

would roll back programs to curb pollution in low-income communities across America.

Whenever we debate energy policy in Congress, Republicans tend to revert to the same old arguments. They say: Think about the economy.

These Republicans insist that, if we want to become energy independent, we have no choice but to invest more in oil and gas. In their view, America is hopelessly addicted to fossil fuels, and forcing us to remain beholden to foreign oil giants is the Republican answer to this challenge.

But, the truth is, they are wrong. Fossil fuels are not the future. We will need a transition; that is for sure. The future is going to be seen in communities like my own hometown of Springfield, IL. Last month in Springfield, an American-owned solar company broke ground on a project called Double Black Diamond.

Now, if you are a skier, you have to wonder what that has to do with flat land in Springfield, IL. Well, it has nothing to do with skiing. What they are talking about is building one of the largest solar farms in America in the area, and the energy produced will be sent to the residents of Chicago. It is amazing. These communities that have committed themselves to green energy are making massive investments in clean, sustainable, renewable energy.

Solar is the fastest growing, most affordable source of new electricity in America. Last year, my wife and I decided to install solar panels on our home in Springfield. It was a decision which was guided more by determination to see if it worked and to do something positive in our family to help with the climate crisis that we face. Well, we installed them, and the good news is this: In the first couple of months, we started to see our electricity bill disappearing. What was \$115 a month turned into \$15 a month. And, of course, there were tax credits available for that decision for our family and for every family that moves in that direction.

We estimate that 230,000 homes in Illinois will do what we did: put solar panels on the roof. With net metering, they will find it is a benefit in their monthly utility bills and a benefit to our environment.

Right now, if we don't do this, China and other countries will. They are going to pursue solar energy and the next generation of technology, and we will be left behind if the Republicans have their way with their budget bill.

So I would conclude by saying fossil fuels had their day. There is still a transition period where they will be needed, but we have got to point to the future where we can tell our kids and grandkids: We are sensitive to this climate crisis. We are investing in the right kind of energy for the future. We are not going to have America take second place to China or any other country when it comes to competition for this technology.

The Republican approach is yesterday. We have got to think about tomorrow.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

DEBT CEILING

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, debt is front and center in the national conversation again. That is entirely reasonable. We have a debt ceiling conversation right now about America taking care of our debts and our responsibilities, which we are a responsible nation, and we are going to do. But we should also have a grownup conversation about our spending to say: Are we spending on our priorities? Because when you have \$31 trillion—actually, scratch that—\$31.4 trillion because \$400 billion is not a rounding error—\$31.4 trillion in total national debt, we should pay attention to this, especially when we are currently adding \$1 trillion in new debt every single year, and it continues to accelerate.

Recently, someone asked me: When does it get hard? When do we pass the point?

And I actually had to painfully say to them: 10 years ago because in the last 10 years, our debt has continued to accelerate like a rock rolling downhill, and it is going to be harder and harder to be able to manage this. At some point, we have got to be able to stop and say: Inflation is going up; challenges that are in our economy are increasing; we are spending almost as much on interest as we are on defense. At what point do we stop and say: We have got to be able to fix this?

Well, I have a perspective. The first step on actually talking about debt and deficit is actually taking it seriously and saying: What are we spending on that is a priority, and what are we spending on that is not a priority? Again, it is not unreasonable to be able to say that would be nice to do, but we don't have the money to do that. Let's set that aside.

And for whatever reason, in this town, anytime you talk about reducing spending of whatever percentage or whatever amount, everyone freaks out immediately, like, oh, you can't; there is no way we can reduce spending in government.

So we started, 7 years ago, a habit of our staff that we produce a book called "Federal Fumbles." Every year we put out the "Federal Fumbles" guide, and that is just a set of ideas to say these are areas we believe the Federal Government has dropped the ball.

The Federal Government, and our Agencies, we had a responsibility to handle American taxpayer dollars prudently and wisely, but that didn't happen. So we asked the question: Is this really what we need to spend for? In a nation that is keeping up with our infrastructure, of our national defense, of education, of so many different expenses, and things that are truly governmental, we asked a simple question: With \$31.4 trillion in total debt, is that what we need to spend our dollars on?

Now, just to set context because, again, this is difficult to be able to do, when you talk about millions and billions and trillions, it gets easy to go, those all sound alike. So they are similar. So people throw out millions of dollars or billions of dollars or trillions of dollars, and you just think, OK, I don't even understand what that is anymore.

So I break it down, as I have in the past—I break it down to seconds because that is something I can understand. A million seconds is 12 days—12 days. That is a million seconds. A billion seconds is 32 years.

So there is a big difference between a million and a billion: 12 days in 32 years; a trillion seconds is almost 32,000 years.

So let me knock that past us again. A million seconds is 12 days; a billion seconds, 32 years; a trillion seconds, almost 32,000 years.

And to put this into context of \$31.4 trillion in total debt, that is 995,000 years—almost a million years of seconds—to get to \$31.4 trillion.

The numbers here are large, and they are overwhelming. So again, why don't we talk about ways that we can actually save money. My reasonable conversation with "Federal Fumbles" every year is just to say: Let's talk about it. Is this really how we want to be able to spend Americans' taxpayers dollars?

We set up a top 10 list that we listed out some of the things that we just say, OK, of the 50 different examples—and we don't try to go into every single spending area, but we lay out in the guide for fumbles 50 different examples and just try to ask the question: Is this the best way to be able to spend America's dollars? Again, we have all got different perspectives and different ideas on it. I am just asking the question.

For instance, last year, the State Department did a grant to Ecuador to host 12 drag shows in Ecuador with American tax dollars. Now, we may have different opinions in this room on drag shows. I am just asking the simple question: Is the best use of American tax dollars to actually fund drag shows in Ecuador with U.S. tax dollars? I don't believe that it is.

Last year, we actually did a different funding through the State Department that was actually done—actually, this was the National Science Foundation. Excuse me. Strike that. It seems like a State Department thing. The National Science Foundation last year did a study of butterflies in Europe. So we funded, with American taxpayer dollars, a butterfly study in Germany where we paid a Swedish scientist to study butterflies in Germany.

I am not real sure American tax dollars was the best use of that, but that was one of the grants that was done last year.

Last year, there was also an NEA grant that was done to set up a display in Brooklyn for the Sergeant Pepper's

Lonely Hearts Club Band, which, by the way, is not even an American band. And I am not sure why we had to pay Federal tax dollars to be able to do that. My simple question is always: Why are tax dollars being taken out of Oklahoma to be able to do that?

Always popular, we had a \$350,000 grant to study smart toilets. That was one of the grants that we actually paid for with our Federal tax dollars last year.

We also had a grant that was done studying Colonial Mexican Soundscapes. I am sure Colonial Mexican Soundscapes are fascinating, but we paid for a researcher to travel to Mexico and then to be able to write a series about the sounds of Colonial Mexico and how they could be used to be able to influence communities.

We, last year, did a study on helmets and seatbelts in Ghana to be able to study whether seatbelts and helmets were effective for saving lives in Ghana. Can I just go ahead and answer that question for free? Seatbelts and helmets are a good idea. They save lives—free. I can go ahead and give you that advice.

How do I know that? Because we have already spent millions of dollars in other studies here in the United States, but, instead, we spent money in Ghana studying helmets to see if they are actually a good idea there. And amazingly, they discovered, yes, they are.

There was also a grant that was done last year—I have to just walk this one through. This was at the Springfield Art Museum in Missouri. There was a grant to be on a display, an installation of the exhibit at a museum called “Yoko Ono: Mend Piece.”

Now, let me just read this to you. It is a simple white room where shattered cups and saucers are placed on a table and participants are asked to mend the fragments together using common household items like twine, glue, scissors, and tape, and the resulting works are displayed on nearby shelves as evidence of the power of collective action.

Again, I am not opposed to fixing broken saucers in a public place and displaying them. All I am asking is: Why did Oklahomans work overtime last year to pay their tax bill to fund doing the Yoko Ono white room, where people fixed broken saucers? I don't have a good answer for that yet, by the way. I am still trying to be able to get that.

If you like wine country, great. You helped pay for it—one of the highest income areas in the world is Napa Valley, CA—one of the highest income areas in the entire world.

The good folks of Oklahoma helped pay for a wine pedestrian trail through Napa Valley because apparently Napa Valley didn't have enough cash to be able to pay for the 8-mile walking trail through wine country—some of the most expensive real estate in the entire world. So the taxpayers in Oklahoma had to pay for that wine country tour trail.

If you like traveling to Hawaii, enjoy the trip. When you get there, if you go to a farmers market, you will find out that you helped pay for that farmers market because the farmers markets in Hawaii received \$3.4 million to be able to fund the farmers markets.

If you go to New York City and pay for a very high-dollar ticket to get into a private location in the Metropolitan Opera to be able to watch the opera, you will feel safer, I am sure, when you go to the Metropolitan Opera because almost three-quarters of a million dollars was given to the Metropolitan Opera in New York to help them install a new fire-suppression system with Federal tax dollars.

If you like traveling to Paris and you go to a butcher shop in Paris, you may be fascinated to know that since the 13th century, apparently butchers in Paris have come up with their own private language. It is like a supersecret private language among butchers in Paris. It is fascinating for the French to study, but unfortunately the American taxpayers paid for a study of French butchers' private language for fear that it is diminishing and fading away. So American tax dollars paid for this study in France to study the secret language of butchers in Paris. I can't tell you why.

You may know the story of the—let me see if I can pull this out—the parable of the sower. It is a famous Biblical story, the parable of the sower. This particular version of the parable of the sower was actually a little bit different. What your tax dollars paid for is actually an event that was done to teach climate futurism and to be able to use the parable of the sower from the Bible but to reteach a new religion called Earthseed, using the Biblical story of the parable of the sower and talking about humanity's destiny to be able to leave Earth for other planets. It wasn't the writing of a book; it was a conference for teachers to make sure teachers know how to teach this new version of the parable of the sower and about the religion of Earthseed to their kids. That was done with your tax dollars.

Not leaving Ghana alone, there was also a study done in Ghana last year—not only did we do one on seatbelt studies and helmet studies in Ghana, we also did an interview project that was almost \$200,000 in Ghana to interview taxicab drivers and truckdrivers to ask them about how difficult driving has become with climate change, if it is harder to drive now in Ghana based on climate change. Your tax dollars paid for that.

If you don't like that I am discussing anything on climate change and you may disagree with that, well, perfect, because there was also a fund that was done with your tax dollars in the National Science Foundation to study how to influence people who disagree on the issue of climate change, with a study that was done for \$400,000. It was a study on pluralistic ignorance gaps in

climate change and to be able to determine how to speak to people, as the study says, who are “ignorant” on climate change and to be able to reeducate them on that. So if you disagree on this issue, we are also studying how to be able to reeducate you on this issue.

Last year, we also spent \$991 million on soft-sided facilities—those are called tents—along our border with Mexico. Now, best estimates on this: There are about 2 million people who illegally crossed the border last year. If you run the numbers on it, we spent somewhere around \$500 a person on the tent facility they were processed through just to travel across the border.

Listen, we have differences of opinion on lots of issues. I am respectful of that. I understand the people of Oklahoma don't think like people in other areas of the country. I also understand that not everyone in Oklahoma thinks the same way, and I am respectful of that. But I have yet to find anyone who wants their tax dollars wasted. People literally work overtime to be able to feed their families. They are working two and three jobs. In April, when they pay their taxes, they want to know it went to roads and infrastructure and national security. What we reveal in “Federal Fumbles” is, yes, some of that was done, but also some of it was done because we lacked oversight, and things were just wasted and thrown out the door.

We did a multithousand-page omnibus bill at the end of last year that literally no one had read—no one. There were no committee hearings in the Senate on appropriations at all last year, and trillions of dollars were spent, and no one knows what they were spent on.

We try to bring here some of the ways American tax dollars were spent. I am not just complaining about it; we bring this up to say: What are we going to do about it? Are we going to do more oversight, to ask more questions, and to spend money on our priorities and not spend money on what is not?

So we put out “Federal Fumbles.” You can go to the website Lankford.senate.gov to be able to download it and to be able to look at it. The goal of this is to get us all thinking about \$31.4 trillion in Federal debt. Can we focus on spending on our priorities and target areas that are not?

Mr. President, can I do one quick addendum to my protracted speech on “Federal Fumbles”? I have a staff member named Phillip Moran who worked like crazy this year actually pulling all these details together and some other team members who really help me a tremendous amount to do the research on this. As you can imagine, it is not one person who does this. I have a fantastic team that works very hard on this.

I want to say from this floor so the Oklahomans back home can also know,

there are some great people working for them every single day. I appreciate that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the brave men and women in North Carolina and across the Nation who serve in law enforcement.

This is a particularly emotional week for law enforcement. The law enforcement community has thousands of officers, and their families are in the Nation's Capital for National Police Week. They are paying a tribute to the brave officers who were killed in the line of duty while protecting our communities. I want to welcome all North Carolinians who are in Washington right now.

Unfortunately, our State is all too familiar with law enforcement officers having to make the ultimate sacrifice, losing their lives in the line of duty. Over the past year, North Carolina has lost three law enforcement officers who were killed by others in the line of duty, in addition to a number of other officers who died from other causes. I would like to take a moment to honor the service of those North Carolina law enforcement officers who were killed in the line of duty.

In late August, we lost Sergeant Matthew Ryan Fishman—he was 38 years old—of Wayne County Sheriff's Office. He was one of three deputies shot after attempting to serve a warrant. They were met with gunfire, and the incident caused a 10-hour standoff. Sergeant Fishman died a day later.

He had been a deputy since 2010. Before that, he was an officer in the Mount Olive Police Department. Officer Fishman is survived by his wife Sarah, two children, his parents, and two brothers.

That same August, we also saw the death of Deputy Sheriff Ned Byrd of Wake County. Deputy Byrd was with his K-9 when he heard six gunshots and drove past a vehicle on the side of the road. Deputy Byrd stopped and backed up his vehicle. He was shot several times by two criminals.

Unfortunately, the killing of Deputy Byrd revealed numerous failures. The criminals who killed him were not in the United States legally. One of them had been previously deported but was able to illegally reenter the country.

When we talk about “got-aways,” this is a very important point because it happened just a couple of weeks ago in Texas. Someone who was illegally present in this country—was deported four times—got back into this country a fifth time and murdered a family in Texas, including an 8-year-old child. That is another face of a “got-away.” And it was a “got-away” who killed this officer.

Following their arrest for the murder of Deputy Byrd, one of these criminals managed to escape prison for several

days, and we had to apprehend him again in Mexico.

Part of seeking justice must be looking at these failures and making sure they don't happen again.

Deputy Byrd was an Air Force veteran and served Wake County Sheriff's Department for 13 years. He is survived by his sister, brother-in-law, four nephews, as well as his beloved K-9 Sasha.

Last December, less than 2 weeks before Christmas, we lost Deputy Sheriff Bolanos-Anavisca of the Cumberland County Sheriff's Office. He was 23 years old and served the office for 2 years. He was struck and killed by a car while investigating a robbery at 3 a.m. The driver ran through a red light and struck him and then fled the scene. They eventually located the driver, and he was highly intoxicated.

In the wake of these tragic losses in North Carolina, I am proud to say that we saw the very best of our local communities. While we have some communities calling for defunding the police and making contributions to a website supported by ActBlue—I looked it up today, Mr. President. I am shocked that it is still there. During Police Week, there is a website out there called ACAB. Send your money. What does “ACAB” stand for? “All Cops Are Bastards.”

You would think that at least in a week when we are looking at the sacrifice these officers made, they could take the website down, but they are still proudly raising money. If you don't believe me, just Google “ActBlue,” “All Cops Are Bastards.” Donate today. Harass the police. Look past the sacrifice they are making every single day.

On the other hand, our communities had an outpouring of love and support for the families and colleagues of those fallen officers. Most Americans proudly support men and women in blue. But there are some who feel emboldened by the disgusting anti-police rhetoric.

Disrespect and denigration of law enforcement officers only contribute to an environment that makes our officers and communities less safe and far fewer people willing to even sign up to do the job. If you don't believe me, ask local law enforcement. We have historic lows for people signing up to go to academies and historic highs for people retiring early, as soon as they are eligible. This is happening across the Nation.

In 2021, the intentional killings of law enforcement officers reached a 20-year high. While the number went down in 2022, it is still well above what we have seen in years past. We need to take threats and acts of violence against law enforcement seriously. That is why I will reintroduce the Protect and Serve Act in this Congress. This legislation will make it a Federal crime to intentionally assault a law enforcement officer. It is amazing that it is not on the books already today. It sends a strong message to criminals that targeting and assaulting law en-

forcement officers is inexcusable, and you will be punished. I will continue to work across the aisle to get this legislation enacted into law.

And I am committed to supporting our brave men and women in blue. This bill has earned broad support and has the full support of the Fraternal Order of Police and many of the Nation's leading law enforcement groups.

Each year, we take this week to celebrate those who serve us and protect us in public safety. This would be a great year to come back next year's Police Week and say that we got this bill passed.

Law enforcement has our backs every time and every day they put on a uniform. The least Congress can do is to support the Protect and Serve Act. They need your support more than ever, and you need their support more than ever.

To the men and women in blue in North Carolina and across the country, I want to say thank you for what you do and the sacrifice you make.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

AAPI HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise today in recognition of Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month.

Each May, we celebrate and remember the many contributions that Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders have made to our history and continue to make today.

As a nation, we have made significant progress with respect to the inclusion and representation of the AAPI community across the many facets of our society, from actress Michelle Yeoh's barrier-breaking accomplishment this year as the first Asian-American winner of the Oscars' Best Actress award to Maryland's very own Lieutenant Governor Aruna Miller, who was sworn in just a few months ago as Maryland's first immigrant and first Asian American to be elected to statewide office.

AAPI children are finally getting to grow up seeing faces that look like theirs in film, music, sports, politics, and every other arena of public life.

This progress didn't just happen overnight; it is the fruit of labor of generations of AAPI activists and leaders, along with their allies. A labor that, in some cases, cost them their lives.

I think of the Chinese laborers, for instance, who played a critical role in building America's first transcontinental railroad, yet they were met with discrimination and exclusion at every turn.

They faced hardship, hard working conditions, and were paid only half as much as their White counterparts.

In June of 1867, 3,000 Chinese railworkers began a highly organized strike, demanding equal wages and shorter hours. Though they were initially unsuccessful in their demands,