

**Remarks in a Roundtable Discussion on Federal Relief for Farmers and an Exchange With Reporters**  
*December 8, 2025*

*The President.* Well, thank you very much, and thank you for being here as we take a very vital action to protect and defend American farmers and reduce prices for the American consumers. And we've done that in so many different fields, and this is a little bit of a different field, but we're bringing prices way down.

We inherited a total mess from the Biden administration—the highest inflation in the country's history and very, very high prices. And prices are coming down, and they were very, very far down on energy. Energy has come—in fact, we hit a very important number, a sacred number. We had three States in the last 2 days reported by our energy group, a group of very strong energy people, who said we hit \$1.99 a gallon in three different States. And that's an amazing accomplishment, because the gasoline prices are coming down. When gasoline comes down, everything—it's such a big category that when gasoline comes down, sort of everything sort of follows.

But we inherited a mess. Affordability—but you can call it affordability or anything you want, but the Democrats caused the affordability problem, and we're the ones that are fixing it. So it's a very simple statement. They caused it. We're fixing it.

And they have a tendency to just say, "This election is based on affordability," and nobody questions them, John, you know? Nobody says, "Oh, well, what do you mean by that?" But they just say the word. They never say anything else because they caused the problem. But we're fixing the problem.

And we're pleased to be joined today by many of the wonderful members of the farming community, as well as the Secretary of Agriculture, Brooke Rollins. Brooke, thank you.

*Secretary of Agriculture Brooke L. Rollins.* Thank you, sir.

*The President.* Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent. Thank you very much, Scott. Senator John Boozman. Thank you, John. Good job. John Hoeven. Thank you, John. And Deb Fischer. Thank you very much. As well as Representative Austin Scott, who's been with us right from the beginning. Thank you, Austin. Good job.

I'm delighted to announce this afternoon that the United States will be taking a small portion of the hundreds of billions of dollars we receive in tariffs. We are making a lot of money from countries that took advantage of us for years. They took advantage of us like nobody has ever seen. Our deficits are way down because of tariffs. I guess because of the election, because without the election, you wouldn't have tariffs. You'd be sitting here losing your shirt.

But we're taking in billions. We're really taking in trillions of dollars, if you think about it, Scott, because the real numbers, you know, when you think of all the money being poured into the country for new auto plants and all of the other things, AI.

So what we're doing is, we're taking a relatively small portion of that, and we're going to be giving and providing it to the farmers in economic assistance. And we love our farmers. And as you know, the farmers like me, because, you know, based on voting trends—you could call it voting trends or anything else, but they're great people. They're the backbone of our country.

So we're going to use that money to provide \$12 billion in economic assistance to American farmers. Twelve billion dollars is a lot of money, Meryl. What do you think? Peanuts for you, though, right? *[Laughter]* She's a farmer of rice.

This release will—this relief will provide much-needed certainty to farmers as they get this year's harvest to market and look ahead to next year's crops. And it'll help them continue their efforts to lower food prices for American families.

And again, we inherited something that—we inherited the worst inflation in the history of our country, and we're taking care of it.

Farmers are an indispensable national asset, part of the backbone of America. I've always felt it so strongly. They're so important. Unfortunately, under Sleepy Joe Biden—he's a sleepy guy—our farmers were crushed by the worst inflation in modern history and crippling restrictions on energy, water, and countless other necessities for farmers. And what they did to the farmer in terms of putting the brakes on was just absolutely unacceptable.

In my first term, we had an agricultural trade surplus by a lot. We had a big surplus, meaning we were exporting American agricultural products all over the world, making a net profit and, in many cases, a very substantial profit. He came in and ruined it. Biden turned that surplus into a gaping agricultural deficit that continues to this day. But we're knocking it down. It's starting to go very good.

In fact, China, as you know, is buying a tremendous amount of soybeans. And the number—I spoke with President Xi recently—very recently—and I think he's going to do even more than he promised to do. So I think it's—the relationship is a very good one. I think he's going to do more than he promised to do, and what he promised to do is a lot. So we're very happy with that.

In the last year, Biden bankruptcies rose by 55 percent, having to do with farms. So farm bankruptcies under Joe Biden went up 55 percent. That's not good. But now we're once again in a position where a President is able to put farmers first. But unfortunately, I'm the only President that does that.

On day one, I terminated the "green new scam." Energy prices are down. Gasoline prices are down. We've slashed record numbers of crippling regulations, and we're working on huge trade deals, already securing \$60 billion in agricultural purchase commitments. And you know, Biden made none. He didn't make any trade deals having to do with the farmers or any of it. It's crazy. China committed. He was the worst President in the history of our country, by the way, in case anybody has any questions.

China committed to over \$40 billion of soybean purchases, and that's a commitment. And I asked President Xi if he could even up it, and I think he'll do that. I mean, not a commitment. The \$40 billion is a commitment, but the soybean farmers are quite happy.

Since my successful meeting in South Korea with President Xi, purchases have been made and soybeans are being exported out of the United States to China as we speak. And I say that our soybeans—I told this to President Xi—our soybeans are more nutritious than competitors. Somebody said, "Is that a Trump statement or is that real?" *[Laughter]* In fact, you know who asked me that question? President Xi asked me that question. He said: "Really? I had never heard of it." And he was a food purchaser for a long time. But that's what I hear.

And Japan agreed to \$8 billion in purchases of corn, soybeans, ethanol, fertilizer, aviation biofuel, and rice. *[Laughter]* You know, Japan never bought rice from anybody else. It's like a very important thing to them, and they agreed to buy rice. Okay?

*Kennedy Rice Mill Founder and Chief Executive Officer Meryl Kennedy. Absolutely.*

*The President.* So I also proudly signed into law the largest tax cuts in history in the "One Big Beautiful Bill," the monumental tax relief bill that is benefiting—very, very strongly benefiting the American farmer.

And I think also, for farmers, we have, as you know—and we got this—the estate tax—or the "death tax," as they call it—on farmers, on small businesses. You don't have to pay it anymore. A lot of farms would—you love your children, and your children are great, and they want to be farmers, and you leave the farm to your children. And a lot of farms are—you know, sort of cash poor. Land rich, cash poor.

And the kids would go to the local bank, or to any bank, and they'd borrow money to pay the estate tax, and they'd end up losing the farm, they'd go bankrupt, and lot of death too. You know, literally, because they love their farm and they love their business, and they love that way of life, they end up committing suicide. A lot of suicides.

We have no more estate tax. How about that? You have children?

*Ms. Kennedy.* I do.

*The President.* Huh?

*Ms. Kennedy.* I do.

*The President.* Well, let them know. Now, if you love your children, then it's good. If you don't love your children, you don't have to leave them anything. It doesn't matter what I just said. *[Laughter]*

*Ms. Kennedy.* They're still young. I still love them.

*The President.* I have a feeling you love them.

*Ms. Kennedy.* I still love them.

*The President.* I have a feeling you love your children.

But the estate tax is a very big thing. So you don't have estate tax. You die, you leave your farm or whatever—or small business to your children. You don't have to pay estate tax. It seems to affect the farmer more than anybody else, because you can have a farm that's very valuable, and therefore, you have to pay a big tax, but it's not a big value in terms of cash.

Maximizing domestic farm production is a big part of how we will make America affordable again and bring down grocery prices for American families. And again, these are prices that we inherited. When I left, we were doing incredible. In 4 years, what they've done to this country and so many, and not even mentioning the border and the criminals allowed into our country and all of the others.

So I just wanted to say it's a tremendous honor being with you. I'd now like to ask Secretary Rollins to provide some of the details, followed by Secretary Bessent, Director of the National Economic Council Kevin Hassett, Senator Boozman, Representative Scott, and then we go to a couple of the farmers' representatives, but we'll all get involved a little bit. You can speak—anybody is shy to speak in front of the press, and I don't blame you if that's the case. *[Laughter]*

But farmers Cordt Holub and Meryl Kennedy will say a few words also, and then we'll have a little discussion. Okay?

Madam Secretary.

*Secretary Rollins.* Thank you to the greatest boss in the world for a long time now. It's just an honor to be here. I'm going to keep my comments very short because I really want to make sure that you and the world gets to hear from our farmers. So a couple of quick points.

Number one, this country and our farm economy is facing a crisis that we inherited that most of these farmers have not seen in their lifetime. Profitability is down. It's just one—one crisis after another. When we came into office, sir—when you did and you were sworn in on January the 20th, as you mentioned, not one new trade deal had been struck in 4 years. The cost of inputs for our farmers—fertilizer up 36 percent; manual labor—labor up 47 percent; interest rates up 73 percent.

*[At this point, Secretary Rollins continued her remarks, concluding as follows.]*

So, as you are going to your lender, as you are working to ensure and understanding what you can plant for next year, you will have that number in hand. And we will continue to talk to our farmers, continue to understand exactly what this looks like and what is necessary.

The final thing I'll say is——

*The President.* It's \$12 billion.

*Secretary Rollins.* Well, we're holding \$1 billion back. So today we are announcing \$11 billion.

*The President.* Oh.

*Secretary Rollins.* We are holding \$1 billion back——

*The President.* Very tricky.

*Secretary Rollins.* ——just to ensure that we are covering. So today's announcement covers all of our row crops.

*The President.* Very tricky.

*Secretary Rollins.* All of our row crops, but some specialty crops and others that we are still working with to best understand where they are in the farm economy and ensure that we're making every forward-moving position that we need to.

And then, finally, as we move to this new golden age for agriculture and for rural America, as we continue to fight for these farmers and ranchers, their way of life and those that are represented here represent hundreds of thousands of farmers across this country, just know that this president—I have never been around anyone who every time we talk, he asks "How are my farmers?" Every single time.

So we will never stop fighting. We will make sure that we're doing everything we can to ensure the next 250 years is just as bright, if not brighter, than the last.

So thank you, sir.

*The President.* Thank you, Brooke. Thank you. And this money would not be possible without tariffs. The tariffs are taking in, you know, hundreds of billions of dollars. And we're giving some up to the farmers because they were mistreated by other countries for, I don't know, maybe right reasons, maybe wrong reasons. They weren't—they were trying to show us something. And it would—it's really worked out really well. But because of the tariffs, this is possible.

The other thing I'd like to add before going to Scott, and I think it's very important, we're going to also give the tractor companies—John Deere and all of the companies that make the equipment—we're going to take off a lot of the environmental restrictions that they have on machinery. It's ridiculous. I know because I buy a lot of that machinery for different things. We have a lot of big clubs with, you know, hundreds, thousands of acres, and I buy a lot of stuff. And you buy it, and it's got so much equipment on it for the environmental. It doesn't do anything

except it makes the equipment much more expensive and much more complicated to work. And it's not as good as the old days.

And we're going to take a lot of that nonsense off of the equipment, which is going to reduce. And we're going to do it, and we're going to say you're going to reduce the prices. We're not going to do it, and they're not going to reduce. They're going to have to reduce their prices, because farming equipment has gotten too expensive. And a lot of the reason is because they put these environmental excesses on the equipment, which don't do a damn thing except make it complicated, make it impractical.

*Secretary Rollins.* That's right.

*The President.* And you really have to be—in many cases, you need about 185 IQ to turn on a lawn mower. [Laughter]

So we're going to take that off—that crap off that they put on—Biden, mostly. And we're going to take that off. So that's going to make a big—that will bring down farm—the equipment prices by a lot.

*Secretary Rollins.* That's right. That's right.

*The President.* And we're going to do that immediately. You're going to work with Lee Zeldin, who's not here. He's doing a fantastic job. And Lee is going to work that out. And that would be most of it. It's crazy. The machines, they're always under repair because they're so complicated that you can't fix them. The old days, you used to fix it yourself. Now you can't do that. You have to be a Ph.D. from, let's say, MIT. Okay? So we're going to get that done.

Scott, please, go ahead.

*Secretary of the Treasury Scott K.H. Bessent.* Good. Thank you, Mr. President. And thank you to the farmers to join us today. And I will tell all of you here that when either in person or when we are on a call with President Xi, the first thing the President is asking for is more soybean purchases. [Laughter]

*Secretary Rollins.* That's right.

*Secretary Bessent.* We don't talk about geopolitics. We don't talk about trade. It's about soybean purchases.

*The President.* We don't even say hello. We immediately start—[laughter]—soybean—we start with the soybean, please.

*Secretary Bessent.* "Could you do a little"—it's always, "Could you do a little more?" So—and I think—I think President Xi is—heard President Trump.

This group represents an American way of life that has fed our Nation and its spirit for hundreds of years. You are the caretakers of the most productive agricultural country on Earth. You drive hundreds of billions of dollars in exports, support millions of jobs, and keep America's economy running strong. And this administration is committed to keeping it that way.

By putting farmers first, President Trump is ushering in a new golden age for agriculture. The president's \$11 billion relief package for America's farmers comes at a critical time. These direct payments will give producers the breathing room they need to market this year's harvest and plan for next season. This serves as a liquidity bridge during a period of adjustment, supporting the strongest agricultural sector in the world.

[Secretary Bessent continued his remarks, concluding as follows.]

I believe Representative Scott and a group in the House that—we were originally just going to do factories, and they called us and said, "You need to do farm structures too." And the President said, "We're all in." And it extended and enhanced much-needed relief for the punishing death tax, giving family farms greater certainty as they plan for the next generation.

Mr. President, thank you for putting America first. By putting your farmers first through pro-growth, pro-farm agenda, you're ushering in a new golden age of American agriculture, and Treasury is proud to help in this.

*The President.* Thank you, Scott.

You know what we'll do? We're going to go a little faster, because the last meeting we had was 3 hours. *[Laughter]* We're the most transparent group. So, if we can go faster, it will be great.

And then we'll take some questions from the fake news. Is that okay? All right.

Kevin, go real fast. Kevin.

*National Economic Council Director Kevin A. Hassett.* Yes, I could go really fast, sir. *[Laughter]*

Sir, the farm economy, you always ask me to just get a few numbers to put it in perspective, and as I've looked through the incredible performance of these people that work so hard and are such important people for keeping communities alive, the thing that struck me the most, because you and I were here in the White House during COVID, is that during those terrible COVID times, farm production didn't go down. Like these farmers, they went to work every day, and they produced so much.

But then Joe Biden came in. So we had COVID, and farm production didn't go down. And then Joe Biden came in, and he really wrecked the farm economy. And so, during Biden's term, 150,000 farms closed, sir—150,000 farms closed, after we went through COVID and we didn't have a problem.

Now, why did we do it, why were we able to do that—I'm going fast. *[Laughter]* The first is that—do you know the expenses for farms fell 5 percent while we were here because of all the things that we did, expensing and everything else? But under Joe Biden, they went up 13 percent because of all, you know, the regulations, energy, everything else.

But the thing that really jumped out at me the most is because you had high growth and low inflation, interest expense for the farm economy fell \$120 million per year while you were there in the White House. But under Joe Biden, it increased by \$8 billion per year.

And so you wonder why it is that we need this \$11 billion, maybe \$12 billion to build a bridge loan to America's farmers. It's because we know how to fix it. But there really was a hole that was dug in the previous administration.

Thank you. Hope it was fast enough.

*The President.* Thank you very much. That was quick. That was good. Appreciate it.

Senator, please.

*Senator John N. Boozman.* Yes, sir. No. Thank you so much. Thank you for convening us—convening this great announcement and all your hard work for farmers. I think—I was reading the clips. I think yesterday you talked about—Mr. Secretary, about farmers needing certainty, and—which is so true. This bridge note is one of those things that provides certainty.

I also, as I was reading that, thought to myself: The one thing that farmers can be certain of is the fact that you've got their back, and you proved——

*The President.* Right. I do.

*Sen. Boozman.* —that through the years in the last administration and now this.

I was giving a presentation to the Senate a while back, and I was talking about us having the cheapest, safest food supply of any place in the world. It's not just about the farmers and rural America.

And so Marco Rubio was sitting by me, prior to coming over here and becoming a great Secretary of State, but he punched me and said, "John, always remind"—he was head of the Committee on Intelligence, and he punched me and said, "Always remind them: Food security is national security."

*The President.* Right.

*Sen. Boozman.* So this is important for so many different reasons. And again, I appreciate you for recognizing that, not only now, but when you were campaigning in your first election, how you treated the farmers in that—in your first administration, and now stepping up.

So we look forward to helping you. If we need some additional help, looking to Congress—  
—

*The President.* Yes. [Inaudible]

*Sen. Boozman.* —whatever, we'll be there for you, sir.

*The President.* We're taking in so much money with the tariffs now that it's such a pleasure. Without it, you—we wouldn't be able to help you. We're making our country—we're the richest country in the world now.

And you know, we have a big decision. Hopefully, we're going to get the right decision. It's such a big thing in the Supreme Court right now, and we have a lot of bad people opposed to us—people that hate our country. Other countries are involved, some real sleazebags that I know—political sleazebags, and they're trying to take that away from us.

And we have other methods, but they're not as powerful.

*Sen. Boozman.* Right.

*The President.* They're not as quick. Some of the wars that I solved wouldn't have been solved using those methods.

So it's a very important thing, the tariff. The decision of the Supreme Court is a very important thing.

And, Scott, we can do it other ways, but it's slow, and it's cumbersome and it doesn't have the power. It doesn't have the national security power that we have. So I hope we're going to be successful. That's all I can tell you.

Austin, please.

Thank you, John.

*Representative J. Austin Scott.* First of all, President, thank you for the selection of Brooke Rollins as Secretary of Agriculture. That was a big first step. And——

*The President.* Do you want to keep her? [Laughter]

*Rep. Scott.* Absolutely.

*Sen. Boozman.* Can I—can I——

*Rep. Scott.* Absolutely.

*Sen. Boozman.* —butt in and second that? She's—not only her, but her staff does a tremendous job.

*The President.* I agree.

*Sen. Boozman.* And we really do—

*The President.* Remember eggs? We came in and——

*Sen. Boozman.* —appreciate all she does.

*Rep. Scott.* Absolutely.

*The President.* —the people in the media—I'm going to be nice—people in the media—we're 3 days into office, Susie, right?

*White House Chief of Staff Susan Wiles.* Mm-hmm.

*The President.* They say, "Egg prices are up like 90 percent—more than that." And I said, "I just got here. I didn't know about it." [Laughter] I just—anyway, she got those prices down to below what they were before. She's doing a great job.

Now beef is starting to come down, and some other things are starting to come down.

Again, we inherited these problems, but we're getting them down.

Go ahead, please, Austin.

*Rep. Scott.* She is a fact-based decisionmaker. And the egg issue is where I learned about her. She said: "We're not going to use a vaccine that doesn't work. We're going to develop a vaccine that does."

*The President.* That's right.

*Rep. Scott.* And that is 100 percent what it takes. And so we have to make decisions based on facts.

And, President Trump, the trade issues, I want to thank you for—for exposing what other countries were doing to us.

*The President.* Yes.

*Rep. Scott.* I want to mention one specifically for the benefit of Kevin and Scott. I know they're—I hope they're paying attention to it, but this—the European Union Deforestation Regulation, where they are imposing on our landowners rules that were established for Brazil, and now they're telling the American farmer what they can and can't do on—on their own land through this European Union Deforestation Regulation. I——

*The President.* Now, what one is that? Tell—explain that.

*Rep. Scott.* They are telling the American farmer that if their timber is cut and they are going to use that land for pasture land or for production agriculture that they will not take the timber or the by-products from the sale of that timber.

And I have talked with Jamieson a little earlier about we need to make it clear to Europe, Mr. President, if you would——

*The President.* If you could give me a two-paragraph statement on that, I will give that to them, and they will do what they have to do.

*Rep. Scott.* Yes, sir.



*The President.* We're always helping them. And they do this kind of stuff. And you know, they pass little regulations that are—that cost billions of dollars. It takes them 2 minutes to do it. They do it. Very tough. No good.

*Rep. Scott.* Yes, sir.

*The President.* You give me a couple of paragraphs or so—we don't have to do a lengthy study—and I'll get that changed fast.

*Rep. Scott.* Thank you.

*The President.* Okay?

*Rep. Scott.* Thank you very much, President. We love you. And——

*The President.* It's incredible. It's incredible. Every day, it's something else.

*Rep. Scott.* A country that can't feed itself doesn't know what freedom is, and so thank you for making sure that our farmers have the tools that they need so that we as a country can feed ourselves.

*The President.* Well, just what you said to me about, you know, the European Union. I think that's the European Union, right? We have to be able to act quickly with tariffs. We can't just, you know, go to a committee, go to a study that takes 7 months, and talk. We've got to be able to act quickly.

So thank you very much.

*Rep. Scott.* Thank you.

*The President.* John.

*Senator John H. Hoeven III.* So thank you. I think that's the message from farm country is thank you very much. You know, in the Working Family Tax Relief Act—or, as my young staffers call it, "OB3"—[laughter]—there is a tremendous amount for farmers and ranchers. You mentioned the credit, as far as estate tax, which is so important. You analyzed it just right.

But also in there, we enhanced ARC and PLC, which is a countercyclical safety net thanks to the strong leadership of Senator Boozman and our colleagues in the House. We also included the FARMER Act, which was my bill to make crop insurance more affordable.

These tools will kick in next year, Mr. President, in a big, big way for our farmers. Big time. And people aren't even really looking at it yet, but it's going to be a very big deal.

So today is all about bridging to get there. And I want to thank Secretary Bessent and Jamieson Greer. They're tremendous, and they're negotiating hard out there for farmers and ranchers.

*The President.* They are.

*Sen. Hoeven.* And I know it's because you're setting the tone. But this is that bridge.

And so we need to come back to Secretary Rollins. Thank you. Your leadership on this was vital.

And, Mr. President, this—you're right. They love you in farm country out there. All you have to do is drive out and see the flags and——

*The President.* I—no, there's signs all over the fields there.

*Sen. Hoeven.* On the hay bales, right?

*The President.* It's a great honor.

*Sen. Hoeven.* I—so——

*The President.* They're great people. The best people.

*Sen. Hoeven.* ——this is really important—really important for our farmers and ranchers. Thank you very much.

*The President.* You're—you're doing a great job, too, John. Thank you.

And whatever we need, we get through the Senate, we get through the House. We'll get it done.

I think we'll start maybe with Cordt Holub, and you come from——

*Iowa Farm Bureau member Cordt Holub.* Yes.

*The President.* ——a place that I'm very happy with, Iowa.

*Mr. Holub.* I hail from the great State of Iowa.

*The President.* That's right.

*Mr. Holub.* You know, I'm surrounded here by some of the—greatest farmers in the area and from across the country—anything from rice farmers—we've got all sorts of cotton farmers, everything. Everything is here represented so well.

And first off, from—me, I want to say thank you for this bridge payment. It's Christmas early for farmers.

And just to kind of have an icebreaker here for this story, I've got a 2-year-old little boy at home—2-year-old little boy and a 4-month-old little girl. And the other day, I was reading my little boy a story at night, putting him to bed, and he said, "Daddy, I—don't want Santa Claus to come to our house for Christmas. I want President Trump." [*Laughter*]

And I think—Mr. Trump, I think you brought—I think you brought Christmas to farmers. With this bridge payment, we'll be able to farm another year, help us get by.

It's such an honor to be here with you. I lost my grandfather and our hired hand in 2002 in a farming accident, and he instilled in me at an early age to love the land, to take pride in what we do.

*The President.* Was that a machine accident?

*Mr. Holub.* It was a machine accident.

And it gets in your blood to farm. It's in our blood. Despite what happened, I want my 2-year-old to farm. I want my 4-month-old daughter to have an opportunity.

And what you're doing here in DC is working. You have a backbone to stand up to other countries for trade.

*The President.* Yes.

*Mr. Holub.* You're getting things done.

Tax provisions—I'll be able to potentially pass on a farm to my children because of you.

Ethanol—you're working for ethanol, trying to get E15 year-round.

We're dealing with California, Prop 12. Let's continue to work on that. I think we can have a lot of domestic product used here in the country, and we can keep America first, and you're good at that. That is who you are.

And if we keep that E15, you can have the biggest——

*The President.* So E15 is a big deal?

*Mr. Holub.* E15 is a great deal, year-round.

*The President.* Okay.

*Mr. Holub.* You could have the biggest stamp: I did that. Trump did that. And we would thank you. Farmers would love you more than—more than anything if we could continue that—continue to use domestic product, use the by-products, and even be able to export to other countries.

And so what you've done here in just having us here in the White House with you, sitting beside the Secretary and all these other great individuals here, what a true honor.

And I will take pride in this meeting, and I'll take this home for many generations to come. And because of what you're doing, hopefully, them generations can stay on the Holub Land Farm.

*The President.* Well, we're going to bring you into the Oval Office when we're finished, okay? The farmers.

*Secretary Rollins.* That would be amazing.

*The President.* Nobody else, just a farmers. [*Laughter*] And we'll take some——

*Sen. Boozman.* You've seen enough of us.

*The President.* We'll take some pictures, right? Our representatives also, right? We have to let them come, because they're doing a great job. John and John and Austin, we appreciate it. You're doing a great job.

Meryl, go ahead, please. Tell us about rice.

*Ms. Kennedy.* Rice.

Well, thank you, first of all, for inviting me here, and my friend, the Secretary. You have an incredible lady right here.

*The President.* Yes.

*Ms. Kennedy.* She really is.

Along with being a mother of three and a wife, I run my family's agribusiness, Kennedy Rice Mill, in a little town called Mer Rouge, Louisiana—about 1,000 people in northern—the northern part of the State. We employ around 150 people, taking rice from the field to a finished product. I'm supplying some of the largest food companies that many of you would know here, domestically, but also abroad.

And my sisters and I—because there is four of us—right?—I'm the youngest of four daughters—started our own rice brand a few years ago to just tell the story of American agriculture that hadn't really been told before.

But I wish I was here under better terms. I'll tell you, I think the rice industry thanks you sincerely for what you have done for the California rice market and to Japan. It has been monumental for our industry, but us in the South are really struggling. I mean, this is not just a

crisis. I would say it's almost market dynamics that really are true anti—in a anticompetitive nature, right?

So it follows what you what you sent out this weekend. And we do believe that countries are dumping rice into this country today. We've never seen imports this great.

*The President.* Which countries?

*Ms. Kennedy.* India, Thailand, even China into Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico used to be one of the largest markets for U.S. rice. We haven't shipped rice into Puerto Rico in years.

So this has been happening for years. This didn't start during your administration, but unfortunately, we're seeing it in a much bigger way now.

The tariffs are working, but we need to double down, because——

*The President.* You want more. I mean, I understand.

*Ms. Kennedy.* Well, they're cheating, right? They're——

*The President.* Yes, I know. Could I ask——

*Ms. Kennedy.* ——you know, not—they're just subsidizing, and then they——

*The President.* Scott, India. Tell me about India. Why is India allowed to do that? They have to pay tariffs. Do they have an exemption on rice?

*Secretary Bessent.* No. No, sir. We're still working on their trade deal. So we'll——

*The President.* Yes, but they shouldn't be dumping. I mean, I heard that. I heard that from others too. You can't do that. You can't.

*Ms. Kennedy.* There's a WTO case against India right now.

*The President.* Give me the—give me the countries, if you could. Go ahead. India. Who else?

*Ms. Kennedy.* So India——

*The President.* Mark it down, would you, Scott?

*Secretary Bessent.* Yes, sir.

*Ms. Kennedy.* Thailand, China into Puerto Rico—not into the—to, you know, the continental U.S., but into Puerto Rico. Those are the main culprits.

*The President.* So Puerto Rico used to do a lot of business, and now you're not doing business?

*Ms. Kennedy.* One hundred percent. Puerto Rico was U.S.-based, and not it's——

*The President.* So, all right. It's so easy to settle.

*Secretary Bessent.* Yes.

*The President.* Okay?

*Ms. Kennedy.* But there's others too, and I can get you a full list as well.

*The President.* Get me a full list. Yes.

*Ms. Kennedy.* Of course, I can.

*The President.* All right.

*Ms. Kennedy.* So——

*The President.* Go ahead.

*Ms. Kennedy.* So, truly, this is a national security issue. I think you put it just perfectly. And so, I want to—for all of us in the room to know that rice is more than just a commodity. It's a currency in many of these countries.

*The President.* And you love rice. Right? Do you love it?

*Ms. Kennedy.* I love rice. *[Laughter]* Yes. I'm going to get you to love rice too.

*The President.* I like rice.

*Ms. Kennedy.* You know, the next time you're not going to have a button for a Coke. You're going to have a button for rice. *[Laughter]*

*Secretary Rollins.* A little bucket of rice.

*Ms. Kennedy.* But our——

*The President.* The farmers love what they do.

*Ms. Kennedy.* Yes.

*Secretary Rollins.* It's true.

*Ms. Kennedy.* Our—well, our farmers can feed this Nation and many nations abroad, but we need fair trade, not free trade.

*The President.* Yes.

*Ms. Kennedy.* And so we appreciate what you've done today. We appreciate what you did in the "Big Beautiful Bill." I mean, my word, you really changed reference prices. And, you know, we're hopeful that we can even move that further.

I know that rice prices right now—the lowest they've been in over 40 years. So, we're going to struggle. We're going to max out on our payments, probably. So that's something that I know those in Congress can potentially help us with to change.

But, again, we appreciate everything you're doing.

*The President.* That's solved so quickly with tariffs to these countries that are illegally shipping. It's solved. You'll—your problem is solved in 1 day. That's why we have to win the Supreme Court case.

*Secretary Rollins.* That's right.

*The President.* In one day, that problem is solved.

It's so unfair. They go out of business, they put everyone out of business. That's what they did to our car industry—we lost more than 50 percent of our car industry because of that. We lost—our chip industry went to Taiwan because of that.

If you had a President that said: "No, you can't do that. It's 100-percent or 200-percent tariff on chips if you make them outside of the United"—we would have—we would have never lost our chip industry. But we're going to have 40 or 50 percent of it back very shortly, because they're all coming in now from Taiwan. They're building chip companies. But it's the same thing with rice.

Thank you, darling, very much. Really nice.

*Ms. Kennedy.* Yes. Well, thank you.

*The President.* We—it will be good.

*Ms. Kennedy.* Thank you.

*The President.* We'll get it solved very quickly. We just need the countries. We just give us the names of the countries.

*Ms. Kennedy.* Yes. They own the largest brands.

*The President.* Tariffs, again, it solves the problem in 2 minutes.

*Ms. Kennedy.* Yes, they've bought the largest brands at retail too. Right? So they're—it—they have an incentive to subsidize their products that they can keep it on the shelf.

*The President.* Yes. Who did that?

*Ms. Kennedy.* The Indians own the two largest brands.

*The President.* All right. Then we'll take care of it.

*Ms. Kennedy.* Yes. Thank you.

*The President.* That's very—it's so easy.

So do you have any questions?

*Q.* Yes. President Trump, how are you?

*The President.* How about keeping it on farming, as opposed to boats——

*Q.* Your team answered all of my questions on farming, but I do have a——

*The President.* ——or something?

Yes, do you have a farm question?

### *Consumer Prices*

*Q.* Mr. President, in the interest of affordability, with this aid package, I assume that that's something you want consumers to see before midterms next year. How quickly will that affect prices at the grocery store?

*The President.* Well, I think the prices are going to be going down already. I mean, the prices are way down. We've brought prices way down from what it was. We inherited high prices. We inherited the biggest inflation in the history of our country—that means prices going up—and we brought it down very substantially.

Now, inflation is essentially gone. We have it normalized, and it will go down even a little bit further. You don't want it to be deflation either. You have to be careful. But we brought it way down.

We had inflation that was the highest in the history of our country. They say 48 years, but I say the history. Forty-eight years is pretty bad too. Right?

So we're solving those problems. We're bringing them way down.

[Several reporters began asking questions at once.]

Yes.

### *"Make America Healthy Guidelines" Nutrition Guidelines*

*Q.* Would you consider MAHA incentives for farmers that go by MAHA guidelines?

*The President.* Well, a lot of the farmers like those MAHA guidelines, yes.

*Secretary Rollins.* Yes, sir.

*The President.* So, I mean, they do. We like MAHA.

How do you feel about that?

*Secretary Rollins.* Yes, let me answer that.

So, this is another reason—I didn't mention it, but this is another reason I think that what we're moving into is a golden age for agriculture. As Secretary—Secretary Kennedy and I and across our Cabinet, with the President's leadership, focusing on making America healthy again, the undergirding, foundational effort in that is our agriculture industry. It is our farmers and our ranchers.

So, as the new dietary guidelines come out in early January—where USDA alone spends \$400 million a day on nutrition programs. That's a whole other SNAP fraud, et cetera. But when you think about what a market mover that is, as we begin to move the market toward more locally produced, American-made, healthier products closer to the schools, the hospitals, et cetera, you again begin to open up so much of the market for the great products produced by these farmers instead of ultra-processed foods out of a box.

So there's a lot that's going to be coming on that as well. I'm really excited.

*The President.* Okay.

*District of Columbia U.S. Attorney Office's National Security Section Deputy Chief  
Jocelyn Ballantine*

*Q.* Question. It's not related to farming, but if you'll entertain. I'm Cara from LindellTV. Cara Castronuova. And I'm not fake news, just so you know. [*Laughter*]

And everybody's talking about the pipe bomber over the weekend, the suspect that was taken into custody. I reported on Biden's kangaroo court for four years, and I—this is an important question to me. Everyone knows that J6 was a fedsurrection to set you and your supporters up.

So my question is: What's your gut instinct about the new pipe bomber suspect taken into custody? Does your instinct tell you that he acted alone?

And also, Mr. President, how do you feel about the lead prosecutor on the pipe bomber case? Jocelyn Ballantine is the same prosecutor that allegedly asked a J6er to lie to frame you for J6 when you did nothing wrong. What are your thoughts?

*The President.* Well, thank you. I really appreciate that question. It's sort of a statement, and I appreciate it very much.

Jocelyn is being looked at. They all have to be looked at. What they're doing is so bad. This was a whole Democrat hoax. The whole thing was a Democrat hoax, and it's all being looked at.

Appreciate that.

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

*Federal Relief for Farmers*

*Q.* Is this the final aid package, Mr. President, or is more expected? Is this the final aid package—farm aid package?

*The President.* It depends on where we go. China is buying a lot. Other countries are buying a lot. And you know, the interesting thing about the farmer, they don't want aid. They want to just have a level playing field.

*Ms. Kennedy.* No, please.

*The President.* I've seen that more with farmers than anybody else, any other industry. Right, Deb?

*Senator Debra S. Fischer.* Right.

*The President.* We've seen it more with farmers, where I've had meetings like this, and primarily in the first term. And we did a great job. We turned it around.

This is going to be the golden age, but the farmers don't want aid. They want to have a level playing field, because if they have a level playing field, they'll do better than anybody else.

*Secretary Rollins.* That's right.

*The President.* They're better than anybody else. Our product is incredible. Our machinery is incredible. Right? I mean, we do have the best machines.

It's a very big statement I made, though: the environmental excess that we have put onto our tractors and all of our machinery. Do you all agree with that, by the way? Do you agree?

*Mr. Holub.* Oh, yes.

*The President.* You know what I'm talking about, right?

*Mr. Holub.* Yes, it's got to go.

*Secretary Rollins.* Yes.

*Ms. Kennedy.* Got to go.

*The President.* It doesn't do anything except make the machines break all the time.

*Mr. Holub.* Yes.

*The President.* And, I must say, I like to buy old machinery. I said, "Buy old"——

*Mr. Holub.* Yes.

*The President.* ——"because it's better." The new stuff is terrible. It never works. Never works.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Here we go. Listen to this.

### *U.S. Airstrikes on Suspected Drug-Trafficking Vessels in the Caribbean Sea and Eastern Pacific*

*Q.* Mr. President, you said you would have no problem with releasing the full video of that strike on September 2 off the coast of Venezuela. Secretary Hegseth now says——

*The President.* I didn't say that. That's—you said that. I didn't say that. This is ABC fake news.

*Q.* You said that you would have no problem releasing the full video—okay, well, Secretary Hegseth——

*The President.* No, I—whatever Hegseth wants to do is okay with me.

*Q.* He now says it's under review. Are you ordering the Secretary to release that full video? Would you like to see it out there?

*The President.* Oh, whatever he decides is okay with me.



So every boat we knock out of the water—every boat, we save 25,000 American lives. That was a boat loaded up with drugs. I saw the video. They were trying to turn the boat back to where it could float, and we didn't want to see that, because that boat was loaded up with drugs, just like everything else.

But every boat we shoot down—and I don't know if you know, we're 92- or 94-percent down in drugs coming in by the sea, and we're trying to find who are the 6 percent, because I don't know, people aren't liking to drive boats right now loaded up with drugs. But every single—put—think of that. Every single boat we shoot out, on average, we save 25,000 American lives.

Do you feel okay about that, Cordt?

*Mr. Holub.* Keep us safe.

*The President.* Okay. I knew—I knew—I know my man. [*Laughter*]

And what about you, Meryl? Are you okay with that?

*Ms. Kennedy.* I'm totally fine with that.

*Q.* Are you committed to releasing the full video?

*The President.* Didn't I just tell you that?

*Q.* You said that it was up to Secretary Hegseth.

*The President.* You're the most obnoxious reporter in the whole place. Let me just tell you, you are an obnoxious—a terrible—actually, a terrible reporter. And it's always the same thing with you.

I told you: Whatever Pete Hegseth wants to do is okay with me.

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

### *2026 Congressional Midterm Elections*

*Q.* If I could talk to you about the midterms, and I just have a quick question. There's at least 20 Republicans—House Republicans who have either said they're going to retire or not run again. Do you have any concerns about the number——

*The President.* And Democrats also. And Democrats also.

*Q.* Right. Do you have any concerns——

*The President.* Well, why don't you mention them? How many Democrats are going to retire?

*Q.* Well, do——

*The President.* How many Democrats?

*Q.* Well, that—well, that's what I was going to ask you. Do you have any concerns——

*The President.* No, no, but why don't you tell me the number of Democrats too?

*Q.* Well, do—are you concerned about the narrow margins?

*The President.* No, I'm not concerned.

### *New York Gubernatorial Election*

*Q.* And Congresswoman Elise Stefanik is among them——

*The President.* I think we're going to do well. We will have the greatest economy.

*Q.* —and Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman, who you know as well, is considering running for governor.

*The President.* We're going to have the greatest economy in history.

How many Democrats are retiring? How come you only know the Republicans, but not the Democrats?

*Q.* Because I came prepared to ask you a question about—you're the head of—

*The President.* No, no, you're unprepared, because you should know the Democrats. You're totally unprepared.

*Q.* Okay. Well, can I ask a quick follow-up about—

*The President.* Who are you with? Who are you with?

*Q.* I'm with New York Newsday, and I also have a quick follow-up. Congresswoman Elise Stefanik is among those who is running for New York Governor.

*The President.* She's great. She's great.

*Q.* Bruce Blakeman, who you also know, is Nassau County—

*The President.* He's also great.

*Q.* Are you planning on making any endorsements or have you made any choices yet?

*The President.* Well, I'll think about it. But he's great, and she's great. They're both great people. We have a lot of great people in the Republican Party.

Go ahead.

#### *Farm Profits/Tariffs*

*Q.* Can I get back to farming?

*The President.* Yes.

*Secretary Rollins.* Yes. Yes.

*Mr. Holub.* Yes.

*Ms. Kennedy.* Yes, thank you.

*Rep. Scott.* Please.

*Q.* So you talked about the profitability issue, the machinery playing a role in that.

*The President.* Right.

*Q.* I know fertilizer plays another role in that.

*The President.* That's right.

*Q.* A lot of that, the way I understand it, it comes in from Canada, different countries like that. What are we doing to bolster domestic fertilizer production to help make that more affordable? And then I think that will transition down the pipeline.

*The President.* Well, one of the things it—a lot of it does come in from Canada.

*Secretary Rollins.* It does.

*The President.* And so we'll end up putting very severe tariffs on that if we have to, because that's the way you want to bolster here. And we can do it here. We can all do that here.

But I would say—what you do? You put very severe tariffs on from coming into other countries. You'll be making your own fertilizer very soon.

*Secretary Rollins.* In fact, Secretary Burgum, this Cabinet is so remarkable. Instead of just seeing each other every month, we're literally talking every day, multiples of times a day.

But our Secretary of the Interior, I, and Secretary Bessent and others, we have a whole plan in place, including the reshoring of fertilizer and the opportunity to do it in America.

Having said that, we've also, per the President's guidance, issued a directive. These fertilizer companies, the seed companies, the equipment companies—all of the above—as our farmers have struggled year over year, these companies—the meatpacking companies continue to make, you know, a lot of money hand over fist—a lot of foreign-owned companies. So that's why the president has been very unequivocal in saying, "We've got to figure out why all these input costs are skyrocketing and all of our farmers are struggling," which we're going to do.

*The President.* So when they take——

*Secretary Rollins.* It is a great question and very important.

*The President.* ——when they take, like, fertilizer out of the country, all of the sudden, we don't do it anymore. Then they start charging and sending the, you know, very high prices from other countries, whether it's Canada or somebody else. We're not going to let that happen.

*Secretary Rollins.* Yes.

*The President.* Okay?

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

#### *Domestic Soybean Production/Domestic Agriculture*

*Q.* Mr. President, on the quality—on the quality of foreign produce. You spoke about soybeans and how the quality here in the United States obviously is a lot better. Is——

*The President.* That's what I've heard.

*Q.* Yes. Is the default of this administration—because that's an issue I understand with root vegetables, citrus as well.

*The President.* Yes.

*Q.* Is the default of this administration that even if it's more expensive—a little bit more expensive homegrown, you will choose home grown over cheaper produce abroad?

*The President.* I like homegrown. You know, some things we can't grow because we don't have the heat. There are some things, you know, little delicacies or maybe not such delicacies, but they grow better in warmer climates—very warm climates, actually—but for the most part, I like homegrown.

*Q.* Mr. President, thank you. One on this announcement and then one on foreign policy, if I may.

*The President.* Okay.

#### *Tariff Revenue*

*Q.* Are you open to tapping into tariff revenue again should farmers find they need additional relief to get to that level playing field?

*The President.* Yes, I am. If—we're going to make the farmers so strong, and I'm not even talking about financially, I mean, because that—they just want to be able to produce what they can produce.

*Secretary Rollins.* That's right.

*The President.* And we're going to make them so strong that it will be, indeed, a golden age for farmers.

*Q.* And then, on Russia and Ukraine——

*The President.* You know, we had it going in the first administration, and then Biden came in and ruined everything.

*Secretary Rollins.* That's right.

*The President.* They had no idea what they were—they did. I mean, I think they wanted—they hated the farmer. I love the farmer.

*Q.* And then——

*The President.* That's why I got 94 percent of the vote from the farmers. [Laughter]

*Secretary Rollins.* You did.

*The President.* But they hated the farmers. I love the farmers.

Go ahead.

#### *Ukraine/U.S. Security Assistance/Russian Conflict/U.S. Diplomatic Efforts*

*Q.* And then, on Russia and Ukraine. Obviously, your administration has been having talks with each side. Given that there is no peace deal at this point, will your administration stay engaged in those talks to effort a peace deal?

*The President.* Well, we just want to see people stop from being killed. You know, we don't—as you know, Joe Biden gave them \$350 billion. You know what I gave them? Nothing. I gave—well, I did give them Javelins at the beginning and knocked out a hell of a lot of tanks, but—and Obama gave sheets.

Remember? Obama gave sheets and I gave Javelins.

But no, we have a great situation going over there, except for one problem: You got a lot of people dying, and I want to see that stop.

So you have Ukrainian—mostly Ukrainian soldiers and Russian soldiers. Last month, 27,000 soldiers died—mostly soldiers, a few people from there—the dropping of a missile in the middle of Kyiv or wherever, which is a terrible thing. But mostly soldiers—27,000 soldiers died last month. That's what I want to see stopped.

We—as you know——

*Secretary Rollins.* That's so sad.

*The President.* ——we now sell equipment to NATO at full price, and NATO takes that equipment and probably gives it to Ukraine. I guess they could give it to others too, but for the most part, give it to Ukraine. And they're working with Ukraine in terms of distribution of equipment—missiles, et cetera. But we aren't spending money.

What we are doing is spending time on a humane basis. We want to see if we can stop the killing of 27—it would have never happened—this war would have never happened if the election weren't rigged. If I were President, this war would have never happened.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

### *China-U.S. Trade*

*Q.* Can you talk about the soybean purchases?

*The President.* Say it.

*Q.* You've talked a lot, obviously, about China's——

*The President.* Yes.

*Q.* ——soybean purchases. Some lawmakers from North and South Carolina have raised concern that U.S. tobacco farmers were told that China would not purchase flue-cured tobacco this year. Has that come up in your conversations at all——

*The President.* No, I haven't heard that.

*Q.* ——with President Xi?

*The President.* But we're doing well. The tobacco people—because of the deals I made, they're doing very well—but that could be in—if it's the case, I can get it solved very quickly.

*Q.* A fun question, President Trump——

*Q.* Can you also let us know how you——

*The President.* Yes.

*Q.* ——settled on this 12 billion—or 11 billion plus one more billion—dollar figure?

*The President.* We did. Yes, we looked how they were hurt, to what extent they were hurt. We did a very, you know, steady progression of charts, and we figured out a very exact number, and it was about \$12 billion.

Okay?

### *National Economy*

*Q.* President Trump, if you had one Christmas wish for America, besides making American farmers great again, what would it be?

*The President.* I would say very simply—you know, I go by—I go by a statement—when people asked that question—remember that question was asked by—to Ted Kennedy? And they said, "Well, what are you going to do to make America great?" And he couldn't answer the question. I have a very simple—we're going to make America greater than ever before, and we're going to do it through a series of tariffs, intelligent taxes, and incentives. And our country has never been stronger. We've never had anything like coming in.

We have \$18 trillion coming into our country right now. There's never been anything like it. And if you ask me that, I'll say, "I just want to keep doing what I'm doing, because there's never been anything like it's happened."

*Q.* Do you support the——

*The President.* The most—the biggest number ever in history was \$2 trillion, and we're at \$18 trillion. This is money pouring into our country on building car plants, on building AI plants. We just want to keep doing exactly what we're doing, because nothing like this has ever happened in the history of the world—not just our country. There's never been—Scott, would you say that's right? There's never been anything like the investments coming into America.

*Secretary Bessent.* Sir, this is a——

*Q.* Mr. President, do you——

*Secretary Bessent.* ——a record year. Record year.

*Q.* Do you support the Paramount deal, sir?

### *Health Insurance Reforms*

*Q.* On health care, Mr. President. Twenty-two million Americans are expected to see their health care insurance premiums start to rise by the beginning of next year.

*The President.* Are you talking about because Obamacare is so bad?

*Q.* Yes, well, sir, because the Obamacare subsidies are expiring.

*The President.* Yes.

*Q.* Are you going to do any——

*The President.* That's because Obamacare is so bad.

*Q.* What is the Republican plan? Are you going to let that happen on your watch?

*The President.* What I'm going to do is—if the Democrats go along with it, which they don't want to because they want to make the insurance companies very rich, okay? I want the money to be paid to the people to go out and buy their own health care instead of paying to the—you know, the insurance companies, their stock has gone up 1,700 percent in a short period of time. Did you know that? Seventeen hundred. You wish your corn went up, right? [*Laughter*]

But the insurance companies' stock has gone up by 1,700 percent, 1,800 percent. They're taking in trillions of dollars.

I don't want to pay the insurance companies anything, and I'm—I know a lot of them, but they're owned by the Democrats, and the Democrats have—Obamacare is a setup to make insurance companies rich. And I want to pay the people, and I want the people to go out and buy their own health care. And that's what we want to do, and that's what the Republicans want to do, because Obamacare is a disaster.

And I said it 5 years ago, 4 years ago, 3 years ago. It was always a disaster. It's bad health care that's too expensive for people.

And now, your premiums—and you said it better than I said it. You said the Obamacare premiums are going to go up. They're going way up. And what I want to do is have the money. And you know, who's getting that money? A lot of it is the insurance companies. I want the people to get the money and go out and buy their own health care. And everybody wants that, right?

Okay.

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

### *X Social Media Platform*

*Q.* Do you have any reaction on the fine that was imposed to X by the European Union?

*The President.* For what?

*Q.* To X. To the platform X, the fine that the——

*The President.* Wow. That was pretty——

*Q.* ——European Union imposed.

*The President.* —amazing. You're—you're talking about—is that European Union or is it—who did that? European Union or U.K.?

*Q.* Yes, the European Commission.

*The President.* Whoa, that's a nasty one. I don't know.

*Q.* Do you consider it an attack to the U.S.?

*The President.* Elon has not called me to ask for help on that one.

But no, that's a tough thing. I don't think it's right. No, I don't think it's right. I don't see, you know, how they can do that. No. I'm not—I'm going to—I'll speak about it later. I'm going to get a full report on it.

Look, Europe has to be very careful. They're doing a lot of things. We want to keep Europe, Europe. Europe is going in some bad directions. It's very bad—very bad for the people. We don't want Europe to change so much. They're going in some very bad directions. That was a big—you know, it was a bad thing.

*Q.* You've directed a review of the childhood vaccine schedule, possibly to match what is on par with peer nations in Europe. Would you support ending Federal mandates and just making those recommendations for schools?

*The President.* You're going to have to say it again.

#### *Childhood Vaccine Schedules*

*Q.* As far as the vaccines——

*The President.* Louder. Louder.

*Q.* As far as the vaccine schedule for children——

*The President.* Yes.

*Q.* ——would you support ending the Federal mandates and making it optional for schools?

*The President.* Well, we're looking at a lot of things having to do with vaccines and with the—you know, the different—I think we take like 88 different shots all wrapped up in one, one big glass of stuff like that—[laughter]—and we're going to be reducing it very substantially.

Yes.

*Q.* Do you support the Paramount——

*The President.* It will be safe——

*Q.* ——bid, Mr. President?

*The President.* ——but we're going to be reducing it very substantially.

#### *Paramount/Warner Brothers/Netflix/U.S. Cease-Fire Agreement Between Hamas and Israel*

*Q.* Do you support the Paramount bid for Warner Brothers that came in this morning?

*The President.* I don't know enough about it.

*Q.* You spoke about Netflix last night, saying you have concerns about——

*The President.* Yes, I know—I know the companies——

*Q.* ——them amassing market share.

*The President.* —very well. I know what they're doing, but I'd have to see. I have to see what percentage of market they have. We have to see the Netflix percentage of market; Paramount, the percentage of market.

I mean, none of them are particularly great friends of mine. You know, I just—I want to—I want to do what's right. That's all. It's so very important to do what's right.

*Q.* The Paramount deal is supported by Jared Kushner, Mr. President. Would that impact your decision?

*The President.* If Paramount is?

*Q.* It—

*The President.* No, I don't know. I haven't—I've never spoken to him about it. He's really trying to work on Gaza. [*Laughter*] I think Gaza is his primary thing is Gaza.

*Q.* If you're making house visits on Christmas Eve, as he suggested, does the Beast need to be fitted with sleigh rails? [*Laughter*]

*The President.* Do you want to answer that question? [*Laughter*]

*Secretary Rollins.* The—absolutely. We should put sleigh rails on the Beast. Yes. He is the—[*inaudible*].

*Q.* Madam Secretary, do you support that?

*The President.* Go ahead.

### *Health Insurance Reforms*

*Q.* That Republican plan that you just talked about when it comes to health care, when do you expect Republicans to put that on—

*The President.* We're looking at it very strongly, and we're also going to the Democrats and asking them to do it. The Democrats want to make the insurance companies rich. They're all paid off by the insurance companies. They're—a tremendous amount of the insurance company funding goes to Democrats. Why don't you ask that question of the Democrats? Because I would love to do it. I'd love all of the money go to the people. They go to the people.

You know, I put that out 2 weeks ago. It became number one, viral. People love it. I want the money to go for health care to go to the people and let the people buy their own health care through an account. They can buy their own health care. And everybody loves it, except for the Democrats. And you know why they don't? Because they're paid off by the insurance companies.

Okay, what else?

### *Acting U.S. Attorney for the District of New Jersey Alina Habba/Senate Confirmation Process*

*Q.* Yes. Alina Habba says she's stepping down as U.S. attorney for the District of New Jersey after the courts disqualified her. Do you have any comment on that? And she—

*The President.* Well, she's not disqualified. You've got a blue slip thing that's horrible. It's a horrible thing. It makes it impossible to appoint a judge or U.S. attorney, and it's a shame. And the Republicans should be ashamed of themselves that they allow this to go on. Because I can't appoint a U.S. attorney that's not a Democrat, because they put a block on it. So, if you appoint in Virginia or in New Jersey or in California, a U.S. attorney or a judge—I mean, a judge situation is ridiculous. The only people that you can get by are Democrats, because they will put a hold on it.



If I put up George Washington and Abraham Lincoln to be a U.S. attorney in New Jersey or to be U.S. attorney in Virginia, where you have Democrat Senators, they will not approve them. And this is a gentleman's agreement that's lasted for too long, and it doesn't make it possible — especially in light of what's going on today. It means you can't appoint a Republican U.S. attorney, and we don't play the same game with them, but they do.

And I hope that somebody speaks to Senator Grassley about doing something about the blue slip, because I'm telling you, if—John, I put up great people, top people, highest education, the best lawyers to be, like, U.S. attorney. And both Senators—it only takes one, but if they're—if they're Democrat Senators, they say, "We're not going to approve it."

I had a couple of them say, "Why don't you appoint Democrats?" All because Senator Grassley, with his blue slip stuff, will not let anybody go by.

By the way, the Democrats have violated the blue slip provision on numerous occasions, but we don't do it. And what it means is, I guess, I just have to keep appointing people for three months and then just appoint another one, another one. And it's a very sad situation. We're losing tremendous—we're losing a lot of great people. We have about seven U.S. attorneys who are not going to be able to keep their jobs much longer because of the blue slip. Because unless—I think I know why they did that: to protect their ass. Okay? That's why they did that.

But it should be done away with. I want to be able to appoint great—the most highly educated, the most respected people. They can't keep their jobs because of the blue slips. Terrible.

Okay, thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

The farmers—let's come into the Oval Office. All right? Deb, come on. We're going to go into the Oval Office. You're going to see what a real office looks.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:31 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Elon R. Musk, chairman and chief technology officer, X Corp.; and Sens. Cory A. Booker, Robert Menendez, Timothy M. Kaine, and Mark R. Warner. He also referred to his son-in-law Jared C. Kushner. Ms. Kennedy referred to her sisters Patchez, Felicity, and Chantel Kennedy, cofounders of 4Sisters Rice. A reporter referred to Brian Cole, the Virginia man arrested and charged with placing pipe bombs outside the Republican and Democratic National Committee buildings in Washington, DC, the night before the January 6, 2021, civil unrest and violence at the U.S. Capitol. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on December 9.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Federal relief for farmers, roundtable discussion; Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, White House.

*Locations:* Washington, DC.

*Names:* Ballantine, Jocelyn; Bessent, Scott K.H.; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Blakeman, Bruce; Booker, Cory A.; Boozman, John N.; Fischer, Debra S.; Grassley, Charles E.; Habba, Alina; Hassett, Kevin A.; Hegseth, Peter B.; Hoeven, John H., III; Holub, Cordt; Kaine, Timothy M.; Kennedy, Meryl; Kushner, Jared C.; Menendez, Robert; Musk, Elon R.; Rollins, Brooke L.; Scott, J. Austin; Stefanik, Elise M.; Warner, Mark R.; Wiles, Susan; Xi Jinping; Zeldin, Lee M.

*Subjects:* 2021 civil unrest and violence at U.S. Capitol; 2024 Presidential election; Agricultural production, strengthening efforts; Childhood vaccine schedules; China, President; China, trade with U.S.; Economic improvement; Egg prices; Environmental Protection Agency; Ethanol and biofuels; Farmers, Federal relief and support efforts; Federal regulations, reduction efforts; Fertilizer production and use, efficiency improvements; Food markets and prices; Forests, wetlands, and grasslands, conservation efforts; Free and fair trade; Gasoline costs; Health

insurance exchanges; Illegal drugs, interdiction efforts; India, trade with U.S.; Inflation; Israel-Hamas cease-fire agreement implementation; Japan, trade with U.S.; National Economic Council; Netflix; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Paramount; Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Secretary of Agriculture; Secretary of the Treasury; Secretary of War; Senate confirmation process; Suspected drug-trafficking vessels, U.S. airstrikes in Caribbean Sea and Eastern Pacific; Tariffs; Tax Code reform; U.S. attorneys; Ukraine, international military aid; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; White House Chief of Staff.

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