

should have a role to play in this crisis. So I would argue that we just need to start with a dedicated office to coordinate a governmentwide strategy to tackle loneliness and strengthen communities.

I also think we should have guidelines and best practices for public entities to engage in trying to connect people. We have guidelines for nutrition and physical activity and sleep. We should have these guidelines for social connection.

Finally, we can't really address this crisis adequately if we don't understand it. So my legislation would also include some small amounts of funding to support research on the social and health impacts of widespread loneliness.

I look forward to talking to my colleagues about this legislation. It doesn't solve the problem, but I think it is time that we start organizing our work and our thoughts around what is, in many ways, a foundational problem, which explains a lot of the things that people are feeling that drives political instability, bad health outcomes, and just general unhappiness in this country.

Loneliness is one of the few issues that defies traditional political boundaries, cuts across almost every demographic, from teenage girls living in cities, to White men living out in rural areas, blue States to red States, unaffordable cities to left-behind manufacturing towns.

There is a ton of room for us to come together to combat this growing epidemic of loneliness, and I hope that my colleagues on both sides of the aisle are eager to be part of this solution.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HASSAN). The Senator from Colorado.

DIGITAL PLATFORMS

Mr. BENNET. Madam President, I am sorry I didn't have the chance to say thank you to our colleague from Connecticut for his speech tonight about loneliness in the United States. I was grateful that he gave it and grateful that he is in the Senate and grateful to know that another parent of young kids has the perspective that he has shared tonight because I think it is so important. And strangely enough, I am here to talk about something similar tonight.

First, Madam President, I will put it away because it is not supposed to be on the floor, but I wanted to come here tonight to talk a little bit about this smartphone and the world of social media, the world of machine learning algorithms and generative AI that has now been put at our fingertips.

The rise of smartphones and social media is one of the most rapid, profound, and, I would argue, poorly understood transformations in American life in our entire history.

If you had asked me when I was the age of the pages who are here, when I was growing up, and you had said to me: Someday, Michael, there is going

to be a device—well, here is the device—there is going to be a device that looks like this; it doesn't even have a wire next to it, that would have been astonishing in and of itself. How can an electronic device not have a wire? But it does not have a wire. Not only does it not have a wire, but you can FaceTime anybody on Earth the way Captain Kirk and Mr. Spock FaceTimed each other.

The Presiding Officer knows what I am talking about. These folks may not know who Captain Kirk was or who Mr. Spock was. But the idea that you could reach somebody and communicate with them on video, on a telephone, or a device that had no wires, that alone would have been shocking.

If you had said: Well, let me tell you something else about that device, I would say: OK. What else can you tell me about that device?

And you said: Well, you can buy any book that has ever been written by humans, basically, on that device. And if you want it, you can make a choice. You can have it digitally, and it will just download immediately on your device, or you can order it, and it can be at your house by tonight, if you would rather have a print version of the book rather than getting it digitally. And I will tell you something else, Michael, it will translate any language that you care to hear.

I was, today, with the CEO of Google who was in my office talking about how one of their projects now is to help recover and sustain lost languages or languages we are in danger of losing in this country and around the world, which I think is a worthy project. We definitely, in my State, are at risk of losing Native American languages that really are at risk.

But in any case, if you said to me: You can translate any language or you can translate yourself into any language, and somebody would ask: What do you think that device is worth? In 1983 or 1987, when I was graduating from high school or college, I think I probably would have said that is probably—I can't imagine what it is worth—millions of dollars. Millions of dollars. To have every book that has ever been published that is in every library in the world? Millions of dollars, to be able to translate every language that you can translate? Millions of dollars.

And if you told me that it actually only cost a few hundred dollars, which it does, and that everybody on planet Earth would have one, which is almost in many ways the case, I would have asked what you were smoking. But it is true. It is true. And that is the world we have inhabited for almost 20 years. It is not new: the digital age, the information age, the age of ubiquitous smartphones, social media, and a handful of digital platforms that control them.

And for all of the extraordinary convenience and extraordinary productivity and entertainment that these

technologies have allowed, as a country, we still haven't come to grips with the profound cost to our economy, to our society, and to our democracy, and that is before we even consider AI.

This is what everybody around here is talking about, what some would call the most consequential technology for humanity since the invention of fire. But unlike fire, this technology can improve itself, and it has the potential to move faster and transform more than any innovation in our history, for better or for worse.

Even in its early days, generative AI has already demonstrated the power to write the code to animate and even compose in ways that would have been absolutely unimaginable 20 years ago or 10 years ago, to say nothing of when we were in school.

It is easy to forget how different the world was just 20 years ago. Twenty years ago, General Motors topped the Fortune 500 list. Apple was 285, and Amazon didn't even make the cut. Twitter was still an idea somewhere in the recesses of Jack Dorsey's head. Mark Zuckerberg was barely old enough to vote, even though he likely already acquired the undeveloped view of the First Amendment that he seems to hold to this day. No one on this planet had ever heard of Gmail or TikTok or ChatGPT. That was only 20 years ago, but it might as well have been 200 years ago.

Today, Americans spend over 2 hours a day on social media, more time socializing online than in person. The average TikTok user in our country spends 90 minutes a day on the app—more than 3 weeks a year.

Facebook now hosts 2.7 billion friends—a half a billion more souls than Christianity.

Twitter has fewer followers, but they include every single politician—probably almost every single person in this Chamber—every journalist, every TV producer in America, withering our political debate to 280-character efferrescent posts.

In just two decades, a few companies—less than a handful, really—have transformed much of humanity's daily life: how we amuse ourselves, how we discover, how we learn, how we shop, how we connect with friends and family and elected representatives, how we pay attention, how we glimpse our shared reality. This transformation is a staggering testament to American innovation.

And we can all think of a dozen ways that platforms have improved our lives. I, for one, have been entirely relieved of the stress of sitting in rush-hour traffic, wondering if there is a better route. I am now confident that Waze is guiding me like my own personal North Star, and that has made an enormous difference to my sense of well-being.

But this dramatic shift from our analog to our digital human existence has never been guided and has never been informed by the public interest. It has

always been dictated by the unforgiving requirements of a few gigantic American corporations and their commercial self-interests. And what are those interests? To make us better informed citizens? To make us more productive employees? To make us happier people? Of course not. It is to turn a profit and protect their profits through their own economic dominance, and they have succeeded beyond their wildest dreams.

This is the market capitalization of some of the largest industries in America. You can see at the top here that this is Apple and Microsoft and Alphabet and Amazon and Meta combined. They are at \$9 trillion in market cap. To get to \$9 trillion, you basically have to add up our entire banking sector, our entire oil and gas sector, and our entire pharmaceutical sector just to give you a sense of the size of the market cap of these companies alone and the reason they have become so dominant.

Through it all, unlike almost any small business in Boulder, CO, or in any town in New Hampshire, these digital platforms have remained almost entirely unregulated—moving fast and breaking things, as they have famously said, and forcing the rest of us to sweep up the wreckage.

There is another way these companies are different from the brick-and-mortar companies in Boulder, CO, or in New Hampshire. Digital platforms aren't burdened by the fixed costs of an analog world. Beyond the blinking lights of their energy-intensive server farms, their businesses are on the cloud, a place where no one works and that requires little physical investment. They have no need to use their profits to invest in America by building the kind of infrastructure these other industries do or had.

Unlike their industrial forbearers, today's platforms have devised a new digital barrier to entry to protect their profits. It is different from the way it was in the past. They have figured out how to protect their profits and economic dominance, and we know that digital barrier as the network effect.

The network effect means that platforms become exponentially more valuable as more people join and spend more of their waking moments there—more valuable to users because their friends and families are on it; more valuable to the platforms themselves, which Hoover up our identities for their profits and train their machine-learning algorithms; more valuable for advertisers, who pay the platforms for our identities to barrage us with ads; and so valuable—so valuable—to the markets, where the top tech companies now equal, roughly, a quarter of the entire S&P 500.

In the name of building this barrier to entry—this network effect—they have stolen our identities and our privacy, and they have addicted us to their platforms. The platforms' imperative to grow big and stay big poses a

very basic question: How do you get people on your platform, and how do you keep them there?

For platforms like Apple and Amazon, it is to sell products that people want, to offer subscriptions, and, if they are lucky, to enmesh them in your closed ecosystems. For social media platforms with free services, like Meta and Twitter and TikTok, the answer is more sinister, I am afraid—to harvest as much data on your users as you can, to feed that data to your algorithms to serve up whatever content it takes to keep people hooked so you can keep selling ads.

That is the core business model. That is the model that has led to these market caps. Although this particular business model has bestowed enormous value on a few companies, it has imposed profound costs on everybody else, even in places we don't necessarily expect it.

A senior law enforcement official just told me, within the last couple of weeks, that social media is the "last mile of every fentanyl and meth transaction in America." The Presiding Officer knows that in being from New Hampshire. It took my staff 20 seconds to find illegal drugs for sale on Instagram.

I would ask the pages, please, to avert your eyes here. The image on the left appears to be pills of MDMA. The image on the right shows you how to contact the dealer through Whatsapp and pay him through another app called Wickr. Below that are all of the places you can purchase this stuff, including in Denver, CO, where we are having a terrible, terrible problem with fentanyl and with methamphetamines.

Even though the vast majority of Americans never interact with content like this, we all pay a price. Millions of Americans have surrendered to private companies an endless feed of data on their lives, all for the convenience of being served up self-gratifying political content on YouTube, less traffic, or better movie recommendations. Most Americans have made that trade without ever really knowing it.

The young people who are here today don't know a world where that trade was something that wasn't automatically made. Any suggestion that we have made that trade fairly, I think, is ludicrous. It mocks any sense of consent. These are contracts of adhesion, really. As a society, we have never asked how much of our identity or our privacy we are willing to trade for convenience and entertainment. We have never had a negotiation with Mark Zuckerberg about that. Until today, these questions have been resolved entirely to the benefit of the platforms' bottom lines.

I suppose it would be one thing if the only consequences of the digital platforms' use of our data were to sell better advertising—although even that would be a fairly pathetic concession, I think, of our own economic interests and of the precious value of our data

and our privacy and our identities. But, as every parent knows and as every kid suspects, better advertising is not the only consequence of this model.

Over the years, digital platforms have imported features from gaming and from gambling—from brightly covered displays to flashing notifications, to likes—and they unleash secret algorithms to reverse-engineer our most basic human tendencies, which are to seek out tribe approval, conformity, and to create an almost irresistible feed of content.

Americans now spend a third of their waking hours on their phones, which we check an average of 344 times a day. In speaking as a parent who has raised three daughters in this era, we certainly have not agreed to run a science experiment on our children with machine-learning algorithms and generative AI chatbots that the companies themselves barely understand at all.

While we are still coming to understand the specific role social media plays in the epidemic of teen mental health, the early evidence gives us plenty of reason to worry. Here is what we do know:

In 2006, Facebook became available to the general public. The following year, Apple released the iPhone. By 2012, just 5 years later, half of Americans had a smartphone. Today, everyone has one. Everybody has got one, I think, except for CHUCK SCHUMER, the majority leader, who is still using a flip phone.

A similar story unfolded with teens and with social media. By 2012, about half of teens used social media. Today, 95 percent of teens use it. When my parents excoriated me—and they did, just like your parents excoriated you for being glued to the television in the 1970s—the average American teen watched TV for 4 hours a day. Today, teens are on their screens for twice as long. Half are online almost constantly, they say. More than one in five 10th grade girls spend 7 or more hours a day on social media. That is 35 hours a week. In France, that is a full-time job.

As our children retreat into the digital world of someone else's making, they pay for it. They are paying for it with less sleep and exercise and time with their friends, as my colleague from Connecticut was talking about. All of this has contributed to an epidemic of teen anxiety, to depression, and to loneliness, especially among teenage girls.

Today, girls who use social media heavily are two to three times as likely to say they are depressed, compared to those who use it less often or not at all. And since the introduction of smartphones and social media, we have seen a dramatic and unprecedented rise in serious depression among Americans under 25.

To be fair, I am not saying social media is the only cause of this. But as the father of three daughters who have

grown up in its shadow, I know it has played a role.

Kids are in despair in our country. Today, almost half of teens believe they can't do anything right. Almost half of teens say: I don't enjoy life, and my life is not useful.

All of these numbers began to rise around the time that smartphones and social media began to pervade the country and hook a generation to their screens.

Over this same period, we have tragically seen the suicides of young people increase 60 percent compared to 2007.

I see this crisis of teen mental health everywhere I go in Colorado—everywhere I go in Colorado. Parents tell me about how social media has undermined their children's sense of well-being and especially—especially—a girl's body image and sense of self.

A teenager recently told me that the "electronic bullying follows me home." "There is no escape," she said, "at any hour, on any day."

And I felt the panic. I felt the panic of a parent who can't fix it and make it better. It felt like there was nothing that I could do. It was beyond my control to make it better.

It has become common now, at the end of my townhalls, for parents to come up to me. They are usually not people—or they are often not people—who have come to the townhall to listen to the townhall; they are people who might be working the slide projector or who might have set the chairs out for people to sit in. They come to me after the talk is over, the conversation is over, and they will say something like: My daughter is 5 feet 10 inches, she is 105 pounds, and her confidence is in tatters because of the way she has interacted with social media and the way it has shredded her body image.

All of my young staff and my two eldest daughters universally say how lucky they are to have avoided middle school in the age of social media or to have gone to middle school before there was social media. Their younger siblings aren't so lucky, and they know that about their younger siblings.

Maybe the most poignant expression of this concern were the moms whom I met in the Mississippi Delta, in my wife's hometown of Marianna, AR, which is the county seat of Lee County, AR. One after the other of these moms told me that their kids in this rural, poor county in America just don't read because no book can compete with their phone—even as the Silicon Valley executives who designed these phones send their kids to social media detox camps every single summer. That is not something that is available to these parents in Marianna. These parents work two or three jobs. They can't afford childcare. And they have to compete for their child's attention against algorithmic poison. They have never stood a chance, and neither have their kids. Now these parents also have to compete with generative AI,

virtual reality, and the power they bestow to fully immerse yourself in the digital world.

My constituents in Colorado are most worried about what digital platforms have done to their kids and their families. I will tell you, I don't have a bunch of data tonight about the causal link between social media and the phones and the mental health epidemic that is going on in America, especially among American youth, but there is no doubt that we are having that epidemic. There is no doubt that it correlates to the advent of the phone and social media. There is no doubt it has been compounded by COVID and the effects of that.

This has been a hard time to be a young person in our country, to be a high school student, to be a college student, to have your life interrupted by a once-in-a-generation, once-in-100-years pandemic on top of everything else. I just think about all the kids like my daughter Anne, who spent so much of that time in her room at home on that phone.

When I was superintendent of the Denver public schools 15 years ago, we were working, focused so much on student achievement. It is amazing the way things have changed. When I was asked about this—about education in America—long after I had been superintendent but before COVID happened, I had an easy answer back then. My answer was mental health. Mental health. Mental health. And that was pre-COVID. There isn't anybody in America who thinks things have gotten better since then.

This is a tough time to be a kid in our country. It is a tough time to be a kid because of this dynamic. It is a tough time to be a kid because we haven't, as the Senator from New Hampshire has told us here over and over again, figured out how to stop this epidemic of fentanyl in this country, so that we are living in a time now, unlike when I was superintendent, where kids have to lobby their school nurses to be able to put antidotes in the nurse's office so their friends don't die because they took one pill that was labeled a prescription drug, and that pill killed them or almost killed them. We didn't do that—worry about that when I was superintendent 15 years ago.

This is off-topic tonight, but add on to that the fact that in America—this is the only country in the world where the leading cause of death for kids is guns, and two-thirds of that is people killing people, other people, assaults or suicides. Only 5 percent are accidents.

This is a tough time to be a kid in America.

I would argue that a lot of what we are dealing with here is manmade, human-made. It is not just a natural occurrence out there, somehow, in the world. We have to come to grips with it. We have to understand it.

Among other things, we need these companies, like other companies in the past, to share their data so that inde-

pendent researchers can help us make the assessments we need to make in order to make the judgments we need to make to provide oversight—kind of like the tobacco companies finally had to cough up the data way back when.

As I say, my constituents are most worried about this, these issues, about their kids and about their families, but they also worry a lot about the effect on our democracy, and they have a lot of reason to be concerned about that too.

When I first joined the Senate, it was around the time of the so-called Twitter revolutions in Egypt and Libya and Tunisia that we then heralded as the Arab Spring. At the time, people in Washington and around the world hailed social media as a powerful tool for democracy. It didn't take long, though, for tyrants to turn those tools against democracy. The dictators who once feared social media soon harnessed it for their purposes—to track opponents, to dox critics, and to flood the zone with propaganda.

Vladimir Putin understood this better than most. He saw the vast and unregulated power of social media over our democracy, and he wielded social media as a digital Trojan horse to inflame our divisions and undermine trust in our democracy. The damage inflicts us to this day.

Ahead of the 2016 elections, Putin flooded our social media with disinformation. According to the Mueller report, the Russians "conducted social media operations . . . with the goal of sowing discord in the U.S. political system." We know that, of course, now.

They sought to fracture our country along every conceivable line—race, religion, class, sexuality, politics—playing both sides. They didn't care. Half this stuff is pro-immigrant, for example; half is anti-immigrant. Half of it is pro-Muslim; half is anti-Muslim. What they wanted was to divide this country, to divide this democracy.

By the way, it took us more than a year to figure out this was Russian propaganda and not just our own political discourse, which says a lot about our own political discourse, where we might want to reflect on that.

The Russians played both sides over 10 million tweets and nearly 4,000 fake accounts. Imagine what Putin would have done with generative AI or could do with generative AI and the power to create fake images and videos that most of us would fail to distinguish from reality.

Back in 2016, as I said, we let it all happen because we couldn't tell the difference between this discourse and our discourse.

I published a book during my not-very-well-noticed campaign for President about this because I kept running into people—I can remember I ran into a senior at a nursing home in New Hampshire who was repeating stuff that I knew was Russian propaganda.

He was saying: What are you going to do about it?

I am not saying that you couldn't find something on the internet that is true. Obviously, there is a lot there. But he was repeating Russian propaganda, and he didn't have any idea.

When I joined the Senate Intelligence Committee after that, I began to realize that this problem extended far beyond our borders and that it was serious. That is why 3 years ago I wrote to Mark Zuckerberg, warning him—warning him—that Facebook had become authoritarians' "platform of choice" to suppress their opposition around the world.

The consequences have been horrific. In Myanmar, the United Nations named Facebook "a significant factor" in stoking communal violence against the Rohingya after it repeatedly ignored calls to remove hate speech and hire more staff who actually knew the country.

Around the world, we have seen fake stories on these platforms spark violence—in India, in Sri Lanka, in Kenya, and on January 6, 2021, here in the United States of America.

In the weeks before January 6, President Trump—our first President who ran his campaign and administration through Twitter—incited a mob to invade this Capitol. I remember sitting in a windowless room with the Presiding Officer in the Capitol on the 6th. We watched CNN as our fellow citizens invaded the U.S. Capitol with their racist banners and with their anti-Semitic t-shirts to "save" an election, they said, that had not been stolen.

In these moments, we cannot bury our heads in our digital feeds. All of us are called upon to defend this democracy and to burnish our example at home. We can help—the people in this body can help by reining in the vast power of digital platforms and reasserting the interests of the American people and our public interest.

The Americans who came before us would never have known about algorithms. They wouldn't have known about network effects. But they would recognize the challenge that we face, and their example should guide our way.

The Founders themselves designed one of the most elegant forms of checks and balances to guard against tyranny.

After Upton Sinclair exposed ghastly conditions in meatpacking facilities, in 1906, Teddy Roosevelt joined Congress to create the Food and Drug Administration. As broadcasting became more central to American life, in 1934, FDR and Congress created the Federal Communications Commission. After the 2009 financial crisis, President Obama and Congress established the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. In each case, Congress knew it lacked expertise to oversee complex new sectors of the economy, so it created independent bodies to empower—to empower—the American people.

Today, we have no dedicated entity to protect the public interest, and we

have been powerless as a result. That is why last year, I introduced a bill to create a Federal Digital Platform Commission. I reintroduced it earlier this month with our colleague Senator WELCH from Vermont.

We have essentially proposed an FCC for digital platforms—it is not really more complicated than that—an independent body with five Senate-confirmed Commissioners empowered to protect consumers, to protect competition, and to defend the public and the public's interest. The Commission would hold hearings, conduct research, pursue investigations, establish commonsense rules for the sector, and enforce violations with tough penalties. Most important, the Agency would finally put the American people in a negotiation with digital platforms that have amassed vast power beyond our imagination and over the American people's lives and the lives of our children.

Previous Congresses knew they would never have the expertise to approve or disapprove new drugs, for example.

We didn't have a debate on this floor about that because we knew that expertise would better lie with the FDA. We don't write the safety guidelines for airlines on this floor either. We have a commission that will do that.

Why would we expect Congress to be able to regulate technologies that are moving at quantum speed like AI? It is not possible.

And perhaps this is why Sam Altman, the creator of ChatGPT, testified that we urgently need a new regulator—assuming that he wasn't a deep fake.

Some may say: We don't need a new government Agency. We already have the Federal Trade Commission and the Department of Justice.

These Agencies are staffed by hard-working public servants, but they don't have the expertise or the tools or the time to regulate this brandnew sector. And that was before generative AI.

And I want to say, on that note, I am very grateful to CHUCK SCHUMER, the majority leader, for his remarks earlier today. I completely agree that we need to chart a responsible course between promoting innovation in AI and ensuring the safety of our children and our democracy.

And while I think a dedicated, expert Agency is the best solution, and I believe others will come to that judgment as well, I welcome the debate that we are going to have on this. And I am the first to admit that I don't have a monopoly on wisdom on anything but certainly on this.

But whatever we do, we cannot accept another 20 years of digital platforms transforming American life with no accountability to the American people. We are still coming to terms with the harm from 20 years of unregulated social media. And we haven't come to grips with that. Every parent knows that. I shudder to imagine what our country will look like if we allow the

same story to work its way out with AI.

That particular technology may be new, but we face a familiar American juncture. We have been here before. In the late 19th century, when Gilded Age robber barons abused their dominance of the coal, steel, and railroad industries to stifle competition, to exploit workers and undermine democracy, government stepped in to assert the public interest.

And, looking back, it is hard to imagine American life without the victories of that era—from basic antitrust laws and consumer protections to the direct election of Senators and the income tax. And I think, looking forward, we have similar questions to answer.

What will our response be to the digital robber barons of our era that addict our children, that corrode our democracy and plunder our privacy, our identity, and our attention? Will we allow them to continue transforming American life according to their self-interest, or will we step up to safeguard the interests, civil liberties, and the freedoms of the American people?

You know, especially for young people that are listening to this who might say: There is nothing you can do; the cat is out of the bag; you can't hold back the ocean—my answer to that is not very helpful because it is to recall something that young people here won't remember, but it is in my mind when I am talking to families and to young people in my State and I am listening to them talk about the mental health impacts of what they are facing.

It reminds me of when the Cuyahoga River caught on fire in Cleveland. And that moment, for those of us who were around then, was so extraordinary because that unbelievable image of a river in America burning, catching on fire, flames shooting into the sky, that is what finally forced us to come to grips with the pollution that we were allowing to flow freely into our watersheds and into our communities. The same thing with our air. And we finally did something about it, and the country is better as a result.

This is another case, by the way, just like those environmental regulations, where I think it is critically important for the United States, with our set of values and our commitments to democracy, to help set the international standards here and to not take standards from authoritarian regimes like China, for example.

And that is a big risk if we don't act here. But I think we will, and I think we can. And I think that is going to not only give the American people a chance to negotiate with these companies but give America the chance to lead on questions that are fundamentally important for humanity.

None of this is going to be easy. It never is. But when the stakes are nothing less than the health of our children and the health of our democracy, we have no choice but to try. And we

should try. I think we have a unique responsibility to lead here, not just for the reasons that I just said but also because, after all, it was American companies that blazed the trail into the digital age and invited all of humanity to follow. And we now live in the world that they created, for better and for worse, with its wonders and with its conveniences but also with its risks and dangers and difficult questions.

The same platforms that amplify a protester’s cry for freedom in Iran also equip tyrants around the world to suppress democratic movements. The same technologies that liberated anyone to say anything also unleashed a perpetual cacophony, leaving all of us screaming louder to be heard. The dazzling features that brought the world online have also trapped us there, more connected but more alone, more aware but less informed—enthralled to our screens, growing more anxious, more angry and addicted by the day.

Overcoming all of this will not be easy, but we can’t simply hide under our covers or scroll through TikTok and hope these problems are going to solve themselves. That is our job. The health and future of our children lie in the decisions that we make or the decisions that we fail to make.

Our objective, my objective to being here tonight, is not to hold the world back. In Colorado, we have always welcomed innovation, but we also understand that not all change is progress and that it is our job to harness these changes toward a better world.

We are the first generations to steer our democracy in the digital age, and it is an open question whether democracy can survive in the world that digital platforms have created. I may be wrong, but the evidence so far does not fill me with confidence. It fills me with urgency—urgency to reassert the public interest; to reclaim our public square and exercise in self-government; to level the playing field for America’s

teens, for our parents, for teachers and small businesses who, for 20 years, have battled alone against some of the most powerful companies in human history.

This is a fight worth having. This is a fight worth winning. And if we succeed, we may help save democracy not just in this country but around the world.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BENNET. Madam 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.

BUDGET ENFORCEMENT LEVELS

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023, P.L. 118-5, which Congress passed earlier this month, resolved a manufactured default crisis and avoided an economic catastrophe. In addition, the bipartisan bill provided a congressional budget for 2024.

Specifically, the legislation instructs the chairman of the Senate Committee on the Budget to file enforceable budgetary levels in the Senate consistent with current law. Today, I submit the required filing.

Section 121 of the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 requires the chairman to file a spending allocation for the Committee on Appropriations for 2024; spending allocations for other committees for 2024, 2024 through 2028, and 2024 through 2033; an aggregate spending level for 2024; aggregate revenue levels

for 2024, 2024 through 2028, and 2024 through 2033; and aggregate levels of Social Security revenues and outlays for 2024, 2024 through 2028, and 2024 through 2033. Section 121 also requires the chairman to include a list of accounts eligible for advance appropriations.

The amounts included in this filing are consistent with the Congressional Budget Office’s May 2023 baseline, adjusted for the passage of the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023, including the discretionary spending limits established by that act. Because the legislation does not include budget enforcement for fiscal year 2023, it will not be possible to submit reports required by section 308(b) of the Congressional Budget Act until fiscal year 2024.

In addition, section 121 allows the deficit-neutral reserve fund in section 3003 of S. Con. Res. 14—117th Congress—to be updated by 2 fiscal years. Pursuant to that authority, that reserve fund shall be considered updated and available for use for legislation which does not increase the deficit for the time period of fiscal year 2024 to fiscal year 2033.

For purposes of enforcing the Senate’s pay-as-you-go rule, which is found in section 4106 of the fiscal year 2018 congressional budget resolution, I am resetting the Senate’s scorecard to zero for all fiscal years.

Section 111 of the act requires my counterpart, the chairman of the House Committee on the Budget, to file similar enforceable budgetary levels in the House of Representatives consistent with the discretionary limits in the act. That filing will help both Houses uphold the bipartisan agreement.

I ask unanimous consent that the accompanying tables be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

ALLOCATION OF SPENDING AUTHORITY TO SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024

(Pursuant to Section 121 of the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 and Section 302 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974)
(\$ in billions)

	Budget Authority	Outlays
Appropriations:		
Revised Security Category/Defense	886,349	N/A
Revised Nonsecurity Category/Nondefense	703,651	N/A
General Purpose Discretionary	N/A	1,813,382
Memo:		
On-budget	1,583,271	1,806,643
Off-budget	6,729	6,739
Mandatory	1,473,002	1,452,200

N/A = not applicable. Budgetary changes related to program integrity initiatives and other adjustments pursuant to section 251(b) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act, as amended by the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023, will be held in reserve until consideration of legislation providing such funding. “Revised security category” means discretionary appropriations in budget function 050, while “revised nonsecurity category” means discretionary appropriations other than in budget function 050.

ALLOCATION OF SPENDING AUTHORITY TO SENATE COMMITTEE OTHER THAN APPROPRIATIONS

(Pursuant to Section 121 of the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 and Section 302 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974)
(\$ in billions)

	2024	2024–2028	2024–2033
Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry:			
Budget Authority	190,758	1,002,518	2,088,798
Outlays	191,517	972,954	1,974,649
Armed Services:			
Budget Authority	277,969	1,193,836	2,117,074
Outlays	272,144	1,192,368	2,114,710
Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs:			
Budget Authority	34,273	161,597	333,779
Outlays	7,051	–12,803	–70,708
Commerce, Science, and Transportation:			
Budget Authority	24,239	107,446	196,019