust the patriotism of those who in any quarter may endeavor to weaken its bands.

In contemplating the causes which may disturb our Union, it occurs as matter of serious concern that any ground should have been furnished for characterizing parties by *geographical discriminations—northern and southern—Atlantic and western*; whence designing men may endeavor to excite a belief that there is a real difference of local interests and views. One of the expedients of party to acquire influence within particular districts is to misrepresent the opinions and aims of other districts. You cannot shield yourselves too much against the jealousies and heart burnings which spring from these misrepresentations. They tend to render alien to each other those who ought to be bound together by fraternal affection. The inhabitants of our western country have lately had a useful lesson on this head. They have seen in the negotiation by the executive—and in the unanimous ratification by the Senate—of the treaty with Spain, and in the universal satisfaction at that event throughout the United States, a decisive proof how unfounded were the suspicions propagated among them of a policy in the general government and in the Atlantic states unfriendly to their interests in regard to the Mississippi. They have been witnesses to the formation of two treaties, that with Great Britain and that with Spain, which secure to them everything they could desire, in respect to our foreign relations, towards confirming their prosperity. Will it not be their wisdom to rely for the preserva-

tion of these advantages on the Union by which they were procured? Will they not henceforth be deaf to those advisers, if such there are, who would sever them from their brethren and connect them with aliens?

To the efficacy and permanency of your Union, a government for the whole is indispensable. No alliances, however strict, between the parts can be an adequate substitute. They must inevitably experience the infractions and interruptions which all alliances in all times have experienced. Sensible of this momentous truth, you have improved upon your first essay by the adoption of a Constitution of government better calculated than your former for an intimate Union and for the efficacious management of your common concerns. This government, the offspring of our own choice uninfluenced and unawed, adopted upon full investigation and mature deliberation, completely free in its principles, in the distribution of its powers uniting security with energy, and containing within itself a provision for its own amendment, has a just claim to your confidence and your support. Respect for its authority, compliance with its laws, acquiescence in its measures, are duties enjoined by the fundamental maxims of true liberty. The basis of our political systems is the right of the people to make and to alter their constitutions of government. But the Constitution which at any time exists, until changed by an explicit and authentic act of the whole people, is sacredly obligatory upon all. The very idea of the power and the right of the people to establish government presupposes the duty of every individual to obey the established government.

All obstructions to the execution of the laws, all combinations and associations under whatever plausible character with the real design to direct, control, counteract, or awe the regular deliberation and action of the constituted authorities, are destructive of this fundamental principle and of fatal tendency. They serve to organize faction; to give it an artificial and extraordinary force; to put in the place of the delegated will of the nation the will of a party, often a small but artful and enterprising minority of the community; and, according to the alternate triumphs of different parties, to make the public administration the mirror of the ill concerted and incongruous projects of faction, rather than the organ of consistent and wholesome plans digested by common councils and modified by mutual interests. However combinations or associations of the above description may now and then answer popular ends, they are likely, in the course of time and things, to become potent engines by which cunning, ambitious, and unprincipled men will be enabled to subvert the power of the people and to usurp for themselves the reins of government, destroying afterwards the very engines which have lifted them to unjust dominion.

Towards the preservation of your government and the permanency of your present happy state, it is requisite not only that you steadily discountenance irregular oppositions to its acknowledged authority but also that you resist with care the spirit of innovation upon its principles, however specious the prettexts. One method of assault may be to effect in the forms of the Constitution alterations which will impair the energy of the system and thus to undermine what cannot be directly overthrown. In all the changes to which you may be invited, remember that time and habit are at least as necessary to fix the true character of governments as of other human institutions, that experience is the surest standard by which to test the real tendency of the existing constitution of a country, that facility in changes upon the credit of mere hypotheses and opinion exposes to perpetual change from the endless variety of hypotheses and opinion; and remember, especially, that for the efficient management of your common interests in a country so extensive as ours, a government of as much vigor as is consistent with the perfect security of liberty is indispensable; liberty itself will find in such a government, with powers properly distributed and adjusted, its surest guardian. It is indeed little else than a name, where the government is too feeble to withstand the enterprises of faction, to confine each member of the society within the limits prescribed by the laws, and to maintain all in the secure and tranquil enjoyment of the rights of person and property.

I have already intimated to you the danger of parties in the state, with particular reference to the founding of them on geographical discriminations. Let me now take a more comprehensive view and warn you in the most solemn manner against the baneful effects of the spirit of party, generally.

This spirit, unfortunately, is inseparable from our nature, having its root in the strongest passions of the human mind. It exists under different shapes in all governments, more or less stifled, controlled, or repressed; but in those of the popular form it is seen in its greatest rankness and is truly their worst enemy.

The alternate domination of one faction over another, sharpened by the spirit of revenge natural to party dissension, which in different ages and countries has perpetrated the most horrid enormities, is itself a frightful despotism. But this leads at length to a more formal and permanent despotism. The disorders and miseries which result gradually incline the minds of men to seek security and repose in the absolute power of an individual; and sooner or later the chief of some prevailing faction, more able or more fortunate than his competitors, turns this disposition to the purposes of his own elevation on the ruins of public liberty.

Without looking forward to an extremity of this kind (which nevertheless ought not to be entirely out of

sight) the common and continual mischiefs of the spirit of party are sufficient to make it the interest and the duty of a wise people to discourage and restrain it.

It serves always to distract the public councils and enfeeble the public administration. It agitates the community with ill founded jealousies and false alarms, kindles the animosity of one part against another, fomented occasionally riot and insurrection. It opens the door to foreign influence and corruption, which find a facilitated access to the government itself through the channels of party passions. Thus the policy and the will of one country are subjected to the policy and will of another.

There is an opinion that parties in free countries are useful checks upon the administration of the government and serve to keep alive the spirit of liberty. This within certain limits is probably true—and in governments of a monarchical cast patriotism may look with indulgence, if not with favor, upon the spirit of party. But in those of the popular character, in governments purely elective, it is a spirit not to be encouraged. From their natural tendency, it is certain there will always be enough of that spirit for every salutary purpose. And there being constant danger of excess, the effort ought to be by force of public opinion to mitigate and assuage it. A fire not to be quenched, it demands a uniform vigilance to prevent its bursting into a flame, lest instead of warming it should consume.

It is important, likewise, that the habits of thinking in a free country should inspire caution in those entrusted with its administration to confine themselves within their respective constitutional spheres, avoiding in the exercise of the powers of one department to encroach upon another. The spirit of encroachment tends to consolidate the powers of all the departments in one and thus to create, whatever the form of government, a real despotism. A just estimate of that love of power and proneness to abuse it which predominates in the human heart is sufficient to satisfy us of the truth of this position. The necessity of reciprocal checks in the exercise of political power, by dividing and distributing it into different depositories and constituting each the guardian of the public weal against invasions by the others, has been evinced by experiments ancient and modern, some of them in our country and under our own eyes. To preserve them must be as necessary as to institute them. If in the opinion of the people the distribution or modification of the constitutional powers be in any particular wrong, let it be corrected by an amendment in the way which the Constitution designates. But let there be no change by usurpation; for though this, in one instance, may be the instrument of good, it is the customary weapon by which free governments are destroyed. The precedent must always greatly overbalance

in permanent evil any partial or transient benefit which the use can at any time yield.

Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The mere politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and to cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connections with private and public felicity. Let it simply be asked where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation *desert* the oaths, which are the instruments of investigation in courts of justice? And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.

It is substantially true that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government. The rule indeed extends with more or less force to every species of free government. Who that is a sincere friend to it can look with indifference upon attempts to shake the foundation of the fabric?

Promote then, as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge. In proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened.

As a very important source of strength and security, cherish public credit. One method of preserving it is to use it as sparingly as possible, avoiding occasions of expense by cultivating peace, but remembering also that timely disbursements to prepare for danger frequently prevent much greater disbursements to repel it; avoiding likewise the accumulation of debt, not only by shunning occasions of expense, but by vigorous exertions in time of peace to discharge the debts which unavoidable wars may have occasioned, not ungenerously throwing upon posterity the burden which we ourselves ought to bear. The execution of these maxims belongs to your representatives, but it is necessary that public opinion should cooperate. To facilitate to them the performance of their duty, it is essential that you should practically bear in mind that towards the payment of debts there must be revenue; that to have revenue there must be taxes; that no taxes can be devised which are not more or less inconvenient and unpleasant; that the intrinsic embarrassment inseparable from the selection of the proper objects (which is always a choice of difficulties) ought to be a decisive motive for a candid construction of the conduct of the government in making it, and for a

spirit of acquiescence in the measures for obtaining revenue which the public exigencies may at any time dictate.

Observe good faith and justice towards all nations; cultivate peace and harmony with all; religion and morality enjoin this conduct, and can it be that good policy does not equally enjoin it? It will be worthy of a free, enlightened, and, at no distant period, a great nation, to give to mankind the magnanimous and too novel example of a people always guided by an exalted justice and benevolence. Who can doubt that in the course of time and things the fruits of such a plan would richly repay any temporary advantages which might be lost by a steady adherence to it? Can it be, that Providence has not connected the permanent felicity of a nation with its virtue? The experiment, at least, is recommended by every sentiment which ennobles human nature. Alas! is it rendered impossible by its vices?

In the execution of such a plan nothing is more essential than that permanent, inveterate antipathies against particular nations and passionate attachments for others should be excluded and that in place of them just and amicable feelings towards all should be cultivated. The nation which indulges towards another an habitual hatred, or an habitual fondness, is in some degree a slave. It is a slave to its animosity or to its affection, either of which is sufficient to lead it astray from its duty and its interest. Antipathy in one nation against another disposes each more readily to offer insult and injury, to lay hold of slight causes of umbrage, and to be haughty and intractable when accidental or trifling occasions of dispute occur. Hence frequent collisions, obstinate, envenomed, and bloody contests. The nation, prompted by ill will and resentment, sometimes impels to war the government, contrary to the best calculations of policy. The government sometimes participates in the national propensity and adopts through passion what reason would reject; at other times, it makes the animosity of the nation subservient to projects of hostility instigated by pride, ambition and other sinister and pernicious motives. The peace often, sometimes perhaps the liberty, of nations has been the victim.

So likewise, a passionate attachment of one nation for another produces a variety of evils. Sympathy for the favorite nation, facilitating the illusion of an imaginary common interest in cases where no real common interest exists and infusing into one the enmities of the other, betrays the former into a participation in the quarrels and wars of the latter, without adequate inducement or justification. It leads also to concessions to the favorite nation of privileges denied to others, which is apt doubly to injure the nation making the concessions, by unnecessarily parting with what ought to have been retained and by exciting jealousy, ill will, and a disposition to retaliate in

the parties from whom equal privileges are withheld. And it gives to ambitious, corrupted, or deluded citizens (who devote themselves to the favorite nation) facility to betray or sacrifice the interests of their own country without odium, sometimes even with popularity, gilding with the appearances of a virtuous sense of obligation, a commendable deference for public opinion, or a laudable zeal for public good, the base or foolish compliances of ambition, corruption, or infatuation.

As avenues to foreign influence in innumerable ways, such attachments are particularly alarming to the truly enlightened and independent patriot. How many opportunities do they afford to tamper with domestic factions, to practice the arts of seduction, to mislead public opinion, to influence or awe the public councils! Such an attachment of a small or weak towards a great and powerful nation dooms the former to be the satellite of the latter.

Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence (I conjure you to believe me, fellow citizens) the jealousy of a free people ought to be constantly awake, since history and experience prove that foreign influence is one of the most baneful foes of republican government. But that jealousy to be useful must be impartial; else it becomes the instrument of the very influence to be avoided, instead of a defense against it. Excessive partiality for one foreign nation and excessive dislike of another cause those whom they actuate to see danger only on one side, and serve to veil and even second the arts of influence on the other. Real patriots, who may resist the intrigues of the favorite, are liable to become suspected and odious, while its tools and dupes usurp the applause and confidence of the people to surrender their interests.

The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is, in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connection as possible. So far as we have already formed engagements, let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith. Here let us stop.

Europe has a set of primary interests, which to us have none or a very remote relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. Hence therefore it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves, by artificial ties, in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships or enmities.

Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course. If we remain one people under an efficient government, the period is not far off when we may defy material injury from external annoyance; when we may take such an attitude as will cause the neutrality we may at any time resolve upon to be scrupulously respected; when belligerent nations, under the impossibility of making acquisitions upon us, will

not lightly hazard the giving us provocation; when we may choose peace or war, as our interest guided by justice shall counsel.

Why forgo the advantages of so peculiar a situation? Why quit our own to stand upon foreign ground? Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalship, interest, humor, or caprice?

It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world—so far, I mean, as we are now at liberty to do it, for let me not be understood as capable of patronizing infidelity to existing engagements (I hold the maxim no less applicable to public than to private affairs, that honesty is always the best policy)—I repeat it therefore, let those engagements be observed in their genuine sense. But in my opinion it is unnecessary and would be unwise to extend them.

Taking care always to keep ourselves, by suitable establishments, on a respectably defensive posture, we may safely trust to temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies.

Harmony, liberal intercourse with all nations, are recommended by policy, humanity, and interest. But even our commercial policy should hold an equal and impartial hand: neither seeking nor granting exclusive favors or preferences; consulting the natural course of things; diffusing and diversifying by gentle means the streams of commerce but forcing nothing; establishing with powers so disposed—in order to give to trade a stable course, to define the rights of our merchants, and to enable the government to support them—conventional rules of intercourse, the best that present circumstances and mutual opinion will permit, but temporary, and liable to be from time to time abandoned or varied, as experience and circumstances shall dictate; constantly keeping in view, that it is folly in one nation to look for disinterested favors from another—that it must pay with a portion of its independence for whatever it may accept under that character—that by such acceptance it may place itself in the condition of having given equivalents for nominal favors and yet of being reproached with ingratitude for not giving more. There can be no greater error than to expect or calculate upon real favors from nation to nation. It is an illusion which experience must cure, which a just pride ought to discard.

In offering to you, my countrymen, these counsels of an old and affectionate friend, I dare not hope they will make the strong and lasting impression I could wish—that they will control the usual current of the passions or prevent our nation from running the course which has hitherto marked the destiny of nations. But if I may even flatter myself that they may be productive of some partial benefit,

some occasional good, that they may now and then recur to moderate the fury of party spirit, to warn against the mischiefs of foreign intrigue, to guard against the impostures of pretended patriotism—this hope will be a full recompense for the solicitude for your welfare by which they have been dictated.

How far in the discharge of my official duties I have been guided by the principles which have been delineated, the public records and other evidences of my conduct must witness to you and to the world. To myself, the assurance of my own conscience is that I have at least believed myself to be guided by them.

In relation to the still subsisting war in Europe, my proclamation of the 22d of April 1793 is the index to my plan. Sanctioned by your approving voice and by that of your representatives in both houses of Congress, the spirit of that measure has continually governed me, uninfluenced by any attempts to deter or divert me from it.

After deliberate examination with the aid of the best lights I could obtain, I was well satisfied that our country, under all the circumstances of the case, had a right to take—and was bound in duty and interest to take—a neutral position. Having taken it, I determined, as far as should depend upon me, to maintain it with moderation, perseverance, and firmness.

The considerations which respect the right to hold this conduct it is not necessary on this occasion to detail. I will only observe that, according to my understanding of the matter, that right, so far from being denied by any of the belligerent powers, has been virtually admitted by all.

The duty of holding a neutral conduct may be inferred, without anything more, from the obligation which justice and humanity impose on every nation, in cases in which it is free to act, to maintain inviolate the relations of peace and amity towards other nations.

The inducements of interest for observing that conduct will best be referred to your own reflections and experience. With me, a predominant motive has been to endeavor to gain time to our country to settle and mature its yet recent institutions and to progress without interruption to that degree of strength and consistency which is necessary to give it, humanly speaking, the command of its own fortunes.

Though in reviewing the incidents of my administration I am unconscious of intentional error, I am nevertheless too sensible of my defects not to think it probable that I may have committed many errors. Whatever they may be, I fervently beseech the Almighty to avert or mitigate the evils to which they may tend. I shall also carry with me the hope that my country will never cease to view them with indulgence and that, after forty-five years of my life dedicated to its service with an upright zeal, the faults of incompetent abilities will be consigned to oblivion,

as myself must soon be to the mansions of rest.

Relying on its kindness in this as in other things, and actuated by that fervent love towards it which is so natural to a man who views in it the native soil of himself and his progenitors for several generations, I anticipate with pleasing expectation that retreat, in which I promise myself to realize without alloy the sweet enjoyment of partaking in the midst of my fellow citizens the benign influence of good laws under a free government—the ever favorite object of my heart, and the happy reward, as I trust, of our mutual cares, labors and dangers.

GEO. WASHINGTON.

UNITED STATES, 19th September 1796.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. 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 PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BANKS). The Senator from Washington.

SAVE AMERICA ACT

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I rise today because I think the President tonight is going to continue to talk about his radical changes to our electoral system. He has tried by Executive order, just as he tried to impose tariffs by Executive order, and he found out that he didn't have that authority, according to the Supreme Court. We know now that article I, section 4 of the Constitution says that the States administer elections, that Congress can regulate, but there is no role for the President. I say this because I am very concerned about the President's proposal, and I am very concerned about the SAVE Act.

Greg Kimsey, who is the Clark County auditor of a part of Washington where I guarantee you, we have real election issues—basically, the other day, in trying to fight against the SAVE America Act said this: "Voting is a constitutional right, a barrier to the exercise of constitutional right should only be enacted if the government's compelling interest is greater than the citizen's individual constitutional right, the government's interest in ensuring that only U.S. citizens vote would not be significantly enhanced by the SAVE [America] Act."

So here is a Republican auditor who is basically saying in my State that this is a constitutional right by the citizenry of our State and that the SAVE America Act is basically putting too much of a burden on it.

Have States been failing in election administration? Is there a public outcry from Republicans or Democrats who observe the elections every year or the League of Women Voters that the Federal Government should overturn our Constitution and give this power to the President?

State systems right now are working, and they are not finding significant voter fraud. States have ways of finding out fraud. That is how the system works—because it is based on your signature and saying who you are. King County in my State, the largest county by population, only had 12 instances of voter fraud in the 2024 election that were referred to the prosecutor's office for investigation. Now, we are talking out of millions of votes. None were related to a non-citizen casting a vote, according to King County elections director Julie Wise. Nationally, the conservative Heritage Foundation found 1,620 cases of fraud between 1982 and the year 2025, so that is 1,000 cases of voter fraud, basically over a 40-year period of time. In Texas, they only found 113 cases in those 43 years and, in Georgia, 36 cases.

So again, by comparison, if you are looking at these numbers from a national number, 154 million Americans voted in 2024. The Cato Institute, another conservative group, found similar results in places like Utah, Louisiana, Idaho, Michigan, and Montana. The League of Women Voters is also citing their opposition to the SAVE America Act in saying that only one ten-thousandth of 1 percent is the case of voter fraud.

I wish I had a chart up here, is where I could put the zeros—.0001 percent, so one ten-thousandth of a percent of voter fraud. That is what we found. But somehow, people are saying we should disenfranchise millions of Americans—some have estimated as high as 9 percent of the voting public—to somehow improve that one ten-thousandth of 1 percent. Somehow, that is what we should do.

The League of Women Voters opposes the SAVE America Act because it argues: "By creating a 'show your papers' requirement to not only register but also to cast a ballot, lawmakers seek to suppress millions of eligible Americans from voting."

I also had a letter from the former Republican secretary of state in my State, Sam Reed, who said: "I oppose the SAVE [America] Act. Neither the President nor Congress should be in the business of micromanaging elections. As a longtime Republican election administration official, I adamantly support our nation's constitutional framers' decision that the election process be decentralized to states."

I issued a snapshot report last week detailing the impacts of the SAVE America Act on the voters, and believe me, it is going to cost them time and money. A replacement for a birth certificate—because that is what you are going to need to show that you are a

U.S. citizen—costs anywhere from \$23 to \$50; a passport can be as much as \$165. Twenty-one million Americans don't have these documents readily available. Seven percent of Texas voters don't. Ten percent of Georgia voters don't, and you are basically now asking them to go and find them.

And what about the women in our country that maybe have been divorced, don't have the same name; they have paperwork that is messed up? How is she going to get the right documentation in the right period of time, since passing the SAVE America Act and putting it on the President's desk means it is implemented immediately for this election? Election officials are generally open normal working hours, which would mean a voter would have to take time off from work or hire childcare just to go down there and show these papers.

The SAVE America Act puts up barriers, and it gives the President the authority to have Homeland Security reviewing the voter rolls. That is right. They would take voting rolls and voting information and basically start to approve it. Negligible voter fraud, but yet massive disenfranchisement, that is what would be created.

So I am very concerned because our national voting system does depend on you being a U.S. citizen. This is what the ballot actually says—here is one of my old ballots that I took a picture of. It basically says on the outside of your ballot, return as soon as possible by election day. This ballot contains an envelope, and your signature will be compared to your voter registration, and then it asks you to sign.

But since I wanted to make this a little clearer, I put this attestation that is on the top of the ballot that everybody—so you are directed when you see this ballot, you know that that is what you have to do. You have to sign there. You have to read this attestation: I do solemnly swear and affirm, under the penalty of perjury, that I am a U.S. citizen. And it goes on to say that failure of this is a felony punishable by a maximum imprisonment of 5 years in jail or a fine of \$10,000 or both. And then you sign your name.

Now, the notion that somebody thinks illegal immigrants are running around the United States of America signing ballots saying they are a U.S. citizen, when they can read right here that it says, I do solemnly swear under perjury and these fines that I am a U.S. citizen, I don't think so. These people aren't even going to the grocery store right now. They are not even going to the doctor's office. They are scared to pick their kids up from school.

And somehow, somebody is perpetrating this notion that they are signing ballots and basically trying to sway the election when I just said it is one ten-thousandth of 1 percent of voter fraud. And the voter fraud that they are catching isn't even non-citizens; it is probably people who actually have committed felonies or other types

of actions—because, guess what, when you go to vote and you sign this ballot and you register, which also says you have to be a U.S. citizen, and then you have people at the voting place—every signature is checked. Every signature is checked.

In fact, in our State, the Washington State Patrol basically advises the election officials how to compare the signatures. And while they are comparing the signatures, there are Republicans and Democrats and League of Women Voters and observers in every election official office checking to see that that information is correct.

Now, you want to move all of that to the Homeland Security Department and let them be in charge of this and let them say how many people they think should be thrown off the rolls. I don't. This is a constitutional right for our States. It is one that is working. There is negligible fraud, and we shouldn't change it because you think you are going to get one more zero on that one ten-thousandth of 1 percent and disenfranchise millions of voters.

I do not want the Department of Homeland Security acquiring more information on us. I do not want the general post office holding ballots without postmarking them. I want our country to believe in free and fair elections. It is how we move forward. The President of the United States tonight should listen, as my guest tonight is the secretary of state from Washington whose vote-by-mail system is unparalleled in its ability to get the vote out and to be accurate, even in the closest of elections.

And we do catch fraud, and we do match systems against voters and information about them, so the system works. So please, please let us not tonight forget that voting in our country is a constitutional right upheld and pursued by our States. Let's keep that system. Let's turn down the SAVE America Act. Let's move our country forward with more participation in our elections, again by U.S. citizens in the system that has delivered for us today.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip.

TARIFFS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, last Friday, the Supreme Court ruled to strike down most—70 percent—of Trump's tariff taxes.

Tariffs can be useful when used strategically, but President Trump exceeded these authorities, as clearly defined by Congress, and the Supreme Court, by a vote of 6 to 3, told him as much. He defied basic economic sense. Just ask any American business or consumer who suffered under this chaotic policy.

Last year, the average American family paid more than \$1,700 in tariff costs. A tariff tax, as described by the President, sounds like a problem for the exporter to the United States. It is

not. It is paid by the importer. That turns out to be the American consumer.

So, at a time when families are struggling to make ends meet, when the cost of living is going up, the products that they are buying—many of them—are subject to Trump's tariff tax, and they have to pay it, how much does that mean for each American family? It means \$1,700 a year.

A recent report from the New York Fed found that 90 percent of the economic burden of Trump's tariff taxes fell on Americans—not on foreigners but on Americans.

How did the Trump administration respond to it? They said the researchers needed to be "disciplined."

The chaos unleashed by this administration's attacks on American businesses and consumers also resulted in a massive decline in manufacturing jobs last year—jobs the President promised he would be creating and would be booming. In fact, U.S. factories employ 72,000 fewer people than they did in April of 2025, with more declines every single month.

The President has also broken his promise many times over to the farmers in Illinois. His tariffs have made farming in Illinois unprofitable—not just by making the fertilizer, seeds, machinery, and equipment more expensive but also by wrecking export markets like China for years to come.

I have met with these farmers throughout my congressional career. They are proud, hard-working people. They are the backbone of so many communities across our State.

I meet with them, and they say: Senator, all we want the Federal Government to do is get the heck out of the way. We grow the best crops in the world. We can compete with any country on Earth. Just don't make our job more difficult by government action.

The tariffs did make it more difficult for these farmers, and they told me as much.

Last week's decision was a victory for America and a defeat for this President. It was a victory for the rule of law. But the damage has been done to small businesses and balance sheets across this country.

But instead of reconsidering his position after a clear 6-to-3 loss in the Supreme Court, President Trump is whipsawing between new tariffs—new taxes—resulting in the European Union halting a trade deal with us as they consider their next steps.

Chaos, turmoil—the President thrives on it, but American families and the economy do not. It is up to Congress to reject those desperate gambles by the President. Congress must also act to ensure that small businesses across the country get their money back as soon as possible.

And how about the families who paid for these products that have been taxed by the Trump tariff tax? They deserve relief too. If we are concerned about the cost of living as it hits American

families, they need to have some relief, too, and the President, after losing in the Supreme Court, should pay this money back.

REMEMBERING JESSE JACKSON

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, on a completely unrelated topic, the year was 1969. I had just graduated from law school. I was working for the Lieutenant Governor of the State of Illinois, a man named Paul Simon. He sent me on a mission. He wanted me to go to my hometown—East St. Louis, IL—and then to Cairo, IL. Both communities were in desperate need of help.

The reason he asked me to go at that time was the fact that the Reverend Jesse Jackson, in 1969, was launching Operation Breadbasket. He was shining a light on the ravages of poverty and the failure of the government to protect those in need.

He went through these two communities to listen to the desperate, the damned, and the disinherited. Even then, Reverend Jackson exuded a warmth that could put even the most anxious person at ease. He spoke with eloquence that would stir a person's heart—always did.

As he continued his fight against poverty and injustice, Reverend Jackson became one of the founding voices of the civil rights movement in America. He inspired countless politicians, activists, and preachers to fight for the dignity in every person.

In his life, Reverend Jackson contributed to the benefit of so many people. He will continue to be a symbol of hope, endurance, and equality long after his death. I extend my sympathies to his wife, his family, his friends, and followers.

His Operation PUSH on the South Side of Chicago is a legendary venue. Everybody who is anybody in politics makes a stop there. Jesse Jackson for years—for decades—managed to be a leader in our community through Operation PUSH.

I am going to miss him. We had speed dial on one another's phones, and he wouldn't hesitate to call me with advice on a regular basis. Sometimes, I even took it, but I was always glad to hear it because it was always heartfelt and always focused on helping the little guy. That was his life, and he lived it so valuably.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, on a separate subject, last week marked the season 13 premiere of late-night host John Oliver's "Last Week Tonight."

In the 30-minute monologue, John Oliver laid into the Department of Homeland Security which he says "remain[s] a massive agency with unclear checks on its power, boatloads of money, and sweeping surveillance authority."

John Oliver is right, but it is important to remember how we got to this

point. I am old enough to remember a time before the Department of Homeland Security. After 9/11, Congress created what would become the third largest Department of the Federal Government. The creation and existence of this Agency was defended, in part, by proponents who argued that immigration was primarily a homeland security issue.

But from the beginning, DHS and its various components have struggled to accomplish its many conflicting missions while spending hundreds of billions of dollars. In the wrong hands, this behemoth of an Agency could be weaponized for political purposes. Sadly, that is just what we are seeing today.

I warned the Trump administration about their militarizing Federal immigration raids that don't target the worst of the worst by any means and instead amount to political theater with the intent of sowing fear and meeting arbitrary arrest quotas.

This past Friday, I attended the funeral of Ofelia Giselle Torres Hidalgo. Tragically, she passed away at age 16 after a battle with cancer.

In October of last year, her father Ruben was detained in a Home Depot parking lot. They crashed through his driver's side window and detained him. At that time, he begged them to let him go home. His daughter Ofelia had just returned from the hospital and was at home waiting for some food from her father.

He was trying to do one more odd job so he would have some money in his pocket to buy that food. That is what he was up to.

So they checked the background of Ruben Torres, and you won't be surprised to know he had no criminal record whatsoever. None. That didn't stop the ICE agents. They ended up arresting him, detaining him, and shipping him off to a location in Texas for 2 weeks.

Finally, they dropped all charges against him and let him go home to his sick daughter and his family. He did go home, but his status on the immigration schedule was still uncertain.

He managed to schedule a court hearing just 2 weeks ago. In that court hearing, his daughter, too weak to attend it personally, followed it by closed-circuit TV. The judge ruled against the government in their detention of Ruben Torres, and his daughter got to see her father finally liberated from this outrageous conduct by ICE at the very last minutes of her life. She died 3 days later.

I think about that, and I think about what the President promised us. He was going to send ICE into our communities and make them safer. He was going to make sure that people who came into this country illegally were removed from this country if they were a danger.

Oh, you heard him say it over and over again "the worst of the worst." That is what we are going after. Well,

Ruben Torres was not the worst of the worst. He was a father who had been in this country for 20 years, working, paying taxes, raising his family, and his kids had no criminal records whatsoever.

Does a father standing by his dying daughter who is battling cancer sound like "the worst of the worst" to you? Would you arrest him and send him off to Texas for 2 weeks on a suspicion and then drop all charges against him when he is begging you for a chance to go home to his sick daughter before she dies?

The political theater extends to the rest of U.S. citizens as well.

Kyle Frankovich and Juan Munoz were arrested and detained during November protests outside the Chicago ICE processing center despite peacefully protesting in a designated free speech zone.

According to Mr. Kyle Frankovich:

Kristi Noem was . . . surrounded by photographers, videographers, essentially just getting us in the background as she walked by.

Later, social media posts from DHS showed Kyle handcuffed, dubbing him a "violent activist." But after being detained for hours, Kyle and Juan weren't charged with any crimes. They were just being used as camera props for Secretary Noem's appearance.

These rogue immigration agents have not hesitated to round up American citizens, green card holders, and people with no prior criminal records. They have not hesitated to slap Americans with the label "domestic terrorist."

Now, they are building holding facilities—detention facilities—all over the United States—millions of dollars to hold thousands of these detainees for indefinite periods of time.

This is bound to get worse with the unprecedented funding surge of President Trump's "Big Beautiful Budget Bill." Thanks to that bill, ICE—this one Agency, ICE—has more funding than the Coast Guard or U.S. Marine Corps—more funding than the U.S. Marine Corps, an extra \$75 billion of taxpayer dollars to fund these ICE agents. We have seen plenty of them in the videotape.

That enormous pot of funding has been used in pursuit of the President's mass deportation agenda, while at the same time they are diverting money away from fighting drug trafficking and gun violence, ultimately making our country less safe. The funding certainly has not been used to improve hiring and training. Amid a hiring surge, ICE has reduced training requirements, waived age limitations, and bundled background checks, promising \$50,000 bonuses to those who sign up.

They have sought to recruit new agents via a multimillion-dollar advertising campaign that evokes White nationalism leading to a real concern that America is intentionally enlisting unqualified people based on their animus toward immigrants.

That is why Senate Democrats, with the support of the American people, are demanding real reforms in ICE.

First, DHS must end roving patrols, including indiscriminate arrests and racial profiling. The cameraless stops have to stop. They need to obtain judicial warrants in order to enter private homes.

Second, there needs to be accountability, including new use-of-force standards. And the masks must come off. If the mask is such a darn good idea, then why don't the State troopers in my State and yours wear them? Why don't the county sheriff's deputies wear them? Why don't our police wear them?

Only ICE believes it is so unique and so vulnerable that they need masks. Of course, that vision of a mask-wearing policeman is a secret policeman that doesn't instill trust or confidence in the community.

In a press conference claiming the end of Operation Metro Surge in Minnesota, border czar Tom Homan said in response to protests:

If you want certain laws reformed, [then] take it up with Congress.

Well, he is right. Congress ought to take this up on the agenda quickly.

He also said:

ICE . . . is enforcing laws enacted by Congress and signed by the President.

If they are, it is time for us in Congress to change them.

Let me be clear: It is not legal to deploy paramilitary DHS agents to tear gas Americans in the streets or shoot innocent people, nor to allow immigration agents to break into homes without a judicial warrant or detain U.S. citizens based on their race.

Is there any standard when it comes to too much government that the Republicans are embarrassed about?

It is true that our system needs reform. Time and time again, Democrats in Congress have tried to pass laws that bring meaningful fixes to the immigration system.

Thirteen years ago, I was part of a Gang of 8, with John McCain, LINDSEY GRAHAM, Jeff Flake, and Marco Rubio on the Republican side; myself, SCHUMER, Menendez, and BENNET on the Democrat side. We worked for months every night of every week until we had it done, the comprehensive immigration reform.

It had the support of business; it had the support of labor; it had the support of the White House, and we brought it to the floor of the U.S. Senate. It had more than 65 votes in favor of it. I believe there were 15 Republicans who voted for it.

It was a good bill. It would have avoided all the mess that we are facing today. What happened to that bill? It was sent to the Republican-controlled House where they refused to even consider it, wouldn't even bring it up for debate or amendment. They stopped it cold, and they have done nothing ever since.

That serious bipartisan effort would have fixed our immigration system. It

was blocked by Republican obstructionists in the House of Representatives.

That bill included bipartisan provisions to secure our border and deport dangerous individuals. It provided the solution that many undocumented immigrants need today. For those who have no serious criminal convictions, paid their taxes, and followed all the rules, they are offered a path to citizenship.

It was over 20 years ago when I introduced a bill known as the DREAM Act. The DREAM Act said if you were brought to this country as a child, an infant, a toddler, and you were raised in America, pledged allegiance to that flag in your classroom every day, you deserved a chance to earn your way to citizenship. That is the DREAM Act in a nutshell.

That has never become law. It is passed in the Senate occasionally, but not in the House; passed in the House but not in the Senate. Here it sits today.

My guest at the State of the Union tonight is a young woman named Tereza Lee. She lives in the city of New York now, but when I first ran across her, she was in Chicago. She was brought to the United States by her Korean family and raised by a father who wanted to be a minister at a Korean church in Chicago.

As he would visit these churches, it was Tereza that would go from one church to the next hammering away at the local piano which was always on board at these churches. Over time, she became part of the Merit music program and became an accomplished pianist.

There reached a point where she graduated from high school, and they said: You ought to go to one of the best schools, Julliard or Manhattan conservatory. She started to fill out the application, but didn't know what to put when it asked for citizenship.

So she called our office—or at least a friend did—and said: What should Tereza put to fill in the blank? We basically checked and found out that because she was undocumented and overstayed a tourist visa at the age of 2—at the age of 2—that she had to leave the United States for 10 years and apply to come back in.

It didn't sound right to me. How could she be held legally liable for this situation? It was her parents' decision not to file the papers.

So I introduced the DREAM Act. We had a good run on it with over a half a million people protected by a version of it that was passed into law by Executive order by President Obama.

Whatever happened to Tereza Lee? Well, some families in Chicago thought she was pretty good, and she was. She went to college in Manhattan in the city of New York and played in Carnegie Hall. She went on to get a master's and a PhD in music and is now recognized as one of the outstanding teachers of music to kids from lower-income families in New York.

It is an amazing story. She got married to a jazz musician from the United States. They have three children. She is an American citizen today.

She got her chance because people cared. President Obama passed DACA which gave hundreds of thousands of young people just like her a chance to earn their way to citizenship.

Isn't that part of a good immigration system? It should be.

If it had become law, we wouldn't be here today. The provisions that were included in the overall comprehensive immigration bill would have avoided the conflicts we are facing.

The American people are calling for reform today. The time to rein in this terror campaign is now. Congress must act.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 6644

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk that is due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 6644) to increase the supply of housing in America, and for other purposes.

Mr. BARRASSO. In order to place the bill on the calendar, under the provisions of rule XIV, I would object to further proceeding.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The bill will be placed on the calendar.

STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, tonight the President of the United States will give the State of the Union Address. Americans are going to hear two things from the President. They are going to hear a record of progress that puts America back on track. They will also hear a plan to build on that progress.

In the 2024 election, Americans demanded safety and prosperity, and Republicans have delivered. Republicans cut taxes for Americans. We eliminated wasteful Washington spending. We rolled back regulations that strangled businesses and punished small businesses all across the country. We restored American energy dominance.

Today, America is safer, more secure, and more prosperous than it was when Joe Biden left the White House a little over a year ago. For the 4 years of his Presidency, painfully high prices punished American families. Republicans' policies have changed all of that. Our focus is affordability. The proof is in the pockets of the American people.

Last year, Republicans passed the Working Families Tax Cut law. Every Democrat—every single Democrat in

this body—voted against it. That law benefits every single American taxpayer.

Every working American receives a permanently lower tax rate. Every working American receives a permanent increase in the standard deduction.

Farmers, ranchers, small business owners, and Main Street small business owners receive permanent relief from the dreaded death tax.

All parents are going to receive a permanent increase in the child tax credit—\$2,200 for each child each year. Waiters, barbers, and bartenders are going to keep more money because of no taxes on tips. Nurses, firefighters, police officers, and coal miners will keep more money because of no tax on overtime.

Millions of seniors living on Social Security will receive higher payments as a result of no taxes on Social Security.

New parents can save and invest in their child's future through the historic new Trump accounts.

Republicans didn't stop with cutting taxes—oh, no. We also removed burdensome government regulations that strangled our economy. Just this month, in a historic decision, the Trump administration ended the so-called endangerment finding. That was an Obama-era regulation that raised car prices and limited consumer choice. This is the single largest action to cut burdensome regulation by any administration ever, and it is going to make life more affordable.

It follows a year of rolling back red-tape. Last year, President Trump eliminated 646 regulations, and his actions saved hard-working Americans over \$200 billion.

This is just the beginning. So what are the results so far? Inflation is at the lowest it has been in 5 years. More Americans are working—millions more—and wages are going up. The economy continues to see robust growth. Productivity grew twice as fast last year as it has over the past decade. That is what we have been able to deliver. These are the facts and figures.

Let me put it in personal terms. Because of the economic policies enacted in the past year, workers in America now have \$1,400 more in each and every one of their pockets than they did before President Trump took office. From the gas station, to the grocery store, to the pharmacy, paychecks are going further. Families are feeling financial relief, and more relief is on the way because there is more work for us to do.

Let's consider what the Democrats—the people on the other side of the aisle—want to do instead.

Joe Biden and the Democrats' reckless tax and spending agenda caused the worst inflation in 40 years. Record-high inflation. Sky-high prices. Today, these Democrats are determined to bring that back—that pain, that suffering. They want it all again.

These Democrats tried to raise taxes on American workers by \$4 trillion. Every single Democrat in this body—every single one of them on the other side of the aisle—voted in favor of the largest tax increase in America's history. We stopped them. We stopped them. Had these Democrats gotten their way, Americans would be paying more taxes today, not less. The refund checks coming would be smaller rather than larger, which is what they are going to get with the Republican plan when they get their tax refunds this year.

Even now, Democrats are still trying to raise your taxes. These Democrats are trying to undo the very policies that are putting more money back into the pocketbooks and the purses of American families.

Americans rejected the failed agenda of high prices and of open border and of high taxes. The American people chose safety and prosperity instead.

So, today, America is heading in the right direction. This is an all-American economic comeback, and we are going to continue to build on it, and people are going to hear that tonight when the President speaks.

Tonight, President Trump will lay out his vision for continuing to make America safer and more prosperous for the people who are here, the citizens of this country, and Senate Republicans are going to work closely with him to do precisely that.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UKRAINE

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, today marks the fourth anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Vladimir Putin believed his so-called military operation would be over in 2 weeks, but, as the fifth year of the war begins, Russian forces have fought Ukraine longer than they fought the Germans in World War II. Because of the bravery and innovation of the Ukrainians, aided by American and European support, Vladimir Putin's objective to conquer and control the Ukrainian Government remains unattainable. His war is a strategic failure.

While the Russian military is making incremental gains in the east part of Ukraine, it is at an exorbitant cost. Since the invasion began in February 2022, 4 years ago, Russian forces have seized only 12 percent of Ukrainian territory. Because of the way they fight and how Ukrainians defend, Russian forces simply cannot achieve breakthroughs after the breach of Ukrainian positions. Today, nearly 20 percent of

the Donbas remains out of Putin's grasp and Russian forces, already struggling to take territory, face the "fortress belt" of the region's remaining cities.

Putin has abused his country's manpower advantage by employing a strategy of attrition with devastating consequences. Russian forces have suffered 1.2 million casualties in 4 years, and one-third of those are estimated to have come in the last year alone.

A recent report from the Center for Strategic and International Studies observes:

No major power has suffered anywhere near these numbers of casualties or fatalities in any war since World War II.

As these casualties mount, the monetary cost to lure new recruits is increasing. Russian regions are increasing their signing bonuses for contract soldiers, indicating that Russian recruitment is beginning to struggle to meet its goals. From the war's beginning, when Putin was resorting to mobilizing convicts, now, average Russians do not want to fight in this war.

Russia's economy has been degraded as the war has been prolonged. The move to impose sanctions on Russian's energy companies last year—which should have happened earlier in the war—has made it more difficult to export oil, the foundation of the Kremlin's budget. Moscow has had to offer buyers steep discounts of 25 to 30 percent below market value, increasing their budget deficit to 2.5 percent of GDP.

Sustaining Putin's war depends upon China's continued support. Beijing purchases nearly half of Russia's crude exports and provides critical dual-use technologies for Russian materiel.

Putin is overseeing a war effort that is succeeding in feet rather than miles, and it is coming at considerable cost to the future of his country. This is no time to permit him to claim a victory, either on the battlefield or at the negotiating table. We must share the resolve of Ukrainian people and make certain that Putin's invasion remains the blunder it was when it started 4 years ago.

While both Washington and Brussels have engaged in public debate, Putin should not mistake that debate for disengagement. The United States continues—continues—to provide substantial military and intelligence support, and our allies have increased their contributions. There must be no doubt in Moscow about our enduring commitment to Ukraine. The U.S. expanded intelligence sharing last October to assist Ukraine in targeting energy infrastructure deep inside Russia, and the United States lifted range limitations on certain weapons. Likewise, our European allies have stepped up to assume some of the financial support for the war, most recently agreeing to a \$105 billion loan for Ukraine.

There is much more I believe both sides of the Atlantic can do to assist Ukraine. I called for providing Toma-

hawk missiles last summer, and the European Union should use Russian foreign reserves to help pay for Ukraine's war effort. Congress should enact sanctions to discourage the purchase of Russian oil.

Last March, before the Senate Intelligence Committee, CIA Director JOHN RATCLIFFE told me:

I want to say that with regard to the Ukrainian resistance, the Ukrainian people and the Ukrainian military have been underestimated for a period of several years. . . . I'm convinced that they will fight with their bare hands if they have to.

Ukrainians are coming out of the most difficult winter yet, with temperatures at their most frigid of the war, and Russian bombing campaigns aimed at energy infrastructure have taken a toll. Instead of being convinced to sue for peace on Putin's terms, Ukrainians remain unwavering in their commitment to remain an independent and sovereign nation. We must commit to share in their resolve. I say that again. We must commit to share in their resolve and support the Ukrainian people in their fight for freedom.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, later this evening, we are going to hear from Trump in the State of the Union Address. In a little more than a year, President Trump and Republican majorities in Congress have delivered on our promises to the American people, from a secure border to more money in Americans' pockets. As the American people will hear tonight, we are just getting started.

The Department of Homeland Security has been shut down for 11 days now. It is the second time in less than 6 months the Democrats have needlessly shut down all or part of the Federal Government. Senators will have another opportunity today to vote to proceed to the Department of Homeland Security funding bill. Democrats have previously opposed getting on this funding bill. They opposed a continuing resolution that would have temporarily funded Homeland Security Agencies while negotiations continued on immigration enforcement. All signs suggest that our Democrat colleagues will once again vote against moving to DHS funding this afternoon.

The Department of Homeland Security houses a number of critical Agencies, and shutting down this Department has real consequences. Democrats are threatening the work of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, of the TSA, of key cyber security offices. FEMA training centers, like the National Fire Academy in Maryland, are closed. Roughly 45,000 Americans who are in training at one of these centers can't go to class right now.

We are hosting the World Cup in a few months, and some security training for that event is on hold right now because of the shutdown.

Civilian Coast Guard employees won't get a full paycheck at the end of this week, and thousands more Americans, from disaster response personnel at FEMA to TSA agents, are worried about potentially missing pay as soon as next week.

As I said, this is the second time in 6 months the Democrats have shut down all or part of the Federal Government.

The Department of Homeland Security employs thousands of Americans. We should want the most talented and most dedicated individuals serving in these roles. But when these Americans and their families are routinely used as political pawns, morale suffers. Think of what that means for these Agencies' ability to recruit and retain the very best. But I guess none of that matters to Democrats.

Republicans want to get to an agreement on Homeland Security funding. So does the White House. And we have acted in good faith throughout these negotiations. The Trump administration has taken a number of actions on its own in Minneapolis, including deploying body cameras, tailoring its mission to criminal illegal immigrants, and requiring identification for officers.

On top of those actions, the White House put forward a very serious offer to legislate reforms almost 2 weeks ago. It took Democrats 5 days to respond, and when they did respond, it was with a counteroffer that was essentially the same as their first, which raises a question, and that is, are Democrats actually interested in a solution here or are they just interested in a political issue?

There is room for compromise here but only if both sides give room. Democrats aren't doing that.

I shouldn't need to remind my Democrat colleagues that the Department of Homeland Security does critical work. Border security and immigration enforcement are one part of its mission. And it is an important mission. We need to have a secure border, and we need to deport criminal illegal immigrants.

Now, we can have a debate about how these tasks are undertaken, but we are not going to support anything that makes it impossible for law enforcement to carry out its job. We are not going to support anything that makes it more dangerous for officers to do

their jobs. Unfortunately, that is what some of the Democrats' proposals would do.

Old habits die hard, and, unfortunately, the party of "defund the police" seems to be slipping back into calls to defund law enforcement. I hope that is not the position of the Democrats' here. I hope our colleagues are actually willing to come to a solution, but if they are, it is time to show it. This shutdown is already hurting hard-working Americans and impacting efforts to preserve both public safety and national security, and it is time to end it.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Well, Mr. President, we are in for a long, tedious, and exhausting night as Donald Trump is set to deliver his fourth State of the Union.

Donald Trump said yesterday he is going to talk for a very long time tonight.

God help us.

I am not sure what he thinks there is to celebrate, because America, in short, is a mess thanks to him. American Presidents often talk about how they inherited a mess and turned things around, but in Donald Trump's case, he created a mess and then set the building on fire. High costs are still kicking Americans in the gut. Donald Trump's tariffs have unleashed chaos and confusion. ICE agents are patrolling our neighborhoods in masks like cartel thugs.

Isn't that right, Senator LEE?

Corruption is up; trust in America is down; and we still have no idea what is in the Epstein files.

If I were a Republican sitting in the House Chamber tonight, I would be squirming in my seat, praying to Heaven that the President wraps up things quickly because the American people are sick of his drivel, and the stench of his unpopularity is spreading across the Republican Party like a toxin.

Look, we know how tonight is going to work. Donald Trump will claim that everything in America is going great, but he is in a huge bubble. America is deeply unhappy with his leadership, and he will blame everyone else for all our country's troubles. He will blame Biden. He will blame the Supreme

Court. He will point the finger at everyone but himself.

Tonight, the American people will see a President whose ego does not let him see reality. And what is that reality? I will give you three words: costs, chaos, corruption. That is the reality of Trump 2.0: costs, chaos, corruption. Democrats, of course, offer something different. This year, we are going to give the American people a choice—a choice to lower costs, to end the endless cycle of chaos, and to restore some sanity to our country.

And, as we speak, I am continuing to work with my colleagues to demand Donald Trump and Republicans listen to the American people and stop ICE from terrorizing our communities. The Democrats' position on Donald Trump's brutal ICE tactics haven't changed. Republicans need to work with Democrats to rein in ICE and end the violence. I am disappointed we have not gotten their counter yet, and it is time for them to stop playing games.

Finally, while none of us are excited about tonight's Trumpian endurance test, there are at least two things I look forward to tonight: First, I will be pleased to welcome five great New Yorkers as my guests for tonight's Address—each of them here to put a real face on the consequences of the administration's chaos.

First, we will have Dani Bensky, a survivor of Jeffrey Epstein and now a leading voice demanding transparency, accountability, and justice for survivors who have been failed for far too long.

Second, I will be pleased to welcome Raiza Contreras, a mother whose son Dylan entered the U.S. legally but who was still detained by ICE. Dylan did everything right—followed the rules, showed up to his hearing—and was still arrested by ICE in the middle of a courthouse lobby, if you can believe that; and Raiza is here tonight, fighting to bring her child home. It is amazing that Americans have to come and do this.

Third, we have Gearoid Keogh, a union construction worker on the Gateway Tunnel project who lost his job thanks to President Trump's cruel decision to cut off funding to this project.

Fourth, Aleshandra Fernandes joins us, a Long Island ironworker whose offshore wind job has been thrown into limbo again and again because of Trump's irrational, stupid hatred of offshore wind.

Finally, we have Ben Pearson, a Rochester small business owner who was forced to lay off more than a quarter of his workforce—a quarter of his workforce—hard-working people; he liked to pay them; they did good work—because of Donald Trump's tariffs.

To each of my guests tonight, you make New York proud, and thank you—thank you—for being here. Your presence is the reminder America

needs of the real-life harm that Trump's agenda has done to our country.

Finally, there is one more thing I am looking forward to tonight—listening to my good friend Senator PADILLA, who will offer Democrats a Spanish language response. His story of what he went through in the past year, after being assaulted by Federal agents, and his larger story of how his family built something of themselves in this country is inspiring and admirable. I thank Senator PADILLA.

I thank Governor Spanberger as well, and I thank all Democrats who will spend time tonight correcting the lies that will waft out of the House Chamber from Donald Trump's mouth tonight. On Ukraine, 4 years ago the tanks, missiles, and infantry rolled in from Russian territory onto Ukrainian soil. Today my colleagues and I pause to honor the memory of the courageous dead in Ukraine. We reaffirm that the Senate and the American people stand with the Ukrainian people, even if our President's courage and resolve might waiver.

Today, I am disgusted that the United States made a mockery of itself for the whole world to see by voting to abstain from a resolution in the United States on a peaceful and just end to this war. Can you believe it? Putin brutally invades Ukraine, the whole world sees it and knows it, and Donald Trump, out of obeisance, sucking up to Putin, abstains from a resolution simply on a peaceful and just end to this war. What, does Donald Trump want the war to continue and more people to die? I guess so.

On this anniversary of the Ukrainian war, it is shameful that this administration has chosen to mark it by turning its back on the Ukrainian people at the UN. Let's be clear: Any peace that Donald Trump gives into, any peace made on Putin's terms, will be no peace at all. It would rather be a reward for Putin for his belligerence, a reward that autocrats around the world—including here at home—will take note of.

When I was majority leader, I led this Chamber to pass historic defense packages to help Ukraine defend themselves, and 4 years later, despite all the loss and bloodshed the people of Ukraine have endured, they have held the line, but the conflict, sadly, is far from an end.

American support remains indispensable and perhaps the most important factor to determine the outcome of this awful conflict.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California is recognized.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. President, I request 30 minutes to address the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. President, tonight, just down the hall, the President will

stand before Congress and the American people. He will paint a picture of strength, prosperity, and national renewal. He will claim credit for successes he did not achieve and deny responsibility for crises that he created. He will tell us that America has never been greater, but the American people deserve the truth. And the truth is that over the past year, we have not moved closer to forming a more perfect Union. Tragically, it is quite the opposite. Our disunion has only grown.

Our Founders understood something when they chose the words "a more perfect Union." They didn't contemplate achieving perfection. They envisioned something more realistic, more achievable—the pursuit of a more perfect Union, a constant effort to push the country forward, a grinding, slow and sometimes painful process. They recognized that America is not a finished product but a beautiful, ongoing experiment in self-governance that requires hard work and constant perseverance.

For 250 years, through wars and depressions, through slavery and Jim Crow, through periods of bitter division and hard-won reconciliation, Americans have honored our Founders' intention and moved the Nation forward. We have stumbled; we have fallen short; and at times, we have failed to live up to our promise. But we have always eventually bent the arc of our own national story towards justice, towards fairness, and towards a more perfect Union.

And yet from the moment he inflicted himself on our public life, Donald Trump has done everything possible to reverse that progress. By design, it appears, by virtue of the product of some defect of character perhaps, but in every way he can and every moment he can, he has sought to divide us. Today, in fewer words than the President will use tonight, I want to talk about some of the ways that President Trump has not only failed to advance our Union, but done so much to bring about our disunion.

Now, I have served in the Capitol for over two decades, and I have visited the capitols of our friends and some of our adversaries across the world. I have seen firsthand that, notwithstanding our possession of the strongest and most courageous military in the world, America's greatest strategic asset is not the might of our arms or size of our aircraft carriers; it is the strength of the alliances we have around the world.

The web of partnerships we built after World War II, NATO, our Pacific alliances, our hemispheric relationships, they are force multipliers. They help us keep the peace. They are the reason that a nation of 340 million people can project power and values across a globe of more than 8 billion. Yet, tragically, President Trump has systematically taken apart the advantage these allies give us. He has insulted the leaders of Canada, Germany, France, and the United Kingdom—our closest

democratic allies—not to mention countries like Denmark.

He has questioned whether America would defend NATO members under article V, the collective defense provision that has kept most of Europe peaceful for 75 years. He has treated longstanding security commitments as protection rackets, demanding payment as if our allies were vassal states rather than partners. And he has done all this while praising Viktor Orban, Vladimir Putin, Xi Jinping, and other dictators. The result? Our allies don't trust us, and our most powerful adversaries don't fear us, and that makes America less safe.

When the next crisis comes—and it will come, and it may even be precipitated by this President—we will find ourselves isolated in ways that would have been unthinkable just a few years ago. This weakens and endangers our Union. But the power of our Union isn't just about the strength of our military or our ties abroad. It is also about the strength of our intellect here at home.

I find myself thinking about an exchange from the television series on Chernobyl. A scientist tells a Soviet bureaucrat:

Every lie we tell incurs a debt to the truth. Sooner or later, that debt is paid.

This administration has run up a debt to the truth that will take generations to repay.

Over the last several years, the President of the United States suggested people inject bleach to cure COVID, that windmills cause cancer, that climate change is a hoax invented by China, that Tylenol use in pregnancy causes autism—the list goes on and on. And over this past year, we have seen systematic attacks on scientists at CDC, at NOAA, the EPA, and the NIH—career professionals driven from public service for the crime of publishing findings the President doesn't like, DOGE'd for speaking truth to power, for respecting facts and science, or simply—seemingly and perversely in this cruelest of administrations—fired for the apparent fun of it.

We have seen university researchers lose Federal funding, not because their work lacks merit, but because their conclusions contradict preferred political narratives.

We have seen attacks on vaccines and changes to our public health system that have caused needless outbreaks of disease. This President has most assuredly not made America great again, but he has managed to make measles great again. And when experts gently try to correct these falsehoods, they are attacked, doxed, and threatened. This is part of a deliberate cultivation of ignorance as a political strategy.

When you undermine expertise, when you treat all opinions as equally valid regardless of evidence, when you replace scientists with sycophants, you make people vulnerable to con artists and demagogues. You make democracy itself impossible because democracy requires an informed citizenry capable of distinguishing truth from lies.

The debt to the truth will come due. And when it does, our country will pay an enormous price.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. President, just more than a year ago, Los Angeles County faced one of the most destructive disasters in the Nation's history. Entire neighborhoods torched and torn apart by wildfires, the magnitude of which we haven't seen on suburban streets of the Southland. The loss of loved ones, of homes, of businesses, the precious memories—all gone in mere moments—still weigh heavy upon us.

Since then, I have talked to survivors of those fires who have gone on to rebuild, or tried to, only to see their insurance coverage dropped. With worsening drought and prolonged dry seasons, insurance companies are refusing to cover the same homes and businesses they covered just a few years ago. They are seeing what we are seeing; that this may not be the last of these tragedies in our hills in our lifetimes. This is the climate crisis in human terms, and this administration's response has been to make it catastrophically worse.

President Trump has rolled back fuel efficiency standards, withdrawn from international climate agreements, opened pristine Federal lands to more drilling, and—as we saw last week's repeal of what is known as the endangerment finding—gutted the EPA's authority to regulate carbon emissions.

A New York Times headline last month actually read "E.P.A. to Stop Considering Lives Saved When Setting Rules on Air Pollution." It sounds like parody but, sadly, these destructive efforts are real. All of this while summers grow hotter, some winters grow colder, wildfires rage, hurricanes intensify, and insurance markets collapse. The President calls this energy dominance, but dominance over what? the laws of physics? the carbon cycle?

Here is what has actually happened: We are sacrificing long-term prosperity for short-term profit. We are driving up costs for American families through higher insurance premiums, higher food prices, and higher disaster recovery expenses.

We are ceding global leadership in clean energy and technology—the defining economic opportunity of the 21st century—to China and to Europe. And we are doing it all while pretending that the house isn't on fire. Angelinos know better, so do millions of Americans living through droughts, floods, and heat waves that would have been impossible a generation ago. The climate doesn't care about your politics. The debt comes due whether you believe it or not.

Our change in climate is not the only threat our communities face in Donald Trump's America. In the aftermath of January 6, 2021, there was a brief moment when Americans of all political

persuasions condemned political violence. The attack on the Capitol was so brazen, so shocking, that even some of the President's allies momentarily found their moral bearings and said "count me out." That moment has clearly passed.

We now have a President who has pardoned January 6 rioters, calling them patriots, and brought them into his administration, including one caught shouting "kill them" at police officers that day.

We have an administration that treats White nationalist extremism as a core competency in the hiring process and an administration that focuses Federal law enforcement resources, not on violent offenders but on prosecuting political opponents, unleashing masked ICE agents on innocent people, and deporting children and grandmothers.

At the same time, we have seen the gutting of public health infrastructure that was built over decades to protect Americans from pandemics. We have seen emergency preparedness budgets slashed and the people who ran them driven out of government.

The message is clear: If you are a violent extremist who supports the President, you get a pardon, but if you are a public health official who takes your job seriously, you get a pink slip.

This makes Americans less safe from terrorism, from disease, from domestic threats that don't care about party affiliation. Security and attacks against police officers aren't partisan issues—at least they shouldn't be. But when the President treats loyalty as more important than competence, when he treats protection as something selectively offered to supporters rather than universally provided to the people, he fundamentally misunderstands the first duty of government. And the need to protect the public is certainly not the only thing he misunderstands.

From the birth of our Nation, our Founders were obsessed with preventing tyranny and the emergence of another King, another despot. They created checks and balances, separation of powers, an independent judiciary. They understood that the greatest threat to liberty wasn't foreign invasion; it was the concentration of power in the hands of one person or faction.

This President has systematically dismantled these safeguards in his second term. The Justice Department is supposed to be independent, pursuing justice without fear or favor, but under this administration, it has become an instrument of Presidential revenge, a sword and shield for the President launching investigations of critics and dropping cases against allies.

His Justice Department—and I say "his" because it no longer represents the public or justice but is run by his former criminal defense lawyers and represents only his personal interests—sought to indict two of my Senate colleagues for stating the plain truth that members of the military may refuse an illegal order. Indeed, they have a duty

to do so. Their oath, after all, is to the Constitution, not to the person of the President.

It is difficult to overstate what an abuse of power the pursuit of that indictment represents. The effort to jail one's opposition is a hallmark of dictatorship, not democracy.

Career civil servants from all across the Federal Government—people who have served under both Republican and Democratic administrations with professionalism and integrity—are being purged for insufficient loyalty to the person of the President. Inspectors general who uncover wrongdoing and expose corruption are fired; whistleblowers, intimidated. We are witnessing the conversion of the Federal Government from a public trust into a personal fiefdom.

Here is the thing that should terrify every American regardless of party: Once these norms are broken, they are immensely difficult to restore. Once you establish that a President can use the Justice Department to punish enemies, every future President will face that temptation—pressure, even. Once you establish that civil servants must demonstrate personal loyalty rather than professional competence, you have replaced the rule of law with the rule of one.

The Founders warned us about this. Their pursuit of a more perfect Union was dependent upon a calculated departure from consolidated power. Now we are living the fears of our Founders and seeing that threat expand rapidly.

With the President's weaponization of our institutions comes a parallel and equally disturbing trend. America has always had a secret weapon in global competition. We attract the best and the brightest from around the world. Nobel Prize winners, startup founders, groundbreaking researchers—they come here because America offers something unique: freedom, funding, and the belief in science. The ultimate intellectual melting pot. That is being attacked on a daily basis.

This administration has slashed funding for the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, and the Department of Energy's research programs. It has attacked universities as "indoctrination centers." It has made it harder for foreign students to get visas or stay after graduation and start a business.

I have spoken with researchers at Caltech, UCLA, Stanford—you name it—world-class institutions in my State. They tell me the same story: Graduate students from abroad are choosing to study in Europe or Canada, even China. Postdocs are leaving. Even American-born scientists are considering opportunities elsewhere because they can't count on research funding, because they are tired of political attacks, because they don't want to work in an environment where basic facts are treated with partisan hostility. America is now, for the first time, losing the race for talent, and in a knowledge economy, talent is everything.

China isn't attacking its scientists. Europe isn't defunding its research universities. They are doing the opposite because they understand what this administration apparently doesn't: The future belongs to nations that invest in intellectual and creative talent, not to the nations that drive it away.

When the next breakthrough treatments, the next transformative technologies, the next generation of innovation comes from Shanghai or Berlin instead of San Francisco or Boston, we will know why and who is responsible.

In 1783, George Washington wrote:

For if Men are to be precluded from offering their Sentiments on a matter, which may involve the most serious and alarming consequences, that can invite the consideration of Mankind, reason is of no use to us; the freedom of Speech may be taken away, and, dumb and silent we may be led, like sheep, to the Slaughter.

Washington understood that the rule of law, the principle that no one—not even the President—is above the law is fundamentally what separates democracy from despotism.

President Trump has spent his whole career evading the rule of law. He has refused to comply with congressional subpoenas. He has ignored court orders. He has pardoned conspirators and dangled pardons in brazen attempts at witness tampering. He has attacked judges who rule against him as “biased” or “partisan.” He has called for the prosecution of political opponents without evidence. He has treated the justice system not as a neutral arbiter but as a weapon to be captured and wielded. And, increasingly, he is succeeding.

We have seen this partisan and dangerous Supreme Court grant Presidents sweeping immunity from prosecution. We have seen judges appointed based on loyalty rather than jurisprudence. We have seen the normalization of conduct that in any previous administration would have been utterly disqualifying.

After 2½ centuries of American life, we came to believe that the rule of law was so well entrenched in this country as to be sacrosanct, beyond reproach or repeal. We were wrong. It depends on norms; on shame, even; on the willingness of people in power to accept limits on that power. When those restraints disappear, when corruption becomes routine and impunity becomes expected, the Republic is in deep danger.

The health of our democracy is at risk, but so, too, is the health of our Nation.

Let me tell you about a constituent of mine. Her name is Catherine. She wrote to me last November. She shared that she is a retired teacher, but earlier in her career, when she was working, she had trouble getting health insurance because she had a preexisting condition that made insurance unobtainable for her until we passed the Affordable Care Act. The ACA changed that. It literally saved her life.

Now the President is trying to dismantle the ACA again. The “Big Ugly

Bill” repealed its tax credits and took a trillion dollars from Medicaid to give the rich in this country a tax cut. He has systematically attacked the healthcare system Americans rely on to give more tax breaks for corporations, and all the while he has driven up costs so that he can claim the system is broken and then privatize it. It is not hard to see.

The pattern with this administration is to promise relief but deliver crisis, promise lower costs but drive them up, promise to protect people then cut their care. But those broken promises will also mean shattered families, deeper uncertainty, and an America that is sicker and poorer.

This is what is happening to Catherine right now. She is on a fixed income—roughly \$45,000 a year—with a house payment and two kids in college. Because of the “Big Ugly Bill’s” failure to extend the ACA tax credit, her premiums have gone up \$800 a month this year—nearly \$10,000 over the course of the year—almost a quarter of her annual income. She has relied on the good will of her neighbors and of her local hospital, but her words still ring in my ear:

I am not going to make do. I don't know what I'm going to do.

In Trump's America, the economy of opportunity is only for those on the inside—the billionaires and big corporations that can afford to donate to Donald Trump's ballroom, buy his meme coins, or pay a million dollars to stand at his side while he takes the oath of office or celebrates the 250th anniversary of the Nation. And the rest? Let them eat the cost of mounting tariffs.

Remember when Trump said his tariff wars were going to be easy to win? Well, how is that working out for us? Tariffs, which are taxes on American consumers, not on foreign countries, have driven up the cost of everything, from groceries to electronics. Retaliatory tariffs from other countries have devastated American farmers and manufacturers. And he is fighting a Court decision that should force him to pay those taxes back to the people. Business investment has stalled because no one knows what the rules will be from one month to the next. The President promised to bring down inflation. Instead, his tariffs have made it worse.

Of course, it is not just the tariffs. Tax cuts to the rich people and corporations have exploded the deficit. Regulatory rollbacks have boosted corporate profits but created long-term risks. And attacks on the Federal Reserve's independence have undermined the Nation's economy and driven prices even higher.

Trump promised to bring back manufacturing jobs. We have lost them. He promised to bring down inflation. It has gone up. He promised to reduce the trade deficit. It has reached a record high.

Americans literally cannot afford 3 more years of this, which brings me to the heart of the matter, the No. 1 way

President Trump has worsened the state of our Union. He has taken a diverse, complicated, and sometimes fractious country—which has always been diverse, complicated, and sometimes fractious—and instead of trying to unite it, he has done more than anyone else in our history to break it apart. He governs through fear and scapegoating. Immigrants are “invaders.” Vulnerable kids are a “lie.” Political opponents are “enemies from within.” The media is “fake news.” Anyone who disagrees with him is a traitor.

Think about what this has meant for all of us, what it has meant for you. There are family members who are no longer speaking to one another, friendships that have ended. Communities are turning inward or turning on each other. The basic trust that allows democracy to function—the assumption that even when we disagree, we share certain values and commitments—is coming apart.

I have been in public service long enough to remember when Democrats and Republicans could team up with each other without suffering political attack, when we could disagree without questioning each other's patriotism or humanity, when we could make progress on matters big and small. That world has grown very small indeed, in no small part because of this President.

The great tragedy, of course, is that America has real challenges that require real solutions. The cost of everyday life, housing and healthcare, education and energy costs, infrastructure and the imminent challenges of the climate crisis—these are hard problems. Reasonable people can disagree about how to solve them, but we can't solve them or prepare for the problems of the future if we can't talk to each other. We can't solve them if we treat politics as warfare rather than negotiation. We can't solve them if the President of the United States purports to love America but spends all of his time attacking Americans.

“A house divided against itself cannot stand.” Lincoln said that. It was true then; it is true now.

So, tonight, President Trump will deliver his State of the Union Address. He will claim that America is strong, prosperous, and united, but, sadly, he has made us weaker abroad, more divided at home, less trusted, less prosperous, less safe, and less free than when he took office. The state of our Union now is not strong, thanks to him. It is fragile—deeply, deeply fragile.

But we cannot forget that fragility is not the same thing as frailty. We have been broken before and found ways to mend ourselves. We have lost our way before and found somehow the courage to chart a new course. We have forgotten our highest ideals before and yet always eventually remembered who we are.

We cannot think of “a more perfect Union” as a destination. “A more perfect Union” is a direction. It is the

choice we make generation after generation to see each other not as enemies but as friends, as partners in the boldest experiment in democracy the world has ever known. It is the work of building longer bridges instead of higher walls between parties, between communities, between the America we are and the America we could be. It is the recognition that our Nation's diversity isn't our weakness; it is the very source of our strength, our creativity, our resilience.

"A more perfect Union" means families who don't go bankrupt because someone got sick. It means kids who can breathe clean air and inherit a livable planet. It means immigrants being welcomed for their contributions, not vilified for their origins. It means learning from our history and charting a more equitable course for the future. It means justice that applies equally to the powerful and the powerless. It means scientists free to pursue truth without fear. It means alliances that multiply our influence instead of isolation that diminishes it. It means an America where disagreement doesn't mean demonization, where debate doesn't mean destruction, where we can be fierce advocates for our beliefs while still recognizing the humanity in those who disagree.

None of that is easy, and if the last 10 years of American life are any evidence, none of that is guaranteed. The Constitution gives us the tools, but we have to do the job. The Founders lit the flame, but we have to keep it burning. They started the work, and we must continue it.

Tonight, the President will try to convince you that everything is fine. I am asking you to trust your own eyes, to trust your own experience, to trust the evidence, and then I am asking you to trust something else: your own power—the power to organize, to vote, to speak truth, to run for office, to hold leaders accountable; the power to look at what we have lost and decide we are going to fight with everything we have to get it back.

Because a more perfect Union doesn't depend on any one person or President, as much as he may want it to. It depends on teachers who refuse to teach lies. It depends on students who refuse to abandon their dreams. It depends on journalists who refuse to stop asking questions, on scientists who refuse to abandon facts, on neighbors who refuse to turn against each other, on Americans who refuse to accept that this is as good as it gets. It depends on you, on me—every single one of us.

The work is hard. The progress is slow. The discouragement is real. But so is the possibility. So is the promise. So is the extraordinary, improbable, beautiful experiment that is America if we have the courage to believe in it again and the determination to make it real. The pursuit of a more perfect Union has to continue. It must, and it continues with us.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

WAIVING QUORUM CALL

Mr. CURTIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum call with respect to the cloture motion on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 311, H.R. 7147.

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

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The 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. 311, H.R. 7147, a bill making further consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2026, and for other purposes.

John Thune, John Barrasso, John R. Curtis, Bill Hagerty, Tim Sheehy, Thom Tillis, Tom Cotton, Joni Ernst, Jim Banks, Markwayne Mullin, Tommy Tuberville, Steve Daines, Josh Hawley, Tim Scott of South Carolina, Jon Husted, Pete Ricketts, Susan M. Collins.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the mandatory quorum call under rule XXII has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to proceed to H.R. 7147, a bill making further consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2026, 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 Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL), and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) are necessarily absent.

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

[Rollcall Vote No. 39 Leg.]

YEAS—50

Banks	Cramer	Hoeven
Barrasso	Crapo	Husted
Blackburn	Cruz	Hyde-Smith
Boozman	Curtis	Johnson
Britt	Daines	Justice
Budd	Ernst	Kennedy
Capito	Fetterman	Lankford
Cassidy	Graham	Lee
Collins	Grassley	Lummis
Cornyn	Hagerty	Marshall
Cotton	Hawley	McConnell

McCormick	Ricketts	Sheehy
Moody	Risch	Sullivan
Moran	Rounds	Tuberville
Moreno	Schmitt	Wicker
Mullin	Scott (FL)	Young
Murkowski	Scott (SC)	

NAYS—45

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

NOT VOTING—5

Fischer	Paul	Whitehouse
Hassan	Tillis	

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CURTIS). On this vote, the yeas are 50, the nays are 45.

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

The motion was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. 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

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 651.

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 executive clerk read the nomination of Ryan McCormack, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of Transportation for Policy.

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 executive 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. 651, Ryan McCormack, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of Transportation for Policy.

John Thune, Katie Boyd Britt, Jim Banks, John Barrasso, John R. Curtis, Tim Scott of South Carolina, Kevin Cramer, Joni Ernst, Pete Ricketts, Bernie Moreno, Rick Scott of Florida, Markwayne Mullin, Mike Crapo, Ted Budd, Roger F. Wicker, James Lankford, Chuck Grassley.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

TRIBUTE TO RALPH M. OAKLEY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, in 1993, Quincy, IL, experienced the worst flooding in the Gem City's history. Over a span of a few short weeks, thousands of acres of farmland were covered with multiple feet of water. Businesses and livelihoods became submerged, and Illinoisans were in desperate need of disaster relief. And before the era of smartphones and social media, there was a time when broadcast stations were many people's only source for local news. For Quincy, that station was WGEM-TV.

Owned by the Oakley family, who at the time had more than five generations in the news industry, WGEM provided nonstop coverage of the floods across west central Illinois. WGEM told families where to go for shelter, informed concerned citizens of how they could help, and dispelled rumors that undermined disaster response. For more than 600 straight hours, WGEM was in the eye of the storm, giving Illinoisans the information they needed to stay safe. Ralph Oakley, station vice president and general manager, worked to ensure the station spared no expense to cover the flood. WGEM, without concern for ad sales or commercial revenues, showed up for its community in its time of need. On March 3, the National Association of Broadcasters will be awarding Ralph with the Chuck Sherman Television Leadership Award in recognition of his contributions to his community and local broadcasting. I can think of no better recipient for such an honor than Ralph Oakley.

While working in the broadcast industry is the dream of so many, for Ralph it was destiny. Since 1891, four generations of Oakleys before him had managed the various Quincy newspapers and television stations. Thomas, Ralph's father, was president and CEO of Quincy Newspapers, Inc., and worked diligently to bring the company's papers and channels to more homes across Illinois. In 1977, when he was just 21 years old and still pursuing a degree at Quincy University, then known as Quincy College, Ralph joined the family business. He learned the ropes at Quincy's own WGEM AM-FM-TV before traveling to Indiana and West Virginia to work at QNI's various stations.

But Ralph would not stay away for long. By 1993, he moved back to Quincy and was promoted to vice president and chief operating officer of QNI's Broadcast Division. He continued to rise through the ranks of QNI, eventually becoming president and CEO of the

company in 2009, after his father's retirement. As he thrived at QNI, Ralph also became involved in national broadcasting advocacy. He served as chairman of the Illinois Broadcasters Association and as a board member of the National Association of Broadcasters—working to ensure Americans in any city, town, or county had access to the emergency alerts, educational content, and community news that broadcasting provides. While Ralph has since retired from QNI following its sale in 2021, he remains involved in broadcasting, owning a station that serves Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

Ralph's passion for broadcasting is only matched by his commitment to Quincy, carrying on his father's advocacy for development in western and central Illinois. In 1997, Ralph led the establishment of the Community Foundation with one simple goal: to make it possible for "anyone and everyone to realize their philanthropic wishes." For 29 years, the Community Foundation has raised more than \$10 million for various nonprofits in west central Illinois and northeast Missouri. Organizations ranging from Quincy's own Blessing Hospital to the Quincy Symphony Orchestra have received generous support from the Community Foundation, allowing them to continue their great work in service of their community. In 2022, the Community Foundation celebrated its 25th anniversary, and in honor of this milestone, Ralph donated \$2 million to establish the Ralph Oakley Family Fund, cementing his support for families and communities across Illinois for years to come.

Ralph's philanthropy for Quincy and the surrounding community extends beyond the Community Foundation. He served on the boards of both the Quincy Area Chamber of Commerce and the Quincy Public Schools Foundation and chaired the United Way of Adams County's annual campaign. Ralph also continues to support his alma mater Quincy University, after serving as chairman of the university's board of trustees from 1999 to 2004. In 2021, Ralph and the Oakley family made the largest contribution in the university's history to create new scholarships, classrooms, and programs. Quincy University is the lifeblood of the Gem City, and the Oakley family donation will help ensure that it remains ready and able to support the region for generations to come.

Ralph's legacy can be felt in the broadcasting industry and across Illinois. His work both in and outside of the studio makes him well deserving of the Chuck Sherman Television Leadership Award. I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to my friend Ralph on this accomplishment and thank him for all he has done in service to his community.

225TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TOWN OF LEEDS

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, in 1801, a small town nestled between Androscoggin Lake and River was incorporated and named after Leeds, England, the ancestral home of the first settlers Thomas and Roger Stinchfield. Today, it is an honor to join the people of Leeds, ME, in celebrating the 225th anniversary of a community that is a beautiful place to live, work, and raise a family.

Leeds, initially part of the Littleborough Plantation, was settled as early as the 1780s, with fertile land and plentiful water nourishing the first families. As Leeds developed, so did agriculture and small-scale manufacturing that proved to be not only self-sufficient but also the backbone of its economy. By the mid-19th century, improved roads connected Leeds to other surrounding communities that made it a center for agriculture and, eventually, recreation. Today, Leeds' natural beauty has led to the rise of boating and fishing on Androscoggin Lake, turning quaint farmstands into a seasonal retreat in central Maine.

The proud history of Leeds is etched in stone atop Monument Hill, where the Civil War Peace Monument stands as a tribute to the town's extraordinary service. Erected by the distinguished Howard brothers in 1895, this monument honors the 161 local soldiers and sailors who served in the American Civil War, in which Leeds had the highest per capita enlistment of any town in Maine. Major General Oliver Otis Howard's leadership shaped the Nation's path toward emancipation, making his impact felt today at Howard University, which he founded. The Howard brothers' commitment to freedom spanned beyond the battlefield by bringing escaped slave George Washington "Wash" Kemp, who served in the Union Army alongside both Howard brothers, back to Leeds, making it his eventual home.

Another fascinating example of Leeds' dedication to public service can be seen in the Curtis Homestead Conservation Area. The 360-acre property that once served as the home of Maine Governor Kenneth M. Curtis features remnants of a farmhouse and barn built in the 1840s, offering visitors a glimpse into life in Leeds during the 19th century.

Maine is known as Vacationland, and Leeds is one reason why. With water for recreation, nature preserves for walking and hiking, and a rich history, there is always something to explore.

The celebration of Leeds' landmark anniversary is not merely about the passage of time; it is about resilience, service, and the enduring strength of community. We honor the people of Leeds who stood together in times of war, worked together to build a thriving town, and created a legacy that spans more than two centuries. Their effort and dedication ensure that Leeds has a bright future.

TRIBUTE TO DR. MARSHALL
SCHREEDER

Mrs. BRITT. Mr. President, I am honored to recognize Dr. Marshall Schreeder, a distinguished physician, researcher, and community leader whose lifelong dedication to medicine has profoundly strengthened healthcare in the State of Alabama and beyond.

A native of Atlanta, GA, Dr. Schreeder has practiced medicine in Huntsville since 1979, bringing with him an exceptional blend of engineering rigor, clinical excellence, and public health insight. He completed his undergraduate education in industrial and systems engineering at the Georgia Institute of Technology, an early foundation that would later shape his innovative approach to patient care and health systems. Dr. Schreeder earned both his masters of public health degree and his doctor of medicine from Tulane University, followed by an internship and residency in internal medicine at Emory University Affiliated Hospitals. He then served our Nation as a medical epidemiologist with the Centers for Disease Control, applying his expertise to population health and disease prevention.

Dr. Schreeder continued his advanced medical training in Alabama, completing a fellowship in hematology and medical oncology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. He is board certified in internal medicine and medical oncology and has authored more than 30 peer-reviewed research papers and articles addressing viral hepatitis, liver cancer, and lung cancer. He is also certified by the Foundation for the Accreditation of Cellular Therapy as a qualified bone marrow transplant physician, reflecting the depth and breadth of his clinical expertise.

Throughout his career, Dr. Schreeder has been a respected leader within the medical profession. He has served as president of the Alabama Society of Clinical Oncology and as president of the Medical Staff of the Huntsville Hospital System. He currently serves as chairman of the cancer committee and as a clinical associate professor of medicine at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, mentoring future generations of physicians while advancing the standards of cancer care.

As the founder and a key figure of Clearview Cancer Institute, Dr. Schreeder is widely credited with re-engineering patient-centered oncology care, driving the institute's growth, and establishing high-quality community oncology services throughout north Alabama. His vision has ensured that patients can receive advanced, compassionate cancer care close to home. In 2014, he further demonstrated his collaborative leadership by co-founding the Southeast Lung Alliance, which has successfully coordinated lung cancer screening and care among community practices.

Dr. Schreeder's commitment to the community extends well beyond clin-

ical practice. In May 2006, he cofounded the Russell Hill Cancer Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving health in north Alabama through support of innovative cancer research, education programs, and direct patient assistance. Since 2011, the foundation has contributed more than \$5.1 million to the cancer community, and Dr. Schreeder continues to serve on its board of directors. In addition, he serves as medical director of research at Clearview Cancer Institute and has delivered numerous national and State presentations, contributing extensively to the medical literature.

I am pleased to join my colleagues and the citizens of Alabama in expressing our deep appreciation to Dr. Marshall Schreeder for his extraordinary service, leadership, and compassion. His career exemplifies excellence in medicine, innovation in patient care, and an unwavering commitment to the well-being of his community. Dr. Schreeder stands as an outstanding physician and an exemplary American.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING THE 2026 INDUCTEES
OF THE ARKANSAS AGRICULTURE
HALL OF FAME

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize and commend the distinguished individuals selected for induction into the Arkansas Agriculture Hall of Fame Class XXXVIII.

Agriculture is the backbone of Arkansas' economy and a defining part of our State's heritage. Since the Hall of Fame's founding in 1987, nearly 200 men and women have been honored for their extraordinary contributions to The Natural State's largest industry and the communities it sustains. In addition, their achievements extend not only to Arkansas, but throughout the country. This year's inductees exemplify the innovation, stewardship, and leadership that continue to strengthen agriculture in our State and beyond.

The 2026 inductees reflect excellence across a broad range of agricultural sectors, including soybeans, rice, cotton, cattle, and forestry, as well as public service at the State and national levels.

Jim Carroll III of Moro is a fourth-generation farmer whose leadership has helped expand global markets, advance research, and promote sustainable production for soybean growers nationwide. Through service on local and national boards, including as chair of the U.S. Soybean Board, he has played a key role in strengthening Arkansas' soybean industry while advocating for infrastructure improvements that protect valuable farmland in the Delta.

Joe Fox of Fayetteville has dedicated more than five decades to forestry, conservation, and wood products, helping balance economic growth and environmental stewardship. He led the effort to bring together industry, non-

profit, and government partners to establish Arkansas' largest conservation easement, and his service as Arkansas State Forester and president of the National Association of State Foresters speaks to the lasting extent of his impact.

Allen B. Helms, Jr., of Clarkedale has provided decades of leadership in cotton, soybeans, and ginning, shaping agricultural policy and innovation far beyond east Arkansas. A longtime leader in State and national agricultural organizations, his work has strengthened farm safety, efficiency, and competitiveness for producers across the country. He expertly championed the long-term viability of the cotton industry while supporting the farmers who sustain it.

The Honorable Blanche Lincoln, a native of Helena, devoted her career in public service to advancing the interests of Arkansas farmers and rural communities. As the first Arkansan and first woman to chair the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, she played a pivotal role in the passage and implementation of the 2008 farm bill and worked to preserve a strong safety net, expand conservation programs, and support critical irrigation projects in our state.

John Paul Pendergrass of Charleston represents six generations of Arkansas cattle producers. Under his management, Pendergrass Cattle Company has grown into one of the State's leading stocker and feeder operations, providing economic opportunity for small producers and contributing significantly to rural communities. He has also engaged in national conversations on global food security while continuing a long tradition of stewardship and innovation in Arkansas agriculture.

The late Benny Petrus of Stuttgart lived a life in service to agriculture, entrepreneurship, and public service in Arkansas County. Through the business he built and operated and his service in the Arkansas House of Representatives, he advocated innovation, conservation, and economic opportunity while working to strengthen rural communities and support the next generation of agricultural leaders.

These six individuals embody the values that define Arkansas agriculture: hard work, stewardship of the land, service to others, and a deep commitment to their communities. It is fitting that they be recognized by the Arkansas Agriculture Hall of Fame, and I extend my congratulations to each inductee and their families.●

RECOGNIZING DAYTON MEAT
PRODUCTS

• Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, as chair of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, each week I recognize an outstanding Iowa small business that exemplifies the American entrepreneurial spirit. This

week, it is my privilege to honor Dayton Meat Products of Poweshiek County, IA, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

Established in 1959 by Lawrence Dayton, Dayton Meat Products, originally known as the Malcom Locker, is one of the most respected and well-known meat processors in Iowa. From the beginning, the business embodied the values of a true family operation. Over the past 67 years, Lawrence's wife Edith and their five children all contributed to the success of the business. In 1994, the family moved to South Malcolm and built their current facility, which includes a slaughterhouse, garage, smokehouse, cutting rooms, and retail store. This custom meat-processing business now includes jerky, deer, sandwiches, homemade pies, and catering services. Today, they process more than 700 hogs and 45,000 pounds of game meat each year. Customers are welcome to bring in their own cattle, hogs, or deer and purchase through Dayton, working closely with the team to create custom cuts and smoked products.

In 1999, Lawrence retired and passed the business on to his sons Bill and David and son-in-law Mark Lang. Today, Bill Dayton and his two sons Josh and Jake continue to own and operate the business, proudly upholding Lawrence's legacy. Under their leadership and with a dedicated team of 15 employees, including two American Association of Meat Processors master meat crafters, Dayton Meat Products has earned widespread recognition for its award-winning dried beef, bacon, ham, and jerky.

Beyond their traditional services, Dayton Meat Products is known for its creativity and innovation. They are particularly recognized for their cheddar and cranberry summer sausage and their gummy bear bratwurst, which all quickly became best sellers. The business has received numerous awards at the American Association of Meat Processors—AAMP—convention, the Poweshiek County Fair, and the Iowa State Fair. Most recently, they were named the Grand Champion for semi-boneless ham at the AAMP Convention's American Cured Meat Championship. Bill Dayton is also well known throughout Malcom for sharing his knowledge with new entrepreneurs. To recognize his contributions, Bill was honored in 2012 with a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Iowa Meat Processors Association. In 2015, he was inducted into the Cured Meats Hall of Fame under the American Association of Meat Processors.

Dayton Meat Products values the importance of giving back to the community. They regularly donate to the local food bank, recognizing their products as an important commodity for those in need. They also support the local fire department and were recognized by the Grinnell Lions Club with the Ag Appreciation Day Agri-Business of the Year Award.

It is my honor to recognize Dayton Meat Products for their outstanding

contributions and presence in the Malcolm community. I look forward to their continued success and wish them the very best in the years to come.●

RECOGNIZING HEART 'N HOME

● Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, as chair of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, each week I recognize an outstanding Iowa small business that exemplifies the American entrepreneurial spirit. This week, it is my privilege to honor Heart 'n Home of Pocahontas County, IA, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

Founded in 1992, Heart 'n Home began with Julie Wurr's simple desire to create something beautiful that brought joy, comfort, and inspiration to others. After participating in 4 years of craft shows, this hobby soon grew into something much larger. Thanks to the enthusiastic encouragement of customers and family, Julie and her husband Bill transformed their garage into a small storefront, marking the official start of Heart 'n Home's journey as a local floral and gift destination.

In the early 2000s, Heart 'n Home made a pivotal move to downtown Laurens, IA, where the shop continues to thrive today. The small business has evolved over the years and grown to include entertaining and home decor, silk and dried arrangements, gourmet foods, and an ever-changing selection of unique gifts. Heart 'n Home's reputation bloomed as both a floral studio and a welcoming boutique filled with creativity and warmth.

Most recently, Heart 'n Home brought fresh floral arrangements into its lineup, further elevating the services offered. Julie specializes in couture arrangements, which are carefully crafted pieces that reflect the individual personality and story of the person receiving them.

Over 33 years, Heart 'n Home has expanded from a garage-based floral shop into a distinctive retail experience defined by artistic expression, innovation, and personal service. With a dedicated team of five employees, the store continues to adapt to changing trends and customer needs while remaining deeply rooted in the values on which it was built.

Heart 'n Home is also an active part of the local community, participating in organizations such as Pocahontas County Economic Development and Iowa State University Extension. In 2018, Heart 'n Home was named the Pocahontas County Business of the Year. Julie is also the president of the Laurens Public Library Foundation and is a part of the Laurens Chamber of Commerce.

Julie Wurr's vision has shaped Heart 'n Home into a thriving small business that not only delivers flowers and gifts, but has created meaningful, memorable experiences. Today, Heart 'n Home stands as a shining example of how creativity, dedication, and heartfelt service can transform a small,

homegrown idea into a longstanding community treasure.

It is my honor to recognize Julie Wurr and the entire Heart 'n Home team for their outstanding work and dedication to their community. I look forward to their continued success and wish them the very best in the years ahead.●

TRIBUTE TO DR. PETER B. MOYLE

● Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, I rise today to celebrate the outstanding contributions of Dr. Peter B. Moyle, a distinguished professor emeritus at the University of California, Davis. Dr. Moyle has devoted his life to understanding and conserving the unique freshwater fishes of California and the Western United States. The basis for just about everything we do to manage freshwater fishes in California can be traced back to the research and writings of Dr. Moyle and his many students.

For over five decades, Dr. Peter Moyle has been wading through the rivers, streams, floodplains, and estuaries of California. His work documenting the habitats and lives of the more than 130 species of fish that inhabit our waters—chronicled in over 250 publications and at least a dozen books—is the foundation of our understanding of California's freshwater fishes. No one has done more to teach us about this unique natural resource.

Dr. Moyle has also played a central role in not only understanding but conserving and managing California's fishes, particularly iconic species like salmon and steelhead. His work has shown us which fish are in trouble and which are prospering. And his keen understanding continues guiding efforts to restore habitat and adapt to the changing climate.

Beyond the fish themselves, Dr. Moyle's research has also played a prominent role in the ways we manage our rivers and estuaries, particularly for Federal Agencies working in California. The Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Marine Fisheries Service all rely upon Dr. Moyle's research to guide their actions in protecting native fishes and investing in habitat restorations.

But the measure of Dr. Moyle's contribution goes far beyond his outstanding research. In fact, it can be found in our most precious resource: his students, the critical human capital that California and much of the West relies on to manage freshwater fish. In his time at UC Davis, Dr. Moyle supervised more than 60 graduate students, most of whom are now pursuing successful careers of their own in academia, State and Federal agencies, and private firms. Indeed, at any gathering of experts on fishes, you will inevitably note Dr. Peter Moyle's "offspring" everywhere.

I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Dr. Peter Moyle for being

California's most consequential fish biologist, revealing to us all the wonder of the fishes that call California home, the value of conserving them, and helping us find a way forward in ensuring that they flourish for generations to come.●

RECOGNIZING THE STOCKTON SYMPHONY'S CENTENNIAL

● Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the centennial of the Stockton Symphony in Stockton, CA.

Founded in 1926 by Italian immigrant Manlio Silva, the Stockton Symphony is the third-oldest continuously operating professional orchestra in the State of California. In May of 1926, Mr. Silva assembled 20 local musicians to perform for the Stockton Musical Club, laying the foundation for a cherished and enduring cultural institution. Mr. Silva initially supported the symphony out of his own pocket, guided by a deep belief in the potential of music to enrich community life.

Over the past century, the symphony has grown from a 20-member community ensemble into a professional orchestra of metropolitan stature, drawing musical talent from across the globe. They have elevated artistic excellence in the region, expanded innovative educational programs, and achieved national recognition through high-profile composer residencies and critically acclaimed world premieres.

Throughout its history, the symphony has remained dedicated to Mr. Silva's mission of inspiring joy and building community through the power of music. Today's performers carry on his tradition of excellence as they electrify audiences and shape a vibrant and inclusive culture in the Central Valley.

As the Stockton Symphony celebrates its 100th anniversary, I commend the musicians, staff, and community whose commitment ensure its enduring success. I ask all Members to join me in honoring the centennial of the Stockton Symphony on July 1, 2026, and in recognizing a century of artistic excellence, community service, and cultural enrichment in California's Central Valley.●

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

REPORT ON THE STATE OF THE UNION DELIVERED TO A JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS ON FEBRUARY 24, 2026—PM 52

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

To the Congress of the United States:

Speaker Johnson, Vice President Vance, First Lady of the United States, Second Lady of the United States, members of Congress, and my fellow Americans:

Our Nation is back—bigger, better, richer, and stronger than ever before.

Less than 5 months from now, our country will celebrate an epic milestone in American History—the 250th Anniversary of our glorious American Independence. This July 4th, we will mark two and a half centuries of liberty and triumph, progress and freedom in the most incredible and exceptional nation ever to exist on the face of this earth—and you've seen nothing yet, because we are entering the Golden Age of America.

When I last spoke in this chamber 12 months ago, I had just inherited a nation in crisis—with a stagnant economy, inflation at record levels, a wide-open border, horrendous recruitment for military and police, rampant crime at home, and wars and chaos all over the world. But tonight, after just one year, I can say with dignity and pride that we have achieved a transformation like no one has ever seen before, and a turnaround for the ages. We will never go back to where we were just a short time ago!

Today, our border is secure, our spirit is restored, inflation is plummeting, incomes are rising fast, the economy is roaring, our enemies are scared, our military and police are stacked, and America is respected again, perhaps like never before.

After 4 years in which millions and millions of illegal aliens poured across our borders totally unvetted and unchecked, we now have the strongest and most secure border in American history. In the past 9 months, zero illegal aliens have been admitted to the United States—but we will always allow people to come in legally, people that will love our country and will work hard to maintain it. The flow of deadly fentanyl across our border is down by a record 56%. And last year, the murder rate saw its single largest decline in recorded history—the lowest number in over 125 years, in fact, substantially before my father Fred was born.

The Biden administration and its allies in Congress gave us the worst inflation in the history of our country. But in 12 months, my administration has driven core inflation down to the lowest level in more than 5 years—and in the last 3 months of 2025, it was down to 1.7%.

Gasoline, which reached a peak of over \$6 a gallon in some states under my predecessor, is now below \$2.30 a gallon in many states, in some places \$1.99—and when I visited Iowa a few weeks ago, I even saw \$1.85 a gallon. Mortgage rates are the lowest in 4 years and falling fast—and the annual cost of the typical new mortgage is down almost \$5,000 just since I took office.

Low interest rates will solve the Biden-created housing problem—while at the same time protecting the values of those people, who already own a house, that are now rich for the first time in their lives. And I'm going to keep it that way.

The stock market has set 53 all-time record highs since the election—boosting pensions, 401ks, and retirement accounts for millions and millions of Americans.

In 4 long years, the last administration got less than \$1 trillion of new investment in the United States. In 12 months, I secured commitments for more than \$18 trillion pouring in from all over the globe. Think of it, less than \$1 trillion for 4 years, versus \$18 trillion for one year. A short time ago, we were a dead country—now, we are the hottest country anywhere in the world.

As thousands of new businesses are forming, and factories, plants, and laboratories are being built, we have added 70,000 new construction jobs in just a short period. American Oil production is up by more than 600,000 barrels a day—and we just received, from our new friend and partner, Venezuela, more than 80 million barrels of oil. American natural gas production is at an all-time high, because I kept my promise to drill, baby, drill. More Americans are working today than at any time in the history of our country. And 100% of all jobs created under my administration have been in the private sector. We ended D.E.I. in America. We cut a record number of job-killing regulations—and in one year, we have lifted 2.4 million Americans off food stamps.

For all these reasons, I say tonight—Members of Congress, The State of Our Union is strong.

Our country is winning again—in fact, we're winning so much, that we don't know what to do about it. People are asking me, "Please, please, please, Mr. President, we're winning too much, we can't take it anymore. We're not used to winning in our country—until you came along, we were always losing." And I say, "No, no, you're going to win again, and you're going to win big—there's no such thing as too much winning." And to prove that point, here with us tonight is a group of winners who just made our entire nation incredibly proud—the Men's Gold Medal Olympic Hockey Team. Come on in! They beat a fantastic Canadian team in overtime—as did the American women, who will soon be coming to the White House. Congratulations, Team USA! I have never seen a goal tender play as well as goalie Connor Hellebuyck. And I think the members of this great hockey squad will be happy to hear—and I'll only do this if they agree by a vote count—that I will soon be presenting him our highest civilian honor, which we have given to many athletes over the years, the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Thank you all!

I am also pleased to say that the next time the Olympic torch is lit, it will be here in America for the 2028 Olympics in Los Angeles. And this year, we are hosting the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

But the biggest of all is America 250. This will be a year to celebrate our

country, and the heroes who have kept it free—men like Buddy Taggart. At age 17, Buddy volunteered to defend America in World War Two. Serving in the Pacific under the great General Douglas MacArthur, he fought bravely in the famous Battle of Manila, he was wounded and almost killed by enemy machine guns at Luzon, and 81 years ago this month, he liberated the largest internment camp in the Philippines. Buddy earned many honors, including a Purple Heart and a Bronze Star, came home, started a family, and tonight, he is in the gallery looking forward to July 4th, 2026—his 100th birthday. Buddy, we salute you. Please stand.

Even in times of challenge, setback, and immense heartache, the Spirit of 1776 has always shone through. It was July 4th of last year when floodwaters tore through a girls' summer camp in Central Texas, rising 26 feet in mere minutes, tragically claiming many lives. As the waters threatened to sweep her away, 11-year-old Milly Cate McClymond closed her eyes, and prayed to God. Those prayers were answered when Coast Guard rescue swimmer Scott Ruskan descended from a helicopter. It was Scott's first-ever rescue mission—and he lifted not just Milly Cate, but 164 others to safety. Tonight, Scott and Milly Cate are here together, reunited for the first time. And Petty Officer Ruskan, I'm pleased to inform you that I am now awarding you the Legion of Merit for Extraordinary Heroism.

From 1776 to today, every generation of Americans has stepped forward to defend life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for the next. Now, it is our turn. Together, we are building a nation where every child has the chance to reach higher and go farther—where government answers to the people, not the powerful—and where the interests of hardworking American Citizens are always our first and ultimate concern. That is the debt we owe to the heroes who came before us—and that is the promise we must keep to America for our 250th Year.

Last year, I urged this Congress to begin that mission by passing the largest tax cuts in American history, and our Republican Majorities delivered. All Democrats—every single one of them—voted against these massive tax cuts. They wanted tax increases. But we held strong—and with the great Big Beautiful Bill, we gave you no tax on tips, no tax on overtime, and no tax on social security for our great seniors. We also made interest on auto loans tax deductible—but only if the car is made in America.

Recently in Pennsylvania, I met Megan Hemhauser, a devoted mom who homeschools her two children during the day, while waiting tables at night—as her husband works overtime operating heavy equipment. Megan is here this evening, and she's very happy—because with No Tax on Tips, No Tax on Overtime, and our expanded child tax

credit, Megan and her husband will take home more than \$5,000 extra, cutting her tax bill in half. Megan—we are fighting for families just like yours. Thank you.

Under our bill, parents like Megan can also activate their children's brand-new Trump Accounts—tax-free investment accounts for every American child. Millions will be pre-funded courtesy of the U.S. Treasury and private individuals like Michael and Susan Dell, who have donated \$6 billion, \$250 million to fund Trump Accounts for 25 million American children, as well as others like Brad Gerstner who is donating to children in Indiana. With modest additional contributions, accounts could grow to \$100,000 or more by the time children turn 18. To make this investment in our children's future, go to TrumpAccounts.gov.

One of the primary reasons for our country's stunning economic turnaround, the biggest in history, where the Dow Jones broke 50,000 four years ahead of schedule, and the S&P hit 7,000 where it wasn't supposed to for years, were tariffs. I used these tariffs to make great deals for our country, both economically and on a national security basis. Everything was working well, countries that were ripping us off for decades are now paying us hundreds of billions of dollars a year—and yet, these countries were happy, and so were we. There was no inflation, tremendous growth, and the big story was how Donald Trump called the economy correctly, and 22 Nobel Prize winners in economics didn't, they got it completely wrong. And then, just 4 days ago, an unfortunate ruling from the United States Supreme Court came down. But the good news is that almost all countries and corporations want to keep the deal that they already made, knowing that the legal power that I, as President, have to make a new deal could be far worse for them, and therefore they will continue to work along the same successful path we had negotiated before the Supreme Court's involvement. So, despite the disappointing ruling, these powerful, country-saving, peace-protecting tariffs will remain in place under fully approved and tested alternative legal statutes, leading to a solution that will be even stronger than before. Congressional action will not be necessary. And as time goes by, I believe that tariffs, paid for by foreign countries, will, like in the past, substantially replace the modern-day system of income tax, taking a great financial burden off the people that I love. I would like to acknowledge Supreme Court Justices Clarence Thomas, Samuel Alito, and Brett Kavanaugh for having the courage and conviction to do what they knew was right. Moving forward, factories, jobs, investment, and trillions of dollars will continue pouring into the United States of America—because we finally have a president who puts America First.

For decades before I came along, we had the exact opposite. From trade to healthcare, from Energy to immigration, everything was stolen and rigged in order to drain the wealth out of the productive, hardworking people who make our country run. Under Biden and his corrupt partners in Congress and beyond, it reached a breaking point—with the Green New Scam, Open Borders, and record-setting inflation that cost the typical family \$34,000 dollars in just a speck of time.

Now, the same people in this chamber who voted for those disasters suddenly use the word affordability—knowing full well that they caused the increased prices, not us. They knew their statements were a lie. Their policies created the high prices—our policies are rapidly ending them. The price of eggs is down 60%. The cost of chicken, butter, fruit, hotels, automobiles, and rent is lower today than when I took office, and even beef is starting to come down. And soon, you will see numbers that few would think were possible to achieve.

I am also confronting one of the biggest rip-offs of our times, the crushing cost of healthcare. Since the passage of the Unaffordable Care Act, sometimes referred to as Obamacare, big insurance companies have gotten rich, with our government giving them hundreds of billions of dollars, as their stock prices soared 1,000, 1,200, 1,400, even 1,700 percent. That's why I introduced The Great Healthcare Plan—I want to stop all payments to big insurance companies, and instead give that money directly to the people, so that they can buy their own healthcare, which will be better healthcare at a lower cost.

In addition, my plan requires maximum price transparency. I did that in my first term, and the Democrats immediately terminated it with full knowledge that they were doing a very bad thing for the people.

I am also ending the wildly inflated cost of prescription drugs. Other presidents tried to do it, but they never could. They were all talk and no action. I got it done. Under my just-enacted Most Favored Nation Agreements, Americans, who have for decades paid by far the highest prices of any nation for prescription drugs, will now pay the lowest price for drugs, anywhere in the world. So, in my first year, I took prescription drugs, a very big part of healthcare, from the highest price in the entire world to the lowest. The result is price differences of 300, 400, 500, 600 percent—all available right now at a new website, TrumpRX.gov. Here tonight is the very first customer ever to get the discount—Catherine Rayner. For 5 years, she and her husband have struggled with infertility, and they turned to I.V.F. One drug has been costing Catherine \$4,000 dollars per purchase. But a few weeks ago, she logged onto the Trump RX website, and got that same drug for just \$500 dollars—a reduction of \$3,500 dollars.

Catherine, we are all praying for you—you're going to be a great mom. Now, I am calling on Congress to codify my Most Favored Nation program into law.

Many Americans are also concerned that energy demand from A.I. data centers could unfairly drive up their electric utility bills. Tonight, I am pleased to announce that I have negotiated the new "Rate Payer Protection Pledge". We are telling the major tech companies that they have the obligation to provide for their own power needs, so that no one's prices will go up, and in many cases, prices will go down for the community, substantially. This is a unique strategy never used in this country before—it will ensure the companies' ability to get electricity, while at the same time lowering prices for you.

Another pillar of the American Dream that has been under attack is home ownership. With us tonight is Raysall Wiggins, a mom of two from Houston. She placed bids on 20 homes, and lost all those bids to gigantic investment firms that bypassed inspection, paid all cash, and turned those houses into rentals, stealing away her American dream. Stories like this are why last month, I signed an Executive Order to ban large Wall Street investment firms from buying up, in the thousands, single-family homes. And now I am asking Congress to make that ban permanent, because homes are for people, not corporations. Raysall, thank you.

We are also working to make it easier for Americans to save for retirement—and under this administration, we will always protect Social Security and Medicare for our nation's seniors.

Since I took office, the typical 401K balance is up almost \$30,000 dollars. Yet half of all working Americans still do not have access to a retirement plan with matching contributions from an employer. To remedy this gross disparity, I am announcing that next year, my administration will give these often-forgotten American workers access to the same type of retirement plan offered to every Federal worker—we will match your contributions with up to \$1,000 dollars each year.

As we ensure that all Americans can profit from a rising stock market, let's also ensure that members of Congress cannot corruptly profit using inside information. Pass the Stop Insider Trading Act without delay.

But when it comes to the corruption that is plundering America, there has been no more stunning example than Minnesota—where members of the Somali community have pillaged an estimated \$19 billion dollars from the American taxpayer. And in actuality, the number is much higher than that—and California, Massachusetts, Maine and many other states are even worse.

This is the kind of corruption that shreds the fabric of a nation. So tonight, although started 4 months ago, I am officially announcing The War on

Fraud, to be led by our Vice President, J.D. VANCE. And if we are able to find enough of that fraud, we will have a balanced budget overnight.

The Somali pirates who ransacked Minnesota remind us that there are large parts of the world where bribery, corruption, and lawlessness are the norm, not the exception. Importing these cultures through unrestricted immigration brings those problems right here, to the USA—and it is the American People who pay the price, in higher medical bills, car insurance rates, rent, taxes, and perhaps most importantly, crime. We will take care of this problem.

Dalilah Coleman was only 5 years old in June 2024, when an 18-wheel tractor trailer plowed into her stopped car traveling at 60 miles per hour. The driver was an illegal alien let in by Joe Biden and given a Commercial Driver's License by Open Borders politicians in California. Doctors said Dalilah would never be able to walk, talk, or eat on her own ever again. But against all odds, she is now in the first grade, learning to walk again, and she is here this evening with her dad Marcus. Dalilah—you are a great inspiration.

Many, if not most, illegal aliens do not speak English and cannot read even the most basic road signs as to direction, speed, danger, or location. That is why tonight, I am calling on Congress to pass what we will call the "Dalilah Law"—barring any state from granting Commercial Drivers Licenses to illegal aliens.

Yesterday at the White House, I hosted a ceremony with Americans who lost their treasured loved ones to the scourge of illegal immigration. These are the Angel Moms and Families that for decades our government betrayed, and our media totally ignored.

In 2023, a 16-year-old high school cheerleader named Lizbeth Medina was supposed to perform in her town's Christmas parade, but she never arrived. Her mother Jacqueline went home to look for her, and she found her—lying dead in the bathtub, after being stabbed 25 times. Lizbeth's killer was a previously-arrested illegal alien who had broken in, and brutally extinguished the brightest light in her family's life. Her heartbroken mother is in the gallery to remind everyone in this chamber exactly why we are deporting illegal alien criminals from our country—we want them out of here. Jacqueline, please stand.

We can never forget that many in this room not only allowed the border invasion to happen before I got involved—but indeed, they would do it all over again if ever given the chance. The only thing standing between Americans and a wide-open border right now is President Donald J. Trump and our great Republican patriots in Congress.

As we speak, Democrats in this chamber have cut off all funding for the Department of Homeland Security.

They have instituted another Democrat Shutdown, the first one costing us a 2-point reduction in the GDP. Now, they have closed the agency responsible for protecting Americans from terrorists and murderers. Tonight, I am demanding the full and immediate restoration of all funding for the Border Security and Homeland Security of the United States.

One of the great things about the State of the Union is how it gives Americans the chance to see clearly what their representatives believe. So tonight, I am inviting every legislator to join with my administration in reaffirming a fundamental principle—if you agree with this statement, then stand up and show your support: The first duty of the American government is to protect American citizens, not illegal aliens.

That is why I am also asking you to end deadly Sanctuary Cities that protect the criminals, and enact serious penalties for public officials who block the removal of criminal aliens, in many cases drug lords and murderers, from our country.

And perhaps most importantly, I am asking you to approve the Save America Act to stop illegal aliens and other unpermitted persons from voting in our sacred American Elections. It is very simple: All voters must show Voter I.D. All voters must show proof of citizenship in order to vote. And no mail in ballots, except for illness, disability, military, or travel. This should be an easy one. The new Mayor of New York city just said they want people to shovel the snow—but if you apply for that job, you need to show two original forms of I.D., and a Social Security card—yet they don't want identification for the greatest privilege of them all, voting in America. Both Republicans and Democrats overwhelmingly agree—and Congress should unite and enact this common-sense, country-saving legislation, right now.

And here is one more opportunity to show common sense in government. In the gallery tonight are Sage Blair and her mother Michelle. In 2021, Sage was 14 when school officials in Virginia sought to "socially transition" her to a new gender—treating her as a boy, and hiding it from her parents. Before long, a confused Sage ran away from home. After she was found in a horrific situation in Maryland, a left-wing judge refused to return Sage to her parents, because they did not immediately state that their daughter was their son. Sage was thrown into an all-boys state home and suffered terribly—but today, all of that is behind them, because Sage is a proud and wonderful young woman, with a full-ride scholarship to Liberty University. Sage and Michelle, thank you for your bravery. Who can believe we're even speaking about such things?

Surely, we can all agree—no state can be allowed to rip children from their parents' arms and transition them to a new gender against the parents' will. We must ban it, and ban it now. These people are crazy!

No one cares more about protecting America's youth than our wonderful First Lady. Over the past year, she has had an incredible impact—championing A.I. legislation, advancing a landmark Executive Order on foster care, and helping secure \$30 million dollars to launch the Melania Trump Foster Youth to Independence initiative. And students and educators in every state have joined the First Lady's efforts in the Presidential A.I. Challenge, keeping America's next generation positioned to succeed in the future. Tonight, we welcome two young people whose lives reflect the First Lady's impact—Sierra Burns and Everest Nevraumont. Thank you both, and thank you, Melania.

I am very proud to say that during my time in office, both the first four years and in particular this last year, there has been a tremendous renewal in religion, faith, Christianity, and belief in God in our country. This is especially true among young people—and a big part of that had to do with my great friend Charlie Kirk. Last year, Charlie was violently murdered by an assassin, and martyred for his beliefs. His wonderful wife, Erika, is with us tonight. Erika, please stand. In Charlie's memory, we must all come together to reaffirm that America is One Nation under God—and we must totally reject political violence of any kind. We love religion, and we love bringing it back.

Above all, unleashing America's promise requires keeping our communities safe. We have made incredible strides—yet dangerous repeat offenders continue to be released by pro-crime politicians again and again.

We are honored to be joined tonight by Anya Zarutka. In 2022, she and her beautiful daughter Iryna fled war-torn Ukraine to live with relatives near Charlotte, North Carolina. Last summer, 23-year-old Iryna was riding home on the train when a deranged monster—who had been arrested over a dozen times and was released through no cash bail—stood up and viciously slashed a knife through her neck and body. No one will ever forget the expression of terror on Iryna's face as she looked up at her attacker in the last seconds of her life. She had escaped a brutal war, only to be slain by a hardened criminal set free to kill in America. Mrs. Zarutka—tonight, I promise you, we will ensure justice for your magnificent daughter, Iryna.

I am asking this Congress to pass tough legislation to ensure that violent and dangerous repeat offenders are put behind bars, and importantly, stay there.

Starting last summer, I deployed our National Guard and federal law enforcement to restore law and order to our most dangerous cities—including Memphis, Tennessee, New Orleans, Louisiana, and our nation's capital itself, Washington, D.C. Here in Washington, crime is now at the lowest levels ever recorded—and murders in D.C.

this January were down close to 100% from one year ago.

One of the brave servicemembers who helped achieve this stunning turnaround was 20-year-old West Virginia Army National Guard Specialist Sarah Beckstrom. After a four-month deployment, she voluntarily extended her service. The very next day, she was on patrol near the White House when she was ambushed and shot in the head by a terrorist monster from Afghanistan, who should have never been in the country—all because she wore the uniform of her nation. Sarah Beckstrom died in order to defend our capital—and we are honored to be joined by her parents. Gary and Evalea, your daughter was a true American Patriot, and she will be greatly missed.

Serving alongside Sarah that day was Staff Sergeant Andrew Wolfe. The terrorist shot Andrew in the head—and no one thought he could possibly make it, except for his wonderful and very loving mother, Melody. I spoke to Melody that night, and the doctors thought that Andrew was gone. But his mother said "No, Mr. President, Andrew will be fine, He's going to make it; I have no doubt. Everybody is praying." The doctors did not understand what she was saying, and after looking at the results of the damage done, neither did I. She was so strong and conclusive that even Andrew's father felt she didn't understand the gravity of the situation, but she turned out to be right. With God's help, Andrew has battled back from the edge of death, and he is here tonight with his mom, on his way to a miraculous recovery. Now, I would like to ask General James Seward to present Staff Sergeant Andrew Wolfe and the great family of Sarah Beckstrom with the award created by our late, great President George Washington himself—the Purple Heart.

We are proudly restoring safety for Americans at home, and we are also restoring security for America abroad. Our country has never been stronger.

In my first 10 months, I ended 8 wars—including Cambodia and Thailand, Pakistan and India, Kosovo and Serbia, Israel and Iran, Egypt and Ethiopia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, the Congo and Rwanda, and of course, the War in Gaza. Under the ceasefire I negotiated, every single hostage—both living and dead—has been returned home. And we are working hard to end the 9th war—the killing and slaughter between Russia and Ukraine, where 25,000 soldiers are dying each and every month, a war which would have never happened if I were President.

As President, I will make peace wherever I can—but I will never hesitate to confront threats to America wherever we must.

That is why, in a breathtaking operation last June, the United States military obliterated Iran's nuclear weapons program with an attack on Iranian soil known as Operation Midnight Hammer. For decades, it has been the policy of the United States never to allow Iran

to obtain a nuclear weapon. Since they seized control of that proud nation 47 years ago, the regime, and its murderous proxies, have spread nothing but terrorism and death. They have killed and maimed thousands of American servicemembers with roadside bombs. And just recently, they have killed at least 20,000 protestors in their own country. They have already developed missiles that can threaten Europe and our bases overseas—and they are working to build missiles that will soon reach the United States. After Midnight Hammer, they were warned to make no future attempts to rebuild their weapons program—yet they continue, and are at this moment again pursuing their sinister nuclear ambitions. My preference is to solve this problem through diplomacy—but one thing is certain: I will never allow the world's number one sponsor of terror to have a nuclear weapon.

No nation should ever doubt America's resolve. We have the most powerful military on earth. I rebuilt our military in my first term, and continue to do so at an even more rapid pace—hopefully, we will seldom have to use it. It's called peace through strength.

Thanks to a Republican Congress, we are investing a record \$1 trillion dollars in the United States Armed Forces this year alone. And NATO countries, our friends and allies, have just agreed to pay 5% of GDP for military defense, up from 2%, something which everyone said would never be done.

Every branch of our Armed Forces is setting records for recruitment. And every service member recently received a Warrior Dividend of \$1,776 dollars.

We are also restoring American security and dominance in the Western Hemisphere—acting to secure our national interests and defend our country from violence, drugs, terrorism, and foreign interference.

For years, large swaths of territory in our region, including large parts of Mexico, have been controlled by murderous drug cartels. That is why I designated these Cartels as Foreign Terrorist Organizations, and I declared illicit fentanyl a Weapon of Mass Destruction. With our new military campaign, we have stopped record amounts of drugs coming into our country—and virtually stopped it completely coming in by water and sea.

We have also taken down one of the most sinister cartel kingpins of all. In January, elite American Warriors carried out one of the most complex, spectacular feats of military competence and power in world history. America's Armed Forces overwhelmed all defenses and utterly defeated the enemy, to end the reign of outlaw dictator Nicolas Maduro, and bring him to face American Justice.

This was a colossal victory for the security of the United States, and it also opens up a bright new beginning for the people of Venezuela. We are working closely with the new president, Delcy Rodriguez, to unleash extraordinary

economic gains for both of our countries—and to bring new hope to those who have suffered so terribly. With us tonight is Alejandra Gonzalez. She grew up in a tightknit Venezuelan family, and was especially close to her beloved uncle Enrique. But after Enrique ran for office and opposed Maduro, her uncle was kidnapped by Maduro's security forces—and thrown into the regime's infamous prison in Caracas. Alejandra feared she would never see her uncle again. But since the raid, we have worked with the new leadership, and they have ordered the closure of that vile prison, and released hundreds of political prisoners with the rest to soon come. Alejandra, I am pleased to inform you that not only has your uncle been released, but he is here tonight to celebrate his freedom with you in person. Enrique, please come down. Thank you, Enrique.

There were many heroes on that January raid to capture Maduro—but the deeds of one warrior that night will live forever in the eternal chronicles of Military Valor. Chief Warrant Officer 5 Eric Slover planned the mission and was the "flightlead" in the cockpit of the first helicopter in the raid, a massive Chinook carrying many American Warfighters. Wearing the dog tags his wife Amy had blessed with holy water before he left, Eric steered the Chinook under the cover of night, and descended swiftly upon Maduro's heavily protected military fortress, protected by thousands of soldiers, guarded by Russian and Chinese military technology. While preparing to land, enemy machine-guns fired from every angle, and Eric was hit, very badly, in the leg and hip, one bullet after another. He absorbed four agonizing shots, shredding his leg to pieces. And yet, despite the fact that the use of his legs was vital to successful helicopter flight, he kept that helicopter flying, to deliver the many commandos who would capture and detain Maduro. Then, even as he was gushing blood, he maneuvered his helicopter to face the enemy and let his gunners eliminate the threat, saving the lives of his fellow warriors from what could have been a catastrophic crash deep in enemy territory. Only after safely landing the helicopter with all warriors aboard, in the exact right spot which was vital to the mission, Eric told his copilot, also wounded, but not as gravely, to take over—he was passing out.

The success of the entire mission—and the lives of his fellow warriors—hinged on Eric's ability to take the searing pain of the bullets and keep on flying. Chief Warrant Officer Slover is still recovering from his serious wounds, but I am thrilled to say that he is here tonight with his wife Amy. Eric and Amy, come on in. In recognition of Eric's actions above and beyond the call of duty, I would now like to ask General Jonathan Braga to present Chief Warrant Officer Slover with our nation's highest military award—the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Thank you, Eric and Amy. And 10 of Eric's fellow warriors from that night will also be receiving medals at a private ceremony at the White House.

Tonight, we have celebrated many truly extraordinary American patriots, but there is one last living legend to honor before we go. He is one more heroic American Aviator. Navy Fighter Pilot Royce Williams served in World War Two, Korea, and Vietnam, flying more than 220 missions. In the skies over Korea in 1952, Royce was in the dogfight of a lifetime. Flying through blizzard conditions, his squadron was ambushed by 7 Soviet fighter planes. It was his first aerial combat of the war, and despite being massively outnumbered and outgunned, Royce led the take-down of four enemy jets, vanquishing his adversaries while taking 263 bullets to his own plane. His story was secret for over 50 years—he didn't even tell his wife. But tonight, at 100 years old, this brave Navy Captain is finally getting the recognition he deserves. He was a legend long before this evening. Royce, please stand up. I now ask the First Lady of the United States to present Captain Royce Williams with his Congressional Medal of Honor.

250 years is a long time in the life of a nation, but in another sense, it is a mere moment in the eye of history. Two of the gentlemen we met in the gallery this evening took their first breaths one century ago. One hundred years before that, on July 4th, 1826, the author of the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson, drew his last breath. Just a single long human lifespan separates the giants who declared and won our Independence, from the heroes who stand among us tonight.

Everything our nation has done, everything we have achieved, has been the work of those few great lifetimes. In those brief chapters, Americans built this nation from 13 humble colonies, into the pinnacle of human civilization and human freedom—the strongest, wealthiest, most powerful, most successful nation in all of history.

Americans ventured out across a daunting and dangerous continent, we carved paths through an unforgiving wilderness, settled a boundless frontier, and tamed the beautiful but very dangerous wild west. From empty marshes and wide-open plains, we raised up the world's greatest cities. Together, we mastered the world's mightiest industries, we shattered history's monstrous tyrannies, and we liberated millions from the chains of fascism, communism, oppression, and terror. Americans lifted humanity into the skies on wings of aluminum and steel—and then we launched mankind into the stars on rockets powered by sheer American will and unyielding American pride. We wired the globe with our ingenuity, we captivated the planet with American culture, and now, we are pioneering the next great American breakthroughs that will change the entire world.

All of this, and so much more, is the enduring legacy and unmatched glory

of the hardworking patriots who built and defended this country, and who still carry the hopes and freedoms of all humanity on their backs.

For years, they were forgotten, betrayed, and cast aside—but that great betrayal is over, and they will never be forgotten again.

Because when the world needs courage, daring, vision, and inspiration, it still turns to America—and when God needs a nation to work His miracles, He knows exactly who to ask. There is no challenge Americans cannot overcome, no frontier too vast for us to conquer, no dream too bold for us to chase, no horizon too distant for us to claim.

For our Destiny is written by the hand of Providence—and these first 250 years were just the beginning.

From the rugged border towns of Texas to the heartland villages of Michigan, from the sun-kissed shores of Florida to the endless fields of the Dakotas, and from the historic streets of Philadelphia, to right here in our nation's capital, Washington, D.C.—the Golden Age of America is now Upon Us. The Revolution that began in 1776 has not ended—it still continues, because the flame of Liberty and Independence still burns in the hearts of every American Patriot. And our future will be bigger, better, brighter, bolder, and more glorious than ever before.

Thank you, God Bless You, and God Bless the United States of America.

DONALD J. TRUMP.

THE WHITE HOUSE, February 24, 2026.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 2:10 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 390. An act to utilize the Advanced Capabilities for Emergency Response to Operations project of NASA to improve aerial responses to wildfires, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2189. An act to modernize Federal firearms laws to account for advancements in technology and less-than-lethal weapons, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2600. An act to require the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to establish a program to identify, evaluate, acquire, and disseminate commercial Earth remote sensing data and imagery in order to satisfy the scientific, operational, and educational requirements of the Administration, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3679. An act to require the Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology to develop resources for small businesses in utilizing artificial intelligence, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5235. An act to amend title 41, United States Code, to prohibit minimum educational requirements for proposed contractor personnel in certain contract solicitations, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 390. An act to utilize the Advanced Capabilities for Emergency Response to Operations project of NASA to improve aerial responses to wildfires, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

H.R. 3679. An act to require the Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology to develop resources for small businesses in utilizing artificial intelligence, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

H.R. 5235. An act to amend title 41, United States Code, to prohibit minimum educational requirements for proposed contractor personnel in certain contract solicitations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

H.R. 6644. An act to increase the supply of housing in America, and for other purposes.

The following bill was read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and placed on the calendar:

H.R. 2600. An act to require the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to establish a program to identify, evaluate, acquire, and disseminate commercial Earth remote sensing data and imagery in order to satisfy the scientific, operational, and educational requirements of the Administration, and for other purposes.

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-2778. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Lebanon that was declared in Executive Order 13441 of August 1, 2007; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-2779. 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 "Conforming Change to the Export Administration Regulations (EAR)" (RIN0694-AK41) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 17, 2026; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-2780. A communication from the Sanctions Regulations Advisor, Office of Foreign Assets Control, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Syria-Related Sanctions Regulations" (31 CFR Part 569) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 20, 2026; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-2781. A communication from the Sanctions Regulations Advisor, Office of Foreign Assets Control, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "International Criminal Court-Related Sanctions Regulations" (31 CFR Part 528) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 20, 2026; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-2782. A communication from the Director, Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, Department of the Treasury, transmitting,

pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Delaying the Effective Date of the Anti-Money Laundering/Countering the Financing of Terrorism Program and Suspicious Activity Report Filing Requirements for Registered Investment Advisers and Exempt Reporting Advisers" (RIN1506-AB58) (RIN1506-AB69) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 20, 2026; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-2783. A communication from the Acting Chief Privacy and Civil Liberties Officer, United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Privacy Act of 1974; Implementation" (28 CFR Part 16) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 20, 2026; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-2784. A communication from the Senior Counsel, International Trade Administration, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Removing an Obsolete, One-Time Reporting Requirement from the Regulations Governing the Use of Supplies in Emergency Relief Work" (RIN0625-AB31) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 13, 2026; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-2785. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report of the continuation of the national emergency that was originally declared in Executive Order 13566 of February 25, 2011, with respect to Libya; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-2786. A communication from the Federal Register Liaison, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Implementation of Refund Procedures for Craft Beverage Modernization Act Federal Excise Tax Benefits Applicable to Imported Alcohol" (RIN1513-AC89) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 30, 2026; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-2787. A communication from the Director of Regulatory Oversight and Management, Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Home Visits in Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers During COVID-19 National Emergency" (RIN2900-AQ96) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 19, 2026; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC-2788. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Preventive Medicine and Public Health Training Grant Program Fiscal Year 2024"; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-2789. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Fiscal Year 2024 Progress Report on Understanding the Long-Term Health Effects of Living Organ Donation"; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. MORAN, from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 1441. A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to award grants to non-profit entities to assist such entities in car-

rying out programs to provide service dogs to eligible veterans, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 119-113).

By Mr. GRASSLEY, from the Committee on the Judiciary, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 3023. A bill to limit liability for certain entities storing child sexual abuse material for law enforcement agencies, and for other purposes.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Ms. DUCKWORTH):

S. 3895. A bill to require rulemaking by the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to address considerations in evaluating the need for public and individual disaster assistance, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN:

S. 3896. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to modify the Department of Veterans Affairs procurement hierarchy of small business preferences, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself and Mr. CRUZ):

S. 3897. A bill to revise administrative procedures relating to public safety officers' death benefits, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

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

S. 3898. A bill to amend the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act to extend burial benefits for certain veterans who die at home while in receipt of hospice care furnished by the Department of Veterans Affairs; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

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

S. 3899. A bill to authorize the transfer by the Secretary of the Navy to the U.S. Space and Rocket Center Commission in Huntsville, Alabama, of certain F-14 Tomcat aircraft; to the Committee on Armed Services.

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

S. 3900. A bill to promote human rights, internet freedom and accountability in Iran, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. BUDD:

S. 3901. A bill to expand the HOME Investment Partnerships Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Ms. ERNST:

S. 3902. A bill to provide for auditable financial statements for the Department of Defense, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. HUSTED (for himself, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. SCHMITT, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MORENO, and Mr. FETTERMAN):

S. 3903. A bill to enhance safety requirements for trains transporting hazardous materials, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Ms. WARREN (for herself, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. SMITH, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. KAINE, Mr.

KIM, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WELCH, and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 3904. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to deny interest and depreciation deductions for certain taxpayers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. MARKEY, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. LUJÁN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. COONS, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Mr. KING, Ms. ALSOBROOKS, Mr. KIM, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. KAINE, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. WARNER, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. SCHUMER, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. PETERS, Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER, Mr. MERKLEY, and Mr. WARNOCK):

S. 3905. A bill to provide for the refund of duties imposed under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself and Ms. ALSOBROOKS):

S. 3906. A bill to amend title 23, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Transportation to develop a national infrastructure intelligence tool for congestion mitigation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. REED:

S. 3907. A bill to amend the GENIUS Act to require foreign payment stablecoin issuers to undergo an annual audit similar to United States payment stablecoin issuers, 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 Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. BENNET, Mr. WICKER, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. COONS, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. DAINES, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. RICKETTS, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. KAINE, Mr. MCCORMICK, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. CURTIS, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. MORAN, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. ERNST, Mr. JUSTICE, Mr. SCHUMER, and Mr. CRAMER):

S. Res. 612. A resolution acknowledging the fourth anniversary of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, reaffirming support for the people of Ukraine, and emphasizing the importance of robust United States security guarantees within a transatlantic commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 137

At the request of Mr. DAINES, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. MULLIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 137, a bill to amend title 41, United States Code, to prohibit the Federal Government from entering into contracts with an entity that discriminates against firearm or ammunition industries, and for other purposes.

S. 226

At the request of Mr. SHEEHY, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Ms.

ERNST) was added as a cosponsor of S. 226, a bill to require a strategy to oppose financial or material support by foreign countries and nongovernmental organizations to the Taliban, and for other purposes.

S. 478

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 478, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to prohibit the Secretary of Veterans Affairs from transmitting certain information to the Department of Justice for use by the national instant criminal background check system.

S. 545

At the request of Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 545, a bill to prohibit certain uses of xylazine, and for other purposes.

S. 733

At the request of Mrs. BLACKBURN, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. RICKETTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 733, a bill to improve the cooperation between the United States and the authorities of Taiwan with respect to travel and tourism.

S. 768

At the request of Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 768, a bill to establish a grant program to provide assistance to local law enforcement agencies, and for other purposes.

S. 847

At the request of Mr. KAINE, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 847, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand the employer-provided child care credit and the dependent care assistance exclusion.

S. 942

At the request of Ms. ROSEN, the names of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) were added as cosponsors of S. 942, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide for interest-free deferment on student loans for borrowers serving in a medical or dental internship or residency program.

S. 1039

At the request of Mr. SHEEHY, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1039, a bill to amend the definitions of firearm silencer and firearm muffler in section 921 of title 18, United States Code, and for other purposes.

S. 1237

At the request of Ms. SMITH, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1237, a bill to establish the New Producer Economic Security Program within the Farm Service Agency Office of Outreach and Education.

S. 1459

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1459, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to improve the historic rehabilitation tax credit, and for other purposes.

S. 1547

At the request of Mr. DAINES, the names of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. MULLIN) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) were added as cosponsors of S. 1547, a bill to amend title 54, United States Code, to reauthorize the National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund, and for other purposes.

S. 1552

At the request of Mr. COTTON, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1552, a bill to promote and protect from discrimination living organ donors.

S. 1574

At the request of Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. MULLIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1574, a bill to amend the Stored Communications Act to include Tribal courts as courts of competent jurisdiction.

S. 1782

At the request of Mrs. MOODY, the names of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN), the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) were added as cosponsors of S. 1782, a bill to prohibit discrimination on the basis of mental or physical disability in cases of organ transplants.

S. 1879

At the request of Mr. OSSOFF, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1879, a bill to amend chapter 131 of title 5, United States Code, to require Members of Congress and their spouses and dependent children to place certain assets into blind trusts, and for other purposes.

S. 1970

At the request of Mr. BUDD, the names of the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. MCCORMICK) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT) were added as cosponsors of S. 1970, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the service members of the Military Assistance Command Vietnam-Studies and Observations Group, in recognition of their bravery and outstanding service in South Vietnam, North Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia during the Vietnam War.

S. 2265

At the request of Mr. PADILLA, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. KIM) and the Senator from Delaware (Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER) were added as cosponsors of S. 2265, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the

2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Los Angeles, California, and the 2034 Olympics and Paralympic Winter Games in Salt Lake City, Utah.

S. 2503

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2503, a bill to require all aircraft to be equipped with Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast In, to improve aviation safety, and for other purposes.

S. 2903

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. GALLEGRO) was added as a cosponsor 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. 2952

At the request of Ms. LUMMIS, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2952, a bill to amend title 31, United States Code, to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint and issue \$2.50 numismatic coins and \$2.50 circulating coins, and for other purposes.

S. 3130

At the request of Mr. MCCORMICK, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3130, a bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a program to award grants to eligible entities to develop, implement, and evaluate approaches and methodologies for prospective randomized control trials for neurorehabilitation treatments for the treatment of chronic mild traumatic brain injury in veterans, and for other purposes.

S. 3267

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the names of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT) were added as cosponsors of S. 3267, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for Medicare coverage of blood-based dementia screening tests.

S. 3438

At the request of Mr. COONS, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) and the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 3438, a bill to direct the Attorney General to establish a single grant program to make grants to hire prosecutors, and for other purposes.

S. 3456

At the request of Mr. SHEEHY, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3456, a bill to amend the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act to provide for a free annual National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass for law enforcement officers and firefighters.

S. 3466

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from California (Mr. SCHIFF) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3466, a bill to improve health care provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 3588

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from California (Mr. SCHIFF) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3588, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide funding for trained school personnel to administer drugs and devices for emergency treatment of known or suspected opioid overdose, and for other purposes.

S. 3725

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the names of the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) were added as cosponsors of S. 3725, a bill to require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to determine the feasibility of constructing a project to supply municipal, rural, and industrial water to expand the capacity and reach of the Lewis and Clark Rural Water System, Inc. (doing business as "Lewis & Clark Regional Water System"), in the States of Iowa, Minnesota, and South Dakota.

S. 3743

At the request of Mr. LEE, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. CURTIS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3743, a bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to carry out a feasibility study on a selective water withdrawal system at Glen Canyon Dam, and for other purposes.

S. 3752

At the request of Mr. LEE, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3752, a bill to amend the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 to require proof of United States citizenship to register an individual to vote in elections for Federal office, and for other purposes.

S. 3790

At the request of Mr. SCHMITT, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BUDD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3790, a bill to condition certain Federal funds for States and local governments on cooperation with Federal immigration enforcement authorities, to deter illegal entry and reentry into the United States, to increase criminal penalties for crimes committed after illegal reentry into the United States, to protect Federal officers and employees from agitators using loud noises to interfere with the performance of their official duties, and to exclude organization that promote, incite, or provide material support for criminal violence from the tax benefits available under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

S. 3791

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the name of the Senator from Mississippi

(Mrs. HYDE-SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3791, a bill to reauthorize Regional Ocean Partnerships, and for other purposes.

S. 3855

At the request of Mr. BUDD, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3855, a bill to enhance bilateral defense cooperation between the United States and Israel, and for other purposes.

S. 3862

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3862, a bill to amend the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 to require States to make payments to child care providers based on verified attendance in child care programs, and for other purposes.

S.J. RES. 103

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. KIM), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) were added as cosponsors of S.J. Res. 103, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Veterans Affairs relating to "Reproductive Health Services".

S. RES. 158

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 158, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that paraprofessionals and education support staff should have fair compensation, benefits, and working conditions.

S. RES. 236

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 236, a resolution calling for the return of abducted Ukrainian children before finalizing any peace agreement to end the war against Ukraine.

S. RES. 606

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the names of the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 606, a resolution condemning the Government of Iran for its suppression of the right of Iranians to peacefully assemble.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Ms. DUCKWORTH):

S. 3895. A bill to require rulemaking by the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to address considerations in evaluating the need for public and individual disaster assistance, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

S. 3895

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 “Fairness in Federal Disaster Declarations Act of 2026”.

SEC. 2. REGULATORY ACTION REQUIRED.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 120 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (in this Act referred to as the “Administrator”) shall amend the rules of the Administrator under section 206.48 of title 44, Code of Federal Regulations, as in effect on the date of enactment of this Act, in accordance with the provisions of this Act.

(b) NEW CRITERIA REQUIRED.—The amended rules issued under subsection (a) shall provide for the following:

(1) PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.—Such rules shall provide that, with respect to the evaluation of the need for public assistance—

(A) specific weighted valuations shall be assigned to each criterion, including—

(i) estimated cost of the assistance, 10 percent;

(ii) localized impacts, 40 percent;

(iii) insurance coverage in force, 10 percent;

(iv) hazard mitigation, 10 percent;

(v) recent multiple disasters, 10 percent;

(vi) programs of other Federal assistance, 10 percent; and

(vii) economic circumstances described in subparagraph (B), 10 percent; and

(B) the Administrator shall consider the economic circumstances of—

(i) the local economy of the area affected by the disaster, including factors such as the local assessable tax base and local sales tax, the median income as it compares to that of the State, and the poverty rate as it compares to that of the State; and

(ii) the economy of the State, including factors such as the unemployment rate of the State, as compared to the national unemployment rate.

(2) INDIVIDUAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.—Such rules shall provide that, with respect to the evaluation of the severity, magnitude, and impact of the disaster and the evaluation of the need for assistance to individuals—

(A) specific weighted valuations shall be assigned to each criterion, including—

(i) concentration of damages, 20 percent;

(ii) trauma, 20 percent;

(iii) special populations, 20 percent;

(iv) voluntary agency assistance, 10 percent;

(v) insurance, 20 percent;

(vi) average amount of individual assistance by State, 5 percent; and

(vii) economic considerations described in subparagraph (B), 5 percent; and

(B) the Administrator shall consider the economic circumstances of the area affected by the disaster, including factors such as the local assessable tax base and local sales tax, the median income as it compares to that of the State, and the poverty rate as it compares to that of the State.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amended rules issued under subsection (a) shall apply to any disaster for which a Governor requested a major disaster declaration under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.) that was denied on or after January 1, 2012.

By Ms. WARREN (for herself, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. SMITH, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HIRONO, Mr.

KAINE, Mr. KIM, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WELCH, and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 3904. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to deny interest and depreciation deductions for certain taxpayers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, today, I am cosponsoring the American Homeownership Act. When Wall Street buys up homes in communities across the country, we have all too often seen families get squeezed by higher costs and abusive landlords. This bill is an important step toward making a home more affordable and accessible. It would limit tax breaks for private equity firms and big corporations that acquire housing, expand investments in affordable housing programs, and crack down on companies that take control of the housing supply in a community.

As we work to tackle Wall Street’s role in our housing market, it is critical that we support efforts to rehabilitate existing housing stock and revitalize neighborhoods with new investment. I appreciate Senator WARREN’s thoughtful consideration of these issues, and I will work with my colleagues to ensure they are effectively addressed in this legislation.

By Mr. REED:

S. 3907. A bill to amend the GENIUS Act to require foreign payment stablecoin issuers to undergo an annual audit similar to United States payment stablecoin issuers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, today I am introducing the Foreign Stablecoin Transparency Act. This important legislation would close a loophole in the Guiding and Establishing National Innovation for U.S. Stablecoins, or GENIUS, Act by extending a provision that requires large U.S. stablecoin issuers to undergo a full financial statement audit to also cover large foreign stablecoin issuers that offer and sell their products to U.S. investors.

Stablecoins are cryptocurrencies whose value is pegged to a real-world asset, which under the GENIUS Act is the U.S. dollar. The basic promise that stablecoin issuers make to their holders is that a stablecoin will always be redeemable for a dollar on demand. You give a stablecoin company a dollar, the company gives you back an IOU that is recorded on a blockchain. The stablecoin company takes your dollar and invests it in various safe assets that are purportedly able to be liquidated at any time to meet redemption requests.

All kinds of companies that handle the American peoples’ money must undergo financial statement audits. U.S.-based dollar stablecoin issuers with \$50 billion of stablecoins in circulation must get an audit. Banks of all sizes must get audits, even the smallest community banks. Many States re-

quire licensed money transmitters to submit audited financial statements to provide transparency and verify their financial health. Even unregistered private funds that are sponsored by U.S. investment advisers must get audits. And of course, all public companies must get audits. So it strikes me as entirely sensible to extend this very same requirement to foreign issuers of dollar-backed stablecoins, which handle Americans’ money—just like so many other institutions that are subject to audit requirements.

Unless stablecoin issuers are audited, there is no independent verification that the company has enough assets to cover all stablecoins in circulation. Instead, holders must take the word of the issuer. If the issuer does not have sufficient reserves or is found to be cooking the books, then a stablecoin company may experience a “run” on its assets and holders will not be able to get their money back despite being sold something that they are told is safe and redeemable on demand. That is why we need audits of all companies that issue dollar-backed stablecoins to Americans.

A major flaw of the GENIUS Act is that stablecoins issued by companies with headquarters outside the United States are not required to undergo audits. Unless this flaw is addressed, the world’s largest dollar-backed stablecoin—Tether, which is based in El Salvador—can be freely offered, sold, and used by Americans without being compelled to provide a full accounting of the reserves backing its coin. Tether purportedly has \$187 billion in assets and is an essential piece of the crypto financial system plumbing. All manner of crypto-assets are bought and sold not with fiat currency, but with dollar-backed stablecoins like Tether.

During his confirmation hearing before the Senate Commerce Committee in 2025 Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick testified, “I believe U.S. dollar-backed stablecoins should be fully audited.” Earlier this week before the Senate Appropriations Committee, I asked him whether this specific statement included Tether, and he said “I absolutely agree with you, Tether should be audited.”

Although Secretary Lutnick has no formal role in overseeing cryptocurrency, he has significant experience in this area. His former investment bank Cantor Fitzgerald has very deep ties to Tether. Cantor owns a 5 percent stake in the company, manages the reserves backing its stablecoin, and has cosponsored various crypto investment funds with Tether.

My legislation would require foreign stablecoins backed by the U.S. dollar like Tether to undergo an audit, no matter where the company is located. And a full audit is essential. In 2021, Tether was fined by the Commodity Futures Trading Commission for lying about its reserves. The CFTC found

that “Tether misrepresented to customers and the market that Tether maintained sufficient fiat reserves to back every USDT in circulation ‘one-to-one’ . . . and that Tether would undergo routine, professional audits to demonstrate that it maintained ‘100% reserves at all times.’ In fact . . . Tether failed to maintain fiat currency reserves . . . to back every USDT in circulation.” Despite Tether executives promising for years that they want to get an audit, we have yet to see them do so. Instead, Tether has published quarterly “attestations” by the Italian arm of a mid-tier accounting firm that simply verify information that Tether provides to that firm using procedures that are mutually agreed. That is very different than true independent third-party verification based upon standardized procedures with criminal and civil penalties if financial statements contain false information.

If foreign stablecoin issuers want the privilege of creating and handling the American people’s money, then I agree with Secretary Lutnick that it is entirely sensible for them to open up their books for the American people to see, just as we expect of large U.S. stablecoin companies, banks, and other payments companies. If the goal of the GENIUS bill is to create incentives for stablecoin issuers to come onshore and operate fully within the U.S. regulatory perimeter, then we must close this alarming gap that incentivizes dollar creation by foreign companies.

I urge my colleagues to support this critical legislation.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 612—ACKNOWLEDGING THE FOURTH ANNIVERSARY OF RUSSIA’S ILLEGAL INVASION OF UKRAINE, REAFFIRMING SUPPORT FOR THE PEOPLE OF UKRAINE, AND EMPHASIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF ROBUST UNITED STATES SECURITY GUARANTEES WITHIN A TRANSATLANTIC COMMITMENT TO UKRAINE’S SOVEREIGNTY

Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. BENNET, Mr. WICKER, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. COONS, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. DAINES, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. RICKETTS, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. KAINE, Mr. MCCORMICK, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. CURTIS, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. MORAN, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. ERNST, Mr. JUSTICE, Mr. SCHUMER, and Mr. CRAMER) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 612

Whereas, on February 24, 2022, the Russian Federation launched a full-scale, unprovoked, and illegal invasion of Ukraine, following its illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 and its illegal occupation of parts of the Donbas region in 2014;

Whereas the international community and the United States recognize the sovereignty, independence, and full territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized 1991 borders;

Whereas Ukraine has withstood four years of brutal aggression, suffering military and civilian casualties and widespread destruction of infrastructure and communities;

Whereas Russian forces have repeatedly struck Ukrainian civilian targets, including maternity hospitals, trains, residential buildings, and schools;

Whereas the Government of the Russian Federation has forcibly abducted at least 19,500 Ukrainian children, with the total number likely much higher;

Whereas, in recent years, the Government of the Russian Federation has specifically targeted United States companies operating in Ukraine to discourage American investment;

Whereas Ukrainian forces, with the support of transatlantic partners, have demonstrated resilience and recently made notable battlefield gains, recapturing territory and slowing Russian advances;

Whereas Russian forces are facing casualties of 35,000 per month and Russia’s economy is stagnant, with spiraling inflation of 20 percent, and in February 2026, Russian oil related taxes declined by 50 percent year on year due to increased economic pressure on Russia’s oil exports;

Whereas European partners provide more military, economic, and humanitarian aid to Ukraine than the United States, with European security assistance to Ukraine increasing 67 percent and nonmilitary aid increasing 59 percent in 2026 over the 2022-2024 average and collective transatlantic support amounting to hundreds of billions of dollars, including billions in advanced weapons systems, air defense, training, and financial assistance;

Whereas effective deterrence and defense of Ukraine require sustained, predictable security guarantees and backstops from both the United States and European allies to ensure that Ukraine can maintain its territorial defense and strengthen its integration with Euro-Atlantic structures; and

Whereas ensuring security guarantees for Ukraine advances the security interests of the United States and its NATO allies by deterring broader aggression from revisionist states and strengthening collective defense postures: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) reaffirms unwavering support for the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders;

(2) expresses deep condolences for the loss of Ukrainian lives and the suffering inflicted on civilians and service members by the Russian Federation’s ongoing aggression;

(3) commends the bravery, heroism, innovation, and resilience of the Ukrainian people and Ukraine’s armed forces for their sustained defense of their homeland and Ukraine’s democracy;

(4) condemns the Russian Federation’s brutal attacks on Ukraine, including its increased attacks on Ukraine’s energy infrastructure during Ukraine’s harshest winter in decades;

(5) condemns the Russian Federation’s deliberate and targeted destruction of United States companies in Ukraine;

(6) rejects the Government of Russian Federation’s attempts to unilaterally change borders by force and its broader aggression that threatens European stability and international law;

(7) affirms that any negotiated settlement must respect Ukraine’s sovereignty, territorial integrity, and include Ukraine as the

central party to discussions regarding its future;

(8) encourages continued strong cooperation among NATO allies, the Ukraine Defense Contact Group, and other partners in providing comprehensive security assistance, including advanced air and missile defenses, artillery systems, drones, training support, and intelligence sharing to Ukraine;

(9) underscores the importance of coordination with NATO, European and other like-minded allies to work together as part of any coalition to defend Ukraine intended to deter future Russian aggression against Ukraine and bolster Ukraine’s long-term defense capabilities;

(10) calls upon Congress and the President to impose additional financial pressure on Vladimir Putin’s government and third-country enablers of Russia’s war to deter further unnecessary aggression against the Ukrainian people and force Mr. Putin to meaningfully engage in peace talks for a lasting peace;

(11) recognizes President Trump’s continued efforts with international partners to achieve a sustainable peace which requires a strong United States security guarantee for Ukraine, which is necessary for Ukraine to reach a durable peace deal with a belligerent Russian Federation; and

(12) underscores that Ukrainian children forcibly abducted by the Government of the Russian Federation must be unconditionally returned home for any peace to be just.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I have two requests for committees to meet during today’s session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority Leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today’s session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, February 24, 2026, at 9:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS’ AFFAIRS

The Committee on Veterans’ Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, February 24, 2026, at 10 a.m., to conduct a joint hearing.

APPOINTMENT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, pursuant to the provisions of 10 U.S.C. 4355(a), as amended by Public Law 118-159, on behalf of the Democratic Leader, appoints the following individual to serve as a member of the Board of Visitors of the U.S. Military Academy: the Honorable GARY PETERS of Michigan. (Appropriations).

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2026

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate recess until 8:20 p.m. today and proceed as a body to the Hall of the House of Representatives for the joint session of

Congress provided under the provisions of H. Con. Res. 74; that upon dissolution of the joint session, the Senate adjourn until 10 a.m. on Wednesday, February 25; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, morning business be closed; and the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of Calendar No. 647, John DeLeeuw, and notwithstanding rule XXII, the cloture motion ripen at 11:45 a.m., and if cloture is invoked, the Senate vote on confirmation at 2:15 p.m.; further, that the Senate recess from 12:45 p.m. to 2:15 p.m. to allow for the weekly conference meetings; finally, that if any nominations are confirmed during Wednesday's session of the Senate, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, for the information of my colleagues, we will gather in the Senate Chamber at 8:20 p.m. this evening to proceed as a body to the House for the State of the Union.

RECESS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that it stand in recess under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:14 p.m., recessed until 8:20 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. LUMMIS).

JOINT SESSION OF THE TWO HOUSES—ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed as a body to the Hall of the House of Representatives to receive a message from the President of the United States.

Thereupon, the Senate, preceded by the Deputy Sergeant at Arms, Jason Bell; the Secretary of the Senate, Jackie Barber; and the Vice President of the United States, JD VANCE, proceeded to the Hall of the House of Representatives to hear the address by the President of the United States, Donald J. Trump.

(The address delivered by the President of the United States to the joint session of the two Houses of Congress is printed in the proceedings of the House of Representatives in today's RECORD.)

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2026, AT 10 A.M.

At the conclusion of the joint session of the two Houses, and in accordance with the order previously entered, at 11:03 p.m., the Senate adjourned until Wednesday, February 25, 2026, at 10 a.m.