

about to retire with no savings other than Social Security, the woman who relies on Social Security to pay for medications, they need to know that the government is not going to break this sacred trust.

That is why I have been leading a bipartisan group of over a dozen Senators to develop a solution. And we have what we call the Big Idea. But before describing the Big Idea, I have to tell you, right now, it does not matter what big ideas—or any idea—are being discussed. President Biden made it clear in his State of the Union speech that he was going to run for reelection attacking Republicans on the issue of Social Security.

Now, by the way, he has not introduced legislation on Social Security himself. He spoke about one in his previous campaign, but it was not serious. And the money he said he would use for his unserious plan he has already spent on other priorities, or at least proposed to spend. President Biden was not even willing to acknowledge the problem that Social Security faces.

But, in a bipartisan sense, let's be fair; he is not alone. Former President Trump refuses to acknowledge the issue. He never introduced or sought to work with Congress when he was President, and now he criticizes anyone who suggests that Social Security might be going insolvent. But, unfortunately for us all, Social Security is going insolvent.

It is not me who says this; it is the actuaries, those who are told to come before the American people and tell what is the current state of Social Security. They tell us that in 9 years, it is insolvent. At that point, beneficiaries will see a 24-percent cut in the amount they are receiving. There is no grandfathering in. You might be already receiving, but when that deadline hits—2033, 2032—boom, 24-percent cut for those who are currently receiving. Poverty among the elderly doubles.

And even though it is against the law to borrow money to pay the difference between what is coming in and what is going out, let's imagine that we did. If we do decide to break the law and borrow that money, it would end up causing a \$562 trillion debt to pay these benefits over the next 75 years. That would give us a debt-to-GDP ratio similar to that of Greece and Venezuela, and that is independent of the money that would be required for Medicare benefits and other such benefits.

So what does our Big Idea do? Our Big Idea avoids this problem by setting up an investment fund separate from Social Security—no Social Security money whatsoever—an investment fund in which we place money and allow it to grow over 75 years; and, in so doing, we address 75 percent of the issue.

We don't raise the retirement age to 70, as people suggest. We don't touch the way Social Security benefits are distributed. We make sure that no one

has a disruption in their benefits that they are promised to receive. And in our plan, we have work incentives and we work to address issues of WEP and GPO and poverty among the elderly.

It is an idea that could work and pass Congress, but there has been zero Presidential leadership. And we have had no engagement from this President, and there was no engagement from the previous President.

So a few weeks ago, we decided to take our issue to the people, and we called it Bill on the Hill. Kind of a nice rhyme, huh? I took a walk around the Capitol grounds and spoke to Americans from across the country who were visiting the Nation's capital. There was a couple from Louisiana, a family from Pennsylvania, a veteran who is also a pastor from Massachusetts, and several others who gave their unvarnished opinions on what they want Washington to do about Social Security.

The bottom line: Americans want to see Social Security saved. They—we—deserve a real solution, not grandstanding. One blue-collar worker I spoke to from rural Pennsylvania told me—I am going to try and imitate his voice:

Jobs that I have had haven't necessarily had retirement plans.

He said it was "very discouraging" to hear a 24-percent cut was coming if we do nothing.

There was a doctor from Opelousas. Now, this doctor has as much gray hair as I do, but, if you can imagine, he was once one of my former students. The doctor from Opelousas—Opelousas, LA, for those who don't know about that—he put it in stark terms when I told him that doing nothing means that poverty among his patients would double—among the elderly in general, but he has got a patient population a little bit older. He said the people he knows "would have to start choosing between their medicines and food."

Now, these are people who rely on Social Security, who put faith in that sacred trust that they would not have to choose between medicine and food. Yet that is the choice they are going to be forced to if we do nothing.

And then there was Dr. Paul Kim—a pastor, a veteran—who was up here for a convention from Massachusetts. And he told me what he wanted from a President:

He has to be honest and keep the promise [of Social Security].

Dr. Kim is right. The President needs to be honest with the American people about Social Security; but this President is not. He refuses to even acknowledge that the problem exists.

The fact is, as I have already mentioned, Social Security—according to the actuaries, the people we entrust to tell us the state of it—is going insolvent in 9 years. But President Biden is steadfast in his position that there is nothing wrong, there is no need for a serious plan. Oh, yes, he introduced a plan when he was on the campaign trail; has done nothing since. And the

money that he would use to pay for this unserious plan he has already proposed to spend on other things.

By the way, \$4.5 trillion he has proposed in new taxes and not a dime going to Social Security. And as I mentioned, it isn't just President Biden; it is former President Trump, who did nothing while he was President and, even now, criticizes people who wish to do something. It appears that the Biden-Trump plan is the same plan. It is a plan to do nothing and demagogue those who choose to responsibly address the issue.

When I told one of these folks, the woman from Opelousas, LA, that President Biden and Donald Trump have the same plan, she was going: Whoa, whoa, that is something. But when she heard it was a plan to do nothing, her reaction was:

I want to laugh, and I want to cry at the same time.

Americans are watching as Washington flounders, as the deadline until retirees get a 24 percent cut approaches. By the way, we have seen polling on this. When people understand that the program is going insolvent in 9 years, 75 percent—from the very liberal to the very conservative and every point in between—think that we should address the issue now. That is the American people speaking, but that is not our leading Presidential candidates.

We owe it to the American people to take this sacred trust seriously. We owe it to them to save Social Security before it is too late.

Now, I am open to discussing my big idea, anyone else's idea. You name it. But there has to be a serious conversation. And since it has to be signed into law, a participant must be the President of the United States. We need the political courage from those who aspire to be our Nation's leader to actually show leadership.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I be able to make my full statement prior to the vote.

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

NOMINATION OF ELIZABETH ALLEN

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I come to the floor today to urge my colleagues to vote for cloture for Elizabeth Allen, the President's nominee for Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs.

When we think about Russia's illegal, unprovoked invasion of Ukraine or China's coercive economic practices, we have to realize we are in competition with more than just conventional militaries or economic prowess. We are in a battle over what kind of world we want to live in. And we want to live in a world where people are free to speak their minds, free to start a business, free to worship as they choose and marry the person they love. These are

the fundamental freedoms that shape the United States and the values that drive our foreign policy.

When it comes to explaining American values and our foreign policy to the world, one of the best tools we have is our public diplomacy programs.

At a time when our adversaries are pouring billions of dollars into propaganda, targeted disinformation and misinformation campaigns—often about the United States—we need an empowered Bureau of Global Public Affairs to tell the truth about U.S. foreign policy. We need to highlight the millions of dollars Americans invest in public health, infrastructure projects, and humanitarian relief around the world.

We need programs like the International Leadership Visitor Program that exposes rising leaders from across the world to America's systems of governance and democracy, leaders who share our vision of a free and open world.

We need programs that bring foreign students to American universities, not only affirming the excellence of our higher education system but bringing billions of dollars into the U.S. economy.

I could go on.

Our public diplomacy tools are simply the best bang for our buck when it comes to making sure we expose people around the world to American values, culture, and the truth about our foreign policy efforts.

We need capable, qualified leadership at the Department of State to lead these efforts. That is why we must confirm Ms. Allen as Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy without delay. As the current senior official for public diplomacy and public affairs at the Department of State, she has already advanced numerous objectives.

As a highly quality professional with a distinguished career and extensive experience in both public and private sectors, Ms. Allen is a nominee who will hit the ground running.

She began her career at the Department of State at the Office of Global Issues and the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement. She served with distinction in the Obama-Biden administration for 8 years, including as White House Deputy Communications Director and Deputy Assistant to the President.

As she talked about during her confirmation hearing, she comes from a family who knows what it means to serve the American people—the granddaughter of two veterans—two veterans—of World War II, the daughter of parents who value public service regardless of party.

Ms. Allen understands the importance of making institutional changes to better educate our diplomats and integrate public diplomacy tools into policymaking.

I urge this body to support cloture on Ms. Allen's nomination so we can get her confirmed without delay and

spread the good word of American foreign policy throughout the world.

I yield the floor.

### CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

#### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 157, Elizabeth Allen, of New York, to be Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy.

Charles E. Schumer, Robert Menendez, Benjamin L. Cardin, Mazie Hirono, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Margaret Wood Hassan, Thomas R. Carper, Tammy Baldwin, Sheldon Whitehouse, Peter Welch, Richard J. Durbin, Tina Smith, Alex Padilla, Debbie Stabenow, Tammy Duckworth, Chris Van Hollen, Ben Ray Lujan.

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

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Elizabeth Allen, of New York, to be Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN), the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH), and the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT) would have voted "no."

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 66, nays 29, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 153 Ex.]

#### YEAS—66

Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Risch
Bennet	Hirono	Romney
Blumenthal	Kaine	Rosen
Brown	Kelly	Rounds
Cantwell	Kennedy	Sanders
Capito	King	Schatz
Cardin	Klobuchar	Schumer
Carper	Lujan	Shaheen
Casey	Manchin	Sinema
Collins	Markey	Smith
Cooms	McConnell	Stabenow
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Sullivan
Crapo	Merkley	Tester
Duckworth	Moran	Tillis
Durbin	Murkowski	Van Hollen
Feinstein	Murphy	Warner
Fetterman	Murray	Warnock
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Warren
Graham	Padilla	Welch
Grassley	Peters	Whitehouse
Hassan	Reed	Wyden
Heinrich	Ricketts	Young

#### NAYS—29

Blackburn	Britt	Cassidy
Boozman	Budd	Cornyn

Cotton	Hoeven	Rubio
Cramer	Johnson	Schmitt
Cruz	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Daines	Lee	Thune
Ernst	Lummis	Tuberville
Fischer	Marshall	Vance
Hagerty	Mullin	Wicker
Hawley	Paul	

#### NOT VOTING—5

Barrasso	Braun	Scott (FL)
Booker	Hyde-Smith	

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HEINRICH). On this vote, the yeas are 66, the nays are 29.

The motion is agreed to.

The Senator from Minnesota.

### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

#### MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

#### RECOGNIZING MUJERES LATINAS EN ACCION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, today, I would like to honor an organization that generations of Illinois families have relied on: Mujeres Latinas en Accion—or Latina Women in Action.

Mujeres is the longest standing Latina-led organization in the entire country. And this year, they are celebrating 50 years of empowering and emboldening Latinas across our State—as well as their families.

Founded in 1973 by the late Maria Mangual, Mujeres was first established as a shelter for young women escaping violence in the Pilsen neighborhood of Chicago, IL. Back then, some wrote off Mujeres' work as radical and unnecessary, but these critics didn't deter Maria or the dedicated women who supported her cause from building an enduring and indispensable organization. In the five decades since, Mujeres' mission, services, and footprint have only expanded to help uplift women from all walks of life.

And today, Mujeres does it all. They host support groups to help young families with parenting skills. They operate a 24-hour crisis line—and referral service—to assist survivors of domestic and sexual violence, both of which, tragically, increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. They have developed an education training program for women hoping to launch or expand their small businesses, as well as a community engagement and mobilization program, to amplify the voices of Latina immigrants and survivors of trauma. And, importantly, Mujeres is now a leading advocate in the effort to ensure pay equity for Latinas in the workplace. What is more, as Mujeres' mission has evolved over the years, so, too, has size of their operation. They