

The other key proposal I have introduced would make a number of revisions and management improvements to the CRP program and other U.S. Department of Agriculture easement programs.

CRP plays a very significant role in South Dakota's economy, as it provides a major portion of the habitat for the Chinese ringneck pheasant, which brings more than \$250 million each year to my State's rural areas, towns, and cities. Unfortunately, farmers have spent years frustrated by some of the ways the Department of Agriculture has managed this program.

We need to make sure that Federal farm programs don't discourage farmers and ranchers from participating, especially in times like these, when these programs are sorely needed to provide valuable safety net assistance and to help protect soil and water.

My conservation program legislation addresses major concerns that farmers have with CRP and other USDA conservation programs by allowing commonsense use and management of land enrolled in these programs, which improves these programs for farmers and at the same time saves taxpayers' money.

My legislation also expands the CRP acreage cap by 25 percent and uses historical acreage averages to make sure CRP will be available in States that have used it and that need it the most. Above all, the acres enrolled in CRP and other easement programs must be effectively used and managed to maximize their usefulness and effectiveness for land and water conservation and wildlife, and I will work to make that happen.

In addition, both of my legislative proposals contain provisions to provide additional support to young, beginning, and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, as well as to military veterans. We need to ensure that young and beginning farmers and ranchers and others have opportunities to succeed, especially now, when even seasoned farmers are struggling.

Along with trade agreements and the farm bill, there are other things we can do to help farmers and ranchers and small businesses. This year, we plan to take up major reform of our broken, bloated Tax Code. Making sure that we consider the needs of farmers and ranchers during this debate will be one of my priorities.

We can also help farmers and ranchers by removing burdensome government regulations that do little to help the environment but force farmers to spend untold hours and dollars on compliance.

One example of this kind of burdensome regulation is the so-called waters of the United States rule, something with which every farmer and rancher is familiar. This EPA regulation improperly used the Clean Water Act to justify expanding the EPA's regulatory authority to waters like small wetlands, creeks, stock ponds, and ditches.

The rule specifically targeted the Prairie Pothole Region, which covers five States, including nearly all of eastern South Dakota. I am grateful that the President chose to protect farmers and ranchers by announcing a review of this rule in February of this year.

We could further support American farmers by removing yet another unnecessary regulatory hurdle, and that is the Reid vapor pressure regulation, which restricts the sale of E15 fuel during the summer driving season.

Providing a waiver for E15, as enjoyed by other fuels, is a bipartisan, no-cost way to roll back regulation and grant consumers real choice at the pumps, as well as to help our farmers.

Our Nation and the world depend on American farmers and ranchers. We need to make sure they can sustain their operations and continue to efficiently feed America and the world.

I look forward to continuing our work on tax, trade, regulatory, and farm bill policies that support farmers and ranchers in South Dakota and throughout our country.

When agriculture does well, I would argue, our national economy does well. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MONTANA AG SUMMIT

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I have some good news from Montana. A week ago yesterday, the U.S. Senate voted to confirm former Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue to be our next Secretary of Agriculture. When we met prior to his confirmation hearing, Secretary Perdue and I discussed Montana ag and the need to expand agricultural access to foreign markets. I know he will prioritize the ag industry during his time in office, and I am pleased to share that I will be hosting the Secretary in Montana for the Montana Ag Summit that is going to be held in Great Falls at the end of this month.

Back in March, during the Secretary's confirmation hearing, I extended an invitation to join us in Montana's Golden Triangle as we discuss the issue of strengthening international relationships for Montana's agriculture. The Golden Triangle is where my great-great-grandmother homesteaded as she moved from Minnesota—a Norwegian immigrant—to Montana.

At the Ag Summit, we will showcase the technological advancements that are changing the way we produce crops and livestock, promote the next generation of ag producers, and discuss the challenges ag producers face as a result of our Federal policies and regulations. The Montana Ag Summit will bring together leaders from across the agricultural

industry to hear from our keynote speakers, which include Secretary Perdue and my colleague and friend and the chairman of the U.S. Senate Ag Committee, Senator PAT ROBERTS from Kansas. Nothing takes the place of hearing directly from Montanans and seeing our great State with your own eyes.

I have been a strong advocate for Montana ag since coming to Washington, DC, and it is a privilege to serve as Montana's only representative on the U.S. Senate Ag Committee. Whenever I get the chance, I talk about Montana's ag industry and advocate for regulation reform and for additional opportunities for our ag producers to compete on a level playing field.

Another critical issue for farmers and ranchers in Montana and around the Nation is opening up more market opportunities for the ag industry. In fact, earlier this past month, 38 of my colleagues and I wrote to President Trump asking him to prioritize reopening China's markets to U.S. beef in his discussions with Chinese President Xi Jinping. China is Montana's third leading trade partner after Canada and South Korea.

It is important to remember that 95 percent of the world's consumers live outside of the United States. While the Chinese ban on U.S. beef imports was lifted last fall, more needs to be done to actually see U.S. beef on the shelves of Chinese grocery stores. You see, China is the second largest beef import market in the world.

I can say it was an honor to personally present some of Miles City's famous and finest beef to Chinese Premier Li Keqiang from Fred Wacker's ranch out of Miles City. I will get Montana beef in China if I have to take it over myself.

Montana's No. 1 industry and economic driver is agriculture. With over 27,000 farms in the State, Montana ag is nearly \$5 billion strong. By the way, Montana is now the leading pulse crop producer in the Nation.

Last week, President Trump unveiled his tax reform plan, which, among many proposals, includes a full repeal of the death tax—a full, permanent repeal of the death tax. This is a tax that directly impacts many Montana farm and ranch families. In fact, I heard a story from a Montana rancher a couple of weeks ago of his having the sudden, unexpected passing of his mother and his father. It is a multigenerational ranch operation in Montana that had a huge tax liability—in the millions of dollars—that it had to pay to the IRS because of the death tax.

I have been calling for a repeal of the death tax since I first came to Washington, DC—one of the most immoral taxes on the books—because I understand how these taxes can cause family farms and family ranches to break up and to be sold off.

The bottom line is this. You cannot feed a nation without farmers and

ranchers, and you cannot have opportunity economies without actual opportunities to meet the needs of not only our State, of not only our Nation but of the world.

As the U.S. Congress and the Trump administration continue to work together, I am excited to see that ag is a priority. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the U.S. Senate, as well as in the Trump administration, to advance policies and solutions to the barriers that our Nation's ag producers face, and I really look forward to the upcoming Montana Ag Summit in Great Falls later this month.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HOEVEN). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise today to speak in opposition to the confirmation of Jay Clayton as Chair of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

Just 100 days into the Trump administration, the truth is becoming crystal clear to the American people: There is no “America first” policy, and there certainly is no “middle class first” policy. There is just one policy, and that is a “Wall Street first” policy. It is a policy designed to steer even more wealth and more power to those who are plenty wealthy and plenty powerful, a policy built on the misguided view that our economy does better when banks do as they please, when CEOs receive runaway pay, and when bigger profits never translate into bigger paychecks for workers. That is why we have seen no Executive orders designed to hold big banks accountable, no Executive orders designed to protect borrowers from abusive student loan companies, no Executive orders helping more workers save for retirement. Instead, we see the administration rolling back protections for consumers and students and seniors, actively exploring how to put taxpayers back on the hook for Wall Street’s recklessness, and ordering oversight agencies to, quite simply, conduct less oversight.

There is no greater example of the Trump administration’s “Wall Street first” policy than its decision to nominate Jay Clayton as the Chair of the Securities and Exchange Commission.

The SEC is our Federal Government’s cop on the Wall Street beat. And let’s remember why we have a Securities and Exchange Commission and why it needs to be the cop on the beat. In 1929, the stock market crashed, and our Nation was sent into a deep and devastating depression. That is why President Franklin Roosevelt signed financial reforms into law aimed at curbing rampant speculation and risky behav-

ior on Wall Street, and the creation of the Securities and Exchange Commission was one of those reforms.

The SEC was designed to enact safeguards and promote fairness in our markets, to protect investors and prosecute fraud, and to ensure that our businesses have access to capital so they can grow and create jobs. When we have a watchdog ensuring that everyone plays by the rules, risk is more distributed, markets are more stable, and capital is more available.

The American people know all too well what happens when we take our eyes off of Wall Street. Not even a decade has passed since the worst financial collapse in 80 years put taxpayers on the line for billions of dollars—billions of dollars—in bailouts.

In the years leading up to the crash, our regulators, including the SEC, turned a blind eye to excessive risk-taking and corporate misconduct. We needed a cop on the beat, but instead we had a regulator asleep at the switch. As a result, we suffered a crisis that cost 8.5 million Americans their jobs and 10 million Americans their homes—8.5 million Americans their jobs and 10 million Americans their homes—a crisis that destroyed \$19 trillion in household wealth and left small businesses devastated nationwide, a crisis that sank local and State governments into a sea of red ink. And, of course, it left us with the great recession. It took us years to dig this economy out of that ditch. Now, after all we have been through, is it really time to go easier on Wall Street?

Since the financial crisis, the SEC has been instrumental in reshaping the rules of the road and holding corporation wrongdoers accountable. Now, less than a decade since that devastating crisis, this administration wants to give the keys to the castle to one of Wall Street’s most loyal guardians.

We need someone at the helm willing to root out bad behavior in our financial sector, but Mr. Clayton is not that someone. He is no expert in enforcing the law. Indeed, Mr. Clayton has made a career out of fighting the SEC and other financial regulators on behalf of Wall Street’s biggest institutions. His resume is built around defending Wall Street’s most notorious offenders from ever being held accountable.

Let me again remind my colleagues that the SEC was not created to be Wall Street’s support group in Washington. Investors and the American public at large deserve an SEC Chair who will fight to hold firms accountable, who will prosecute misconduct and wrongdoing, and who will improve investor protections. Mr. Clayton has not met that burden.

There are three reasons why I am concerned that an SEC led by Mr. Clayton would be an SEC that bends the rules for corporations and ignores the needs of hard-working Americans.

First is Mr. Clayton’s singular focus on corporate bottom lines. When asked to lay out his vision for the agency,

Mr. Clayton offered no path to preventing another financial crisis. He provided no commitment to strengthening the agency’s enforcement abilities, and he callously overlooked investor protections. Mr. Clayton failed to give an iota of support to anything other than boosting corporate bottom lines. He spoke exclusively about reducing compliance and registration costs for companies, and that is all fine, but not at the expense of critical investor protections and of healthy, stable, and fair markets for the economy at large.

Let’s remember why this is important. Without strong protections and disclosures, we will sacrifice investor confidence. And when we sacrifice investor confidence, less capital will flow through our markets. When less capital flows through markets, businesses will struggle to grow and to innovate. In other words, a stable and fair financial sector is vital to our economy as a whole.

My second concern involves Mr. Clayton’s potential conflicts of interest. Mr. Clayton has spent his entire career representing big players on Wall Street before, during, and after the crisis. His work has undoubtedly produced many conflicts of interest. As a result, Mr. Clayton will be forced to sit out of numerous important decisions integral to the role of the SEC Chair. This is a problem because the SEC currently has just two Commissioners. The absence of Mr. Clayton could very well undermine the agency’s ability to prosecute wrongdoing on Wall Street.

Finally, I was alarmed by Mr. Clayton’s refusal to answer any questions of substance during his confirmation hearing.

When asked if he would implement congressionally mandated rules, like the provision I wrote into Dodd-Frank requiring corporations to disclose how much money CEOs make in comparison to their employees, Mr. Clayton gave no straight answer.

When asked if he would fairly consider the 1.2 million comments—the greatest number of comments ever received on any SEC rulemaking process by the SEC—urging that companies disclose their political spending, Mr. Clayton gave no straight answer.

Finally, when asked if he would restore the subpoena power of the SEC attorneys so that they can initiate investigations, Mr. Clayton showed his true colors. When it comes to enforcement at the SEC, he said we had to be “mindful that even the commencement of an investigation can have significant adverse impacts” on public companies. So instead of explaining his vision as SEC’s Chair and the SEC’s role as a cop on the beat, he said the agency should consider a company’s bottom line before investigating potential wrongdoing. This, to me, is in essence what defines this nominee’s approach and this administration’s approach: Wall Street profits that prevail over Main Street protections, no matter the risks

posed to the American people. It is precisely this kind of thinking that made our system too vulnerable to a financial crisis of epic proportions.

Given Mr. Clayton's inability and refusal to answer basic questions about important issues—like whether he would restore the authority of the Securities and Exchange Enforcement Division or implement the CEO-to-worker pay ratio rule mandated by Congress or require disclosure of corporate political spending—1.2 million citizen comments, the greatest in the history of the SEC—or ensure that retail investors receive advice that is in their best interests—I can't help but conclude that Mr. Clayton appears best suited to continue representing Wall Street rather than to working on behalf of the American people.

The President's nomination of Mr. Clayton is a bow to Wall Street and a cold shoulder to hard-working, middle-class families. I will not be voting for his confirmation.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise in opposition to the nomination of Jay Clayton to be Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission, SEC.

Mr. Clayton has achieved great personal success as a corporate attorney, where for years he represented some of our Nation's largest financial institutions, such as Bear Stearns, Lehman Brothers, and Goldman Sachs. Personal success is not the same as being willing to safeguard the interests of all who participate in and rely on our capital markets, especially working-class Americans, as I believe a good SEC Chairman must. Based on Mr. Clayton's testimony and his answers to my questions and those of my colleagues on the Banking Committee, I am unable to support his confirmation.

As more and more working-class Americans know, pensions are becoming rarer, and more American families, assuming they even have extra money to spare from their paychecks, must invest in securities to save for retirement or send their kids to college. The integrity and efficiency of our capital markets then are not only of great importance to the megabanks and tycoon investors, but also to working-class Americans.

It is therefore in all of our interests to have strong and vigilant Federal financial regulators who can help ensure we avoid another financial crisis. While the megabanks have bounced back after staring into the abyss, the last financial crisis, which began in the Bush administration, had devastating consequences on working-class Americans, too many of whom lost their jobs, their nest eggs, and their homes. While the Dow Jones Industrial Average has recovered, the impacts are still felt by too many in Rhode Island and throughout the country.

While it is vitally important to help small businesses raise capital and grow their companies by actually creating jobs here in the United States, it is

also equally essential that we have a strong cop on the beat that upholds and improves the integrity of our capital markets.

Initially, I was encouraged to read in Mr. Clayton's testimony before the Senate Banking Committee that “there is zero room for bad actors in our capital markets” and that “I am 100 percent committed to rooting out any fraud and shady practices in our financial system.”

During his confirmation hearing, I asked Mr. Clayton if he would support my bipartisan legislation with Senator GRASSLEY that would deter fraud by increasing the statutory limits on civil monetary penalties. Our legislation responds to former SEC Chair Mary Schapiro's statement that “the Commission's statutory authority to obtain civil monetary penalties with appropriate deterrent effect is limited in many circumstances.” In his response to me, Mr. Clayton said, “I am very willing to take a look at the issue and work with you on it and give you my views after I've been better educated on it.” I accepted this response for the time being and wrote to Mr. Clayton after the hearing to ask for his thoughts on this matter now that he had time to study the issue.

He responded: “As a general matter, I believe that the effective empowerment and functioning of the SEC Enforcement Division are fundamental to the fair and efficient functioning of our markets and the protection of investors. Under existing law, the Commission has the authority to seek civil monetary penalties in a number of circumstances. I would not want the Division or Commission to be unnecessarily or inappropriately constrained in pursuing civil monetary penalties, which can serve an important deterrent effect in appropriate circumstances. If confirmed as Chair, I will work with my fellow Commissioners and the Enforcement Division staff to enforce the law as it is written, including with respect to civil monetary penalties. I also would be willing to engage with Congress regarding any changes to the SEC's statutory authority to seek monetary penalties that Congress deems appropriate.”

I am glad Mr. Clayton agrees that penalties can serve as deterrents, and I appreciate the fact that Mr. Clayton would not want the SEC to be “unnecessarily or inappropriately constrained in pursuing civil monetary penalties.” Indeed, what appears to be constraining the SEC in part is exactly what former Chair Schapiro said, that penalty limits are not high enough to serve as effective deterrents. Given this, I do not understand Mr. Clayton's hesitation in clearly supporting my bipartisan legislation with Senator GRASSLEY. This does not sound like a 100 percent commitment to “rooting out any fraud and shady practices in our financial system.”

This is just one example, but based on a review of his record and his re-

sponses to the committee's questions, I am not confident Mr. Clayton will vigorously work to protect all investors, in the same way as he throughout his career has defended the interests of his corporate and megabank clients, particularly when those interests may come into conflict, as we know they will. In my opinion, there should be no question of an SEC chairman's willingness to stand up and fight for working-class Americans and mom-and-pop investors.

Indeed, as Senator BROWN, the ranking member of the Senate Banking Committee, has stated himself, “it's not the first time we've seen a nominee like Mr. Clayton. I was concerned about Mary Jo White's conflicts and corporate law background. She was conflicted in dozens of high-profile cases, and then a month after stepping down as Chair, she returned to her old law firm. As a lawyer might say—that's bad precedent.”

What we need is a strong SEC Chair that will vigorously protect and defend the interests of all American investors. I hope he proves me wrong, but based on the record before me, I am not convinced Mr. Clayton is up to this task, and therefore, I cannot vote to confirm him.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I oppose the confirmation of Jay Clayton to be a member of the Securities and Exchange Commission.

When the stock market crashed in 1929, public confidence in the markets plummeted as well. Investors large and small lost their life's savings. Congress responded with laws to help rebuild public faith in the markets. Thus in the wake of the Great Depression, Congress created the Securities and Exchange Commission to protect investors and maintain fair, orderly, and efficient markets.

Congress designed the SEC to see that investors and the markets have reliable information and clear rules for honest dealing. The SEC's job is to make sure that brokers, dealers, and exchanges put investors' interests first. The SEC ensures that companies offering securities for investment tell the public the truth about their businesses, the securities they are selling, and the risks involved.

Congress took pains to create the SEC to have some distance from Wall Street. The law provides that no Commissioner can engage in any business or employment other than serving as Commissioner. The law prohibits any Commissioner from participating in any stock transactions of a type that the Commission regulates.

Mr. Clayton has extensive experience working in capital markets. He has represented a long list of financial firms. His numerous conflicts may make him captive to the industry that President Trump nominated him to police. One of his better-known clients is Goldman Sachs. The Department of Justice found that Goldman Sachs falsely assured investors that sound

mortgages backed securities that Goldman sold, when Goldman knew that these securities were full of mortgages that were likely to fail.

During his confirmation hearing, I asked Mr. Clayton about Goldman Sachs' \$5 billion settlement with the Department of Justice. I asked Mr. Clayton if he felt that Goldman Sachs had been engaged in shady practices, but Mr. Clayton said only that he felt the case stood on its own. I cannot comprehend why Mr. Clayton demurred on this topic. We should all be able to agree that if a firm pays \$5 billion in a settlement, it was engaged in shady practices, to say the least.

During Mr. Clayton's confirmation hearing, he said that he is "100 percent committed to rooting out any fraud and shady practices in our financial system." If he is confirmed, I hope he stands by that pledge.

The SEC, investors, and the American people need an independent voice. They need a politically independent voice, as well as a voice that can be independent enough to make tough enforcement decisions about the financial firms it regulates. I have serious doubts that Mr. Clayton can be that voice; thus I oppose his nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING LEGISLATION

Mr. Kaine. Mr. President, I rise to talk about the short-term budget resolution we will be voting on within the next couple of days and a quote the President made this morning.

The bipartisan agreement we are going to tackle on the floor to extend the Federal budget past the CR deadline through the end of September is salutary. It is salutary because the two Houses worked together to find an agreement.

I can see things in the agreement I like, and I can see things in the agreement I don't like. That is the nature of budget agreements. My principal disappointment with the agreement is that we should have done it in December. I will actually give credit to my Senate colleagues on both sides of the aisle. We were ready to do this deal in December. The Appropriations Committees in both Houses had met. We were ready to do a deal that would then give everybody in government—but, more importantly, all of our citizens and all of our businesses—some certainty about what would happen between that vote in December and the end of the fiscal year, September 30.

The incoming administration, not yet in office, dispatched the Vice President and others to the Hill and said: Don't do a budget. Don't do the omnibus bill. We want to have the ability to work on it ourselves.

I think this was against the better judgment of both sides in the Senate. A decision was made: We won't do an omnibus bill in December. We recessed on the 10th. We had plenty of time to get work done. Instead, we would do a CR through April 28.

I think my colleagues were right to want to do it in December. Nevertheless, we put everybody through the hoops of this: Is there going to be a shutdown, or what are we going to do?

Now, apparently, we will have a deal. We will discuss it, and I hope we will vote in favor of it.

We could have gotten the same deal in December. We would have given people more certainty. They could have adjusted. We could have not frightened people about a shutdown and done other productive work. Nevertheless, we have a deal which I plan to support.

But I was very interested this morning—very interested and, I will be blunt, very disturbed—with the President's words. At 8:07 this morning, he put out a tweet about the deal, about a bipartisan deal reached by two Republican Houses, with Democrats included—as we ought to be, because we represent a lot of the American public. This is the quote:

Either elect more Republican Senators in 2018 or change the rules now to 51%. Our country needs a good "shutdown" in September to fix mess!

So what I want to talk about today is whether there is a good shutdown of the government of the United States—whether there is such a thing as a good shutdown. Is it right for the President of the United States to hope for a good shutdown of the government of the greatest Nation on Earth?

I can't imagine that a CEO—any CEO we would admire—would call for a shutdown of his own company. That is what President Trump now is. He is the Commander in Chief and the Chief Executive of the government of the greatest Nation on Earth. He apparently believes there could be a good shutdown of this government in September.

I want to take us back to the fall of 2013. In the fall of 2013, the government was shut down for about 16 days in October. It was my first year as a Senator. That was bad. It was bad in Virginia, a State with 170,000 Federal employees, who didn't know whether or not there would be work to do, when they would return to work, or whether they would be paid for those days. It was bad for veterans whose claims to get a disability benefit were already too backed up and who couldn't get their calls and questions answered. It was bad for veterans whose requests for medical appointments were already too backed up and, in the uncertainty of a shutdown, they didn't know when they would be resolved. It was in October, which is the high season of tourism in Virginia. It was bad for one of my smallest communities, Accomack County, on the Eastern Shore of Virginia, which is adjacent to the Chincoteague National Seashore. They count on October tourism as a huge part of their local economy, but when the Federal parks shut down, it was bad for their economy. It was bad for economies near Shenandoah National Park to have that park shut down in the heart of fall leaf season, which is

the time they count on to help their small businesses succeed. It was bad for people on military bases, when DOD civilians were being furloughed—civilians like nurses at hospitals, and childcare workers who provide childcare to military families on military bases. They didn't know when they would be reopening. I see nothing good about a shutdown of the Government of the United States.

In fact, it was the first Republican President in the address at Gettysburg who said: The question that we always have to grapple with is whether government by, of, and for the people shall perish from the Earth. I think the answer to that question is that it should not perish from the Earth—not for a year, not for a month, not for a week, not for a day, not for an hour. There should not be a shutdown of the government of the United States. There is no such thing as a good shutdown.

So I just wanted to come to the floor today and be very, very blunt. On behalf of anybody in Virginia and in this country who is afraid of how a government shutdown could impact them or their communities; on behalf of troops, veterans, military families, and members of our Department of Defense who keep us safe every day; on behalf of veterans who fought for this country and who need the Federal Government to cut the backlog on disability claims or medical appointments at the VA; on behalf of every senior citizen or disabled person who has a case awaiting resolution by Social Security or Medicare or CMS; on behalf of 170,000 Federal employees living in Virginia and the people and communities they serve; on behalf of cities and counties around Virginia that rely on Federal support for infrastructure projects, economic development assistance, opioid prevention efforts, export promotion, and so many other critical programs; on behalf of Virginians struggling with disease and illness who pray for lifesaving cures developed through federally funded medical research; on behalf of our dynamic businesses and all of their workers, who need certainty from Washington in order to create jobs and expand the economy; on behalf of Virginia students and families who rely on Head Start Programs or rely on federally funded work study programs so they can work their way through college; on behalf of all Virginians and all Americans who deserve to have clean water, breathable air, beautiful open space, safe food and drugs, violence-free communities, a functional immigration system, and protection from cyber threats; and on behalf of the reputation of this Nation and the values that we proudly claim as American values, I will do anything and everything in my power as a U.S. Senator to stop any Trump shutdown, to stop any good shutdown of the government of the greatest Nation on this Earth, either now or during September or during the remainder of his term. I call on all of my colleagues to take a similar pledge.