

So why did this happen? I believe that the great Satan, which is Iran, wanted this to happen to prevent a reconciliation between Saudi Arabia and the State of Israel, ending the Arab-Israeli conflict. A nightmare for the Ayatollah is that the Arabs and the Jews make peace and economically integrate, leaving them behind.

Israel has signed agreements with six of their Arab neighbors under Bibi's leadership.

When I go, I meet with Lapid, I meet with Gantz, and I meet with Bibi. I meet with everybody because it is not about Bibi; it is not about Gantz; it is about our relationship. If it is Gantz or Lapid next time, I will meet with them. I know them all. Mr. Lapid and I are very good friends. I have known Bibi for 25 years. It is about, what should we do to help our friends in Israel?

Nothing would please me more than to find a way to end this war sooner rather than later and get back on track for their normalization process, but we cannot expect Israel to stop now. It is like putting 80 percent of a fire out—the 20 percent is going to start it all over again.

We are down to six brigades, organized military units that Hamas has to wreak havoc on the Palestinian people and the State of Israel. It is nonnegotiable; Hamas will be destroyed militarily.

I am hoping, in the middle of all this chaos, we can still find a way for Saudi Arabia and Israel to normalize. That would be the ultimate death blow, I think, to the Iranian ambitions in the region. Part of that deal, as the Presiding Officer knows, would be the Palestinians would have a better life eventually; that Saudi Arabia and UAE would invest heavily into Gaza and the West Bank; new, younger, less corrupt people running the place, trying to find a pathway forward where the Palestinians and Israel can coexist in a way that is beneficial for all.

That can never happen until Hamas is destroyed. If Hamas is still in place, they will kill everybody who wants to make peace with Israel. They did it before. They have no desire, as Senator VAN HOLLEN said, of recognizing the Jewish State.

But I will close where I began. What Senator SCHUMER said on the floor of the Senate is taking the country and the Senate down the wrong road. This is not something any of us should be saying—calling on a government to be toppled, basically, by its own people.

At the end of the day, Bibi is not the problem. The problem is radical Islam wanting to kill every Jew they can find. The problem is Iran, which has its mission to destroy the Jewish State and to purify Islam.

I could spend hours talking about the Biden-Obama policy of empowering the Ayatollah, but that is not for today.

So what I would say to what Senator SCHUMER said today—my response to Senator SCHUMER: I am disappointed.

You have done a lot of damage, my friend, and you need to fix this.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The President pro tempore of the U.S. Senate.

APPROPRIATIONS

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, we have now at long last passed our first six funding bills for fiscal year 2024. While we are still now working around the clock on the final six bills, I am hopeful we will pass them in a timely, bipartisan way very soon. But I do want to take a moment to step back and really dive into the six bills that we did pass last week and what they mean for my home State of Washington.

I come to work every day focused on how I can use my voice here to help folks back home. When I sit down at any negotiating table, I bring with me the stories of every parent who is struggling to afford childcare or groceries or rent; every farmer and fisher whose livelihood depends on our crops, our salmon, and our environment; every researcher focused on making the next big breakthrough; every mayor focused on improving our infrastructure; and every young person who is concerned about climate change and our most basic rights.

And I take those voices that I hear at home in Washington State—the people I meet—into every room I enter and write their concerns into every bill I negotiate. It is a responsibility I take very seriously, especially as chair of the Appropriations Committee.

And I am thrilled to say the legislation that we passed last Friday—the bill I wrote with my colleagues—includes more than a billion dollars I helped secure for local projects and programs in Washington State and delivers a historic \$3 billion investment for the Hanford site cleanup.

I have practically been a broken record in saying the Federal Government has a moral and legal obligation to properly fund the cleanup at Hanford. Our work is far from done. But with this historic \$3 billion investment, we are moving in the right direction.

And as long as I am Appropriations chair, I am going to make sure we keep up that momentum. No matter what, we are not going to shortchange the vital cleanup mission at Hanford.

We are facing a housing crisis. And it has been especially hard on families in Washington State. That is why I fought hard to make sure that bill protected and strengthened programs that help families afford the cost of housing and help keep families in their homes.

At the Federal level here, that means homeless assistance grants, eviction prevention grants, and Native American Housing Block Grants, rental assistance programs, programs that help people develop economic independence and help keep kids with their parents, and vital investments to maintain our Nation's affordable housing supply.

But it is not just funding for key national efforts that help Washington State. I am especially proud to have secured funding through congressionally directed spending for the Aurora senior housing development for seniors in Seattle, which will have 90 housing units.

That is a great start, but I know we have a lot more work to do when it comes to tackling the housing crisis. And I will keep pushing for progress with my colleagues every day.

In addition to the roof over their heads, families need food on the table. I held a roundtable in Seattle a few weeks ago, talking with experts and even a mom who depended on WIC; and as I told them, I take this personally.

I remember what it was like when my family fell on tough times and we had to rely on food stamps. Making cuts that leave our kids hungry was never an option for me, which is why I fought tooth and nail to make sure that bill fully funded WIC, which serves over 130,000 moms and kids just in my home State of Washington.

And we fully funded the brandnew permanent summer nutrition program I established—Summer EBT—which will now help feed half a million kids in Washington State alone this summer.

Plus, I secured \$1.8 million for the South Kitsap Helpline. This is a resource for struggling families to help expand food distribution. In the richest country in the world, there is no reason to leave our families hungry. It is really that simple.

Now, another important need for working families in Washington State, like in every other State, is childcare. I hear about the childcare crisis everywhere I go.

We are still negotiating the bill that funds the actual Federal investments in childcare. But guess what. For parents to have access to childcare, we need physical childcare centers close to where people live.

So a big priority of mine in the last package was working with local organizations to help them build or expand their childcare centers. And so through Congressionally Directed Spending, we are going to be constructing an early learning center in the Meridian School District and another in Lewis County that will serve 80 students a year; building 17 early childhood education classrooms at the Cora Whitley Family Center in Tacoma; and relocating a Head Start facility for the Spokane Tribe Indians.

We also provided new funding to design child development centers to expand access to childcare for our military families, something I know we need more of.

I remain focused on protecting and strengthening the Child Care Development Block Grant now as we negotiate the next set of bills.

And I will always work to pass my Childcare for Working Families Act, but I will keep fighting alongside that for every step of progress we can make.

In addition to investments to support our families, I worked hard to pass funding for local projects that support our cities and our communities. Congressionally Directed Spending I secured will help Grant County upgrade security at its district court, Bainbridge Island build a brandnew visitors center at the Japanese American Exclusion Memorial, and the Indian American Community Services in Kent rebuild a community hub that will offer everything from small business support to early learning services.

Funds I secured will also support city efforts to improve public safety and make our justice system work better for everyone. And for the first time ever, the funding bill we passed includes \$10 million for a new grant program to increase access to sexual assault nurse exams.

I worked very hard alongside Washington State advocate Leah Griffin. She bravely shared her story with me about her sexual assault. And we worked together to pass a new law and fund programs to help survivors get the care and exams they need to pursue justice—from a story Leah came to my office with, to a conversation I had with her directly, to years of advocacy and coalition building on the Hill together, to passing a new law—and now funding a new program to help survivors.

It is so important to me that my constituents know anyone can make a difference and have a voice in their government. And Leah's story and her voice made a difference. I am so proud of her.

I also worked to secure local funding for projects like a public safety radio network in Kittitas and Okanogan Counties and mental and therapeutic court programs in Spokane, Tacoma, and Stevens County.

I was just in Tacoma talking to city officials and others about the partnerships they are building around mental and behavioral healthcare. And I am overjoyed to be able to help and tell them the good news that new Federal resources are on the way to support their efforts.

As another example, I secured a half a million dollars for CHOOSE 180. This is an organization in Burien that is focused on mentoring youth and helping them stay out of trouble and build a brighter future for themselves.

I visited last month, and I got to hear firsthand from amazing young adults who participated in that program. This organization is changing lives for the better. And I am so proud of the work that they are doing.

Infrastructure, critically important. In the bills we passed last week, there are many, many important investments to help build our cities, update their infrastructure, make the streets in downtowns work better for pedestrians, commuters, and families. And that includes safety and accessibility improvements and funding for infrastructure projects in my home State of

Washington—in Cle Elum, in Pierce County, in Spokane, in Seattle, in the Heights District development project in Vancouver, and Walla Walla, as well as road projects being undertaken by the Lummi Nation and the Makah Indian Tribe.

Speaking of pedestrians and commuters, we cannot forget about the investments in public transit in this bill. I am thrilled to say I secured new funds in this bill for Sound Transit light rail extension projects to Ballard, West Seattle, and Lynnwood.

And I have to say, House Republicans wanted to cut funding for public transit in their bill to a level where the Lynnwood Link simply would not have had the Federal dollars it needed to get done.

I made sure we stood firm on funding the Capital Investment Grants program. And because of that, we are now going to deliver the full Federal funding this program needs to get across the finish line.

There is also funding in this bill for upgraded bus shelters in Pierce County, a regional transit facility on Whidbey Island. And let's talk about our ferries. When it wasn't easy enough under the topline in this bill—they were tough—I was able to secure millions in additional funding for the Federal Passenger Ferry Grant Program and include, for the first time ever, language to make sure Washington State Ferries can now apply for the rural ferry grant program.

I can't talk about ferries without talking about our harbors and our ports and our waterways. This package includes a historic \$2.77 billion for the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund and new language I have worked hard to get in to make sure Washington State ports get their fair share for those funds.

There are also other crucial investments in our waterways and water infrastructure; millions for maintenance and repairs to the locks of Lake Washington Ship Canal—better known by everyone back home as the Ballard Locks—and preconstruction work at Tacoma Harbor; to say nothing of the bipartisan Infrastructure Law funds that are pouring into our communities. It is so important to all of us.

There is also funding for wastewater treatment projects at Soap Lake, Snoqualmie Pass, and to help the Discovery Clean Water Alliance return more clean water to the Columbia River.

I also worked to protect our State's incredible natural beauty and resources by fighting off devastating cuts and policy riders that House Republicans wanted to make to critical environmental and conservation programs.

This bill that we passed will help our State conserve new public lands, including in San Juan Island National Historical Park, the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge, and the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest to protect the Yakama and Wenatchee water-

sheds. And there are funds for the Mt. Adams Forest project.

I also secured full funding for essential Federal wildfire programs and protected a hard-earned pay raise for our brave Federal firefighters.

And, of course, there are investments to protect and restore our salmon populations, because everyone knows how essential salmon are to our economy at home and our current culture in Washington State. So I fought hard for investments in this bill to support salmon, on top of everything I have already mentioned.

Under tough constraints, I managed to either protect or build on Federal investments in Puget Sound restoration efforts; the Yakima Basin integrated plan; the Northwest Straits Initiative that I created; the National Marine Fisheries Service, including hatchery operations; and Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund.

Last year, I joined leaders from the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, local environmental advocates, and experts to track evasive European green crab. This is something I never heard of before the last few years. But they are now invading Washington waters, and I learned more about the threat that they pose to our native species. And I am very glad to say we now have funding to help fight that invasive green crab and language calling for a coordinated Federal approach to this threat.

Another crucial investment: a much-needed \$50 million down payment for the fish passage project at the Howard Hanson Dam. And I am so glad the President's fiscal year '25 budget that just came out requested \$500 million to build that fish passage facility. And you can bet I will be working to fund that request and finish the job in next year's funding bills.

Of course, how we manage our water resources doesn't matter to just our fish. It is also critical to our communities and farmers, which is why I am pleased we could also include funds in this bill to improve drinking water systems in Dupont and Mattawa and support bridge replacement in Adams and Grant Counties as part of the Odessa Groundwater Replacement Project, which is critical to improving irrigation for our farmers and matters so much to our State's economy.

And I fought hard to secure other critical investments to support our farmers as well.

Last year, I visited WSU for the groundbreaking of their new Plant Sciences Building, which will be at the forefront of responding to challenges Washington State farmers are facing right now.

And I am thrilled to build on that progress by delivering investments in this bill to support researchers at WSU, UW, and the USDA center in Prosser, WA, as they tackle issues like little cherry disease, livestock resiliency, pollution from tires, pulse crop quality, and more.

Of course, when it comes to cutting-edge research, agriculture is just one of

the many fields for where I am very proud to see Washington State researchers leading the way. Whether it is quantum computing in Bothell, clean energy in Tri-Cities at PNNL, or aerospace work in Kent and across western Washington, this bill will propel the innovation that is happening in my State.

And through Congressionally Directed Spending, this bill will help fund new scientific equipment at Gonzaga's Bollier Center for Integrated Science and Engineering, Evergreen State College in Olympia, and Western Washington University's Advanced Technology Laboratory—not to mention funding for WSU to upgrade its electron microscope and develop a new nuclear hot cell facility; and for UW's Tidal-Powered Ocean Observation project in its new lab in Tacoma.

I couldn't leave the floor today without talking about the critical investments in this bill that we made for our veterans and our servicemembers. As chair of the MILCON-VA subcommittee and the proud daughter of a World War II veteran, I worked hard to make sure our funding bill lived up to our Nation's commitment to every man and woman who serves in uniform.

This bill fully funds our veterans' medical care and delivers record investments to tackle veteran homelessness, strengthen mental health services, and support women veterans' healthcare needs.

I also worked hard to secure funding for new barracks and a parachute rigging facility at Joint Base Lewis-McChord; build storage tanks and fuel supply at Point Manchester; update electrical infrastructure at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard; and advance other projects across Washington State bases like equipment, maintenance, and training facilities.

I also made sure our Senate bill re-allocated \$19 million to build 88 new homes at Smokey Point for our servicemembers and their families who are stationed at Naval Station Everett. I am proud to have gotten this through our final bill to help address a major need for more military houses in Snohomish County.

When it comes to support for our veterans and our VA facilities, I pushed to make sure this bill contains funding to help the American Lake VA Medical Center upgrade its facilities so they can provide quality care and for funding for the Tahoma National Cemetery and its work to ensure we honor the veterans we have lost.

Mr. President, I just covered a lot of ground, so I will wrap things up. The bottom line is: While these first six funding bills are not the bills I would have written on my own, they do protect absolutely critical programs and make needed investments in Washington State and every State in America. Again, let's be clear: We are not done yet. I am working to make sure we see similar results for people in Washington State and across the coun-

try in the remaining six bills that we are working on right now, this minute.

I am going to keep bringing the concerns I bring with me to every negotiating room for my constituents and work to get solutions to help them with every bill that I pass.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FETTERMAN). The Senator from Texas.

ISRAEL

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I was shocked to hear the comments of the Senate majority leader this morning excoriating our closest ally, the only democracy in the Middle East. You know, we don't appreciate it when other countries tell us how we ought to govern our country. I am sure that feeling is reciprocated by our Israeli allies.

Here is what the former Ambassador of Israel said on social media:

Regardless of my opinion of Netanyahu and his fitness to serve, Senator SCHUMER's call for new Israeli elections is deeply disrespectful of our democracy and sovereignty. Israel is an ally, not a vassal state. Along with the U.S., we're one of the few countries [that have never] known a non-democratic government, and the only democracy never to have known a moment of peace. We [certainly] deserve that respect.

I think Ambassador Oren is exactly right. The majority leader's speech this morning was deeply disrespectful of our ally, which is, indeed, as I said, a sovereign nation and a democracy.

I traveled to Israel and Saudi Arabia and Jordan in January with five other members of the Senate Intelligence Committee. We met in Jordan and then in Saudi Arabia with Mohammed bin Salman and then with Prime Minister Netanyahu and the Defense Minister Gallant in Israel.

Of course, war involves collateral damages to innocent people. But the people responsible for initiating that war in Israel was Hamas, a proxy of the Iranian regime—one of many. And for somehow to say now, 5 months after that horrible attack on October 7, that Israel ought to stay its hand and allow Hamas potentially to reconstitute in Gaza is not only deeply disrespectful, it undermines the ability of the Israelis to do what they must do, which is destroy that threat.

I know 3 months after the attack on October 7, when I was in Israel, when I heard some of my colleagues say we need to have a cease-fire—well, I know if Hamas had not started the shooting, that Israel would not have started and we would not find ourselves with all of these casualties on both sides.

But we know that Iran is the head of the octopus and the tentacles reach far and wide. We all learned more about world geography and how the world works in recent years since America—we thought we were safe on our own continent, and we had an ocean to protect us on each side. But 9/11 was a reminder that not even Americans are safe from the hand of terrorists.

And Iran is the No. 1 state sponsor of terror—no doubt about it. They spon-

sor the Houthis in Yemen. They help Shia militias in Iraq and Syria. They help Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon on the northern border. Israel is under attack by people who want to wipe that country and those people off the face of the Earth. Of course, they have a right to defend themselves. Of course, they need to eliminate the terrorist threat that killed so many innocent civilians on October 7.

And so for the majority leader to come here and say, ostensibly as a supporter of Israel, that we don't like the current government; that the Israeli people need new elections and to select new leaders; and oh, by the way, you need to quit being so tough on the terrorists known as Hamas—it is shocking to me.

We need to stand with Israel. They need to be able to finish the job, not because they want to, but because they must in order to continue to exist.

OFFICE OF REFUGEE RELOCATION

Mr. President, also today, I was shocked to hear the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Secretary Becerra, say that when it comes to the 400,000 unaccompanied children that have come to America, come to our shores and been placed with sponsors by the Office of Refugee Relocation under Health and Human Services—he said: We don't have any responsibility to those children after they are placed with sponsors.

Just to remind everybody, under current law, if an unaccompanied child shows up at the border—smuggled to the border by criminal organizations that get rich smuggling migrants to the border—they are then turned over by the Border Patrol to Health and Human Services Office of Refugee Relocation. They then identify a sponsor for that child in the interior of the United States. Sometimes it is a family member; sometimes it is not.

There has been precious little vetting of the households in which those children are ultimately placed. And the New York Times, in 2023, wrote several investigative articles documenting the fact that the Biden administration had simply lost those children. In 85,000 cases where the reporters contacted the sponsors of these children, there was never an answer.

Secretary Becerra said this morning: I don't have the authority to do anything after we turn them over to the sponsor.

I said: OK. You can't tell us where these children are? You can't tell us are they going to school? Are they being trafficked for sex? Are they being forced into child labor in violation of the laws that are designed to protect children as has been documented by the New York Times and one of the Senate's own investigating committees?

He said: It is not my job.

Frankly, my conclusion is he simply doesn't care about the welfare of these 400,000 children living in communities all across America. We don't know