

our immigration laws. Beyond that, Vice President HARRIS has advocated for a pathway to citizenship for the 11 million or so people in the country illegally.

I also heard this weekend, one of our colleagues, the Senator from Massachusetts, say one of the things she would anticipate from a future HARRIS administration would be establishing a pathway to citizenship for people here illegally in the United States.

We also know she supports Federal health coverage for undocumented immigrants. In other words, she wants all of us as taxpayers to pay for the healthcare of people who won't even respect our laws and who entered the country illegally.

And she has demonstrated that she is all too quick to judge and vilify law enforcement. Three years ago, border agents were trying to control a crowd of 3,000 migrants in Del Rio, TX. Del Rio, TX, is about 35,000 people. Can you imagine the chaos and the challenge associated with 15,000 migrants from Haiti showing up in this town of 35,000 people? One photographer captured an image that went viral for all of the wrong reasons. The image showed an agent grabbing the back of a man's shirt while on horseback while the horse's reins dangled on the side. At first glance, people like then-Vice President HARRIS assumed the worst and accused the agent of whipping the man to the ground.

But before the Agency could even investigate the matter, she had attacked, disparaging the very law enforcement officials that are responsible for enforcing security at the border. She said these images evoked those of slavery and described the agent's behavior as "horrible and deeply troubling." Had she waited to actually investigate the incident, she would have learned the facts that there was no whip, and there was no whipping. If she bothered to speak to the head of Border Patrol, she would have been told the same thing. But as reports indicate, the Vice President of the United States, who was appointed the border czar by President Biden, has never spoken to the head of the Border Patrol, neither the current one nor his predecessor.

Think about that for a minute. If your job is to be the border czar, wouldn't that be the first person you would talk to—the head of Border Patrol—maybe to learn what you could do to help fix it? But she hasn't even bothered to talk to either the current or the previous Border Patrol Chief.

The fact is that Vice President HARRIS has played a key role in fueling the largest immigration crisis our country has ever seen. If she was able to accomplish that much as the Vice President and border czar, I hate to know what kind of damage she could inflict from the Oval Office.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BUTLER). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Hawaii.

#### ELIMINATE USELESS REPORTS ACT OF 2024

Mr. SCHATZ. Madam President, after a long time of talking over the ways social media is harming kids and debating what to do about it, this week, the Senate is taking some action.

For years, kids have been swimming in a toxic stew of bullying and harassment, glorified violence, and constant false comparisons, and the results have been absolutely catastrophic—record rates of anxiety and depression, unimaginable levels of suicidal ideation and self-harm, an alarming epidemic of loneliness and low self-esteem.

These things are not a given. They did not just happen overnight. The fact that young children as young as 8 or 9 or 10 can feel so sad and so helpless that they think they would be better off not living at all—that is a uniquely modern malady inflicted by social media.

Sadness in kids is not new, but a pandemic of youth depression is new. The fact that it is a relatively recent phenomenon is also cause for us to have some hope. It does mean that this is fixable. This is not the way it is supposed to be. This is not the way it has always been. It means that if we choose to take some pretty commonsense steps, we can finally get kids the help they need, and commonsense steps are exactly what the Kids Online Safety Act and the Children and Teens' Online Privacy Protection Act are.

I am proud to cosponsor both bills, which will provide important tools to protect the safety and privacy of kids online. I want to thank Senators BLUMENTHAL and MERKLEY for their early leadership on both these bills.

For the first time in the age of social media, Congress is taking meaningful action to confront the very worst of the internet's ills. It has been a long and difficult journey to get to this moment, not least because some in Big Tech have done everything in their power to protect profits over kids. So it is to the credit of everyone involved in these bills that we are here, overcoming stiff opposition and inertia, to finally enact something.

It is a good step, but we have to do a lot more because we have yet to address the fundamental question of, when is it appropriate for a child to be on social media?

We have more than enough data, more than enough lived experience, more than enough scientific expertise to know that social media is harming kids' brains, pushing them down rabbit holes, plunging them into deep and dark places. We know that even adults aren't equipped to process the dizzying amount of information available online at all times, and that is to say nothing

of the hate and the vitriol and the abuse served up on an endless loop by coercive algorithms.

That begs the question—why is a 7-year-old or an 8-year-old on TikTok to begin with? Why are young boys and girls, instead of playing with their friends outside or learning an instrument, getting radicalized or starving themselves because of something they saw on Instagram?

The fact is, we need to delay the onset of social media use. There is no safe cigarette. There are no settings that are going to solve this problem.

My bipartisan bill, the Kids Off Social Media Act, which I introduced earlier this year with several of my colleagues, will finally set the legal minimum age for social media use to 13. It will also ban platforms from targeting kids under 17 with powerful black box algorithms designed to keep them scrolling for hours on end. These are reasonable proposals. These are proposals that can be implemented. These are proposals that will pass constitutional muster.

So the question in front of us is, Why in the world is a 9-year-old allowed on TikTok when we know that the stubborn facts operate like this: The longer people spend time on your platform, the more money you make in ad revenue. OK. That stands to reason. The more people that use your site, the more money you get to make. Here is the stubborn fact that Meta and Twitter and TikTok and everybody else actually stumbled upon. They weren't searching for it, but they stumbled upon it. How do you get people to stay on your website? How do you get people to stay on your social media platform? The most reliable way to get any user to stay on a social media platform is to upset them. So you have these publicly traded companies, some privately held, but they all have an obligation to try to maximize profit. To maximize profit, you have to maximize eyeballs. In order to maximize eyeballs, you have to systematically upset, alienate, anger, make sick a whole generation of children.

We don't have to do this to ourselves. It is not impermissible for us to set a minimum age for a product for children. There is a compelling government interest and there is a compelling moral interest for us to take this action.

The bottom line is, our kids need help, and after a series of fits and starts, we are starting to deliver it. Progress, however overdue and however incremental, ought to be recognized and celebrated, but let's also remember that our work here is just beginning. The scale of the ongoing crisis and the needs of kids who are thoroughly overwhelmed online demand that we do more, and we must do more in the months and years ahead.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior executive assistant clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Louisiana.

#### SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr. CASSIDY. Madam President, Social Security is a sacred trust between the American people and our government. It is a promise to workers, many of whom have no other savings besides Social Security. A promise, almost by definition, does not change. It remains consistent despite new challenges. It is just a question of whether society has the courage to honor that commitment.

Now Social Security as we know it is headed for a fiscal cliff in 9 years. If it hits that cliff, if we do nothing and we just attempt to borrow our way out of it, there will be an estimated \$615 trillion in accumulated debt over the next 75 years—again, if we just attempt to borrow our way out of it. If we don't borrow our way out of it, there is a 20- to 24-percent cut in benefits to Social Security recipients, both current and future. This is the rock and the hard place: either the 20-percent or so cut or, with borrowing costs, a \$615 trillion addition to our Nation's deficit.

I have spoken before on Social Security. Today, I want to focus on two unfair provisions that we would eliminate if we actually have a chance to address Social Security, the larger picture. The two I will speak of are the windfall elimination provision and the government pension offset, also known as WEP and GPO. These penalize families across the country who worked in a State or a local public service job for part of their career and had a pension separate from Social Security.

How did we get here? WEP and GPO were introduced by President Clinton and Speaker Gingrich decades ago to address perceived inequalities in the Social Security system, but it had the effect actually of creating inequalities. When someone, say, worked for the State of Louisiana or the State of California, and then they didn't pay into the Social Security system, but they left that job after 20 years and went into the private sector, and they worked for 20 years paying into the Social Security system, getting their quotas, here, they were unfairly penalized, overly penalized for the years in which they did not contribute into Social Security.

What the windfall elimination provision does is it reduces the Social Security benefit of individuals who also receive a pension from non-Social-Security-covered employment—for example, State or local government. This has resulted in thousands of individuals who have paid into Social Security during their career but nonetheless received an overly reduced Social Security benefit when they retired.

This is WEP. Now let's talk about the government pension offset. The

GPO reduces Social Security spousal or survivor benefits for individuals who also receive a government pension. This provision can reduce or even eliminate Social Security benefits that a spouse or a widow might have expected and relied upon.

Louisiana has more first responders per capita than any other State in the Nation and tens of thousands of teachers, meaning that our State is disproportionately affected by WEP and GPO.

A few years ago, I met a retired Louisiana schoolteacher impacted by GPO—again, government pension offset. She had been a teacher. Her husband had paid into Social Security. She should have gotten the spousal benefit from Social Security, but it was remarkably reduced. She cried in my office. She was unable to understand why she was getting less in Social Security spousal benefits than if she had never worked at all. Think about that. If she had never taught, she would have gotten more benefits than the fact that she did teach and was subject to this government pension offset. She felt that she was punished for being a teacher, educating generations of Louisiana children. Indeed, she was, and she is.

There is no excuse to treat public servants this way. WEP and GPO should never have become laws, but we have an opportunity to fix them.

With President Biden stepping aside in the Presidential race, he has the opportunity to show Presidential leadership—the Presidential leadership he failed to demonstrate until now—on the issue of Social Security. If he is going to serve as President for several more months, why not support a bipartisan plan to save Social Security, to hold true to the promise to our seniors, as well as to make the system fair, with one of his last acts in office. The American people deserve a President willing to work for them. Here is an opportunity.

#### LIQUEFIED NATURAL GAS

Madam President, the American people understand the importance of energy: It keeps the lights on and puts food on the table. And living in Louisiana, you happen to know the person who works at the liquefied natural gas plant or at the oil rig, who produces the energy. He is your neighbor. That is why, with the Biden-Harris administration's pause upon LNG export permits in January, it was, to me, clear who they would be putting out of a job.

Last month, the American people gained a major victory. A U.S. district judge in Lake Charles ruled that the LNG pause was "completely without reason or logic." The court ruling reinstated sanity at a time when the Biden-Harris administration adopted the most absurd arguments to please radical environmental donors.

The fact of the matter is the Biden-Harris pause was a clear attempt to undermine U.S. liquefied natural gas production and export by putting the ki-

bosh on these new exports and depriving allies of freedom fuel.

Both President Biden and Vice President HARRIS have not been shy about their desire to kill American energy production. Vice President HARRIS has called for a total ban on fracking, adopting the "leave it in the ground" mentality of the far left, even going so far as to blow up the filibuster to pass the Green New Deal; that is, the now President of the Senate would have us end the filibuster to kill American energy, help China, Russia, and Iran, and raise prices on working families.

I don't know whether we should be more concerned about the fact that they say "leave it in the ground," despite knowing that renewable resources can't meet U.S. energy demand, or that they say it thinking that it may actually work.

Curtailed U.S. natural gas production will not lower global greenhouse gas emissions, but unleashing American energy will. U.S. liquefied natural gas is one of the cleanest burning fuels in the world in terms of lifecycle emissions. In fact, natural gas is principally responsible for U.S. emissions being lower today than they were in 1988, despite a much larger economy and population.

And just because we limit the supply of natural gas, the demand does not go away. The demand instead will turn to other sources of energy. We saw this in Europe after the invasion of Ukraine. European countries refused to buy Russian natural gas—and I applaud that decision—but with the Biden-Harris LNG export pause, the world must turn to dirty alternatives like oil or coal purchased from dictators or despots in Russia and Iran. It was as if Putin himself called up the Vice President, called up the President, and said: Let's put a pause on this because, by golly, this is going to help the Russian economy.

Now, you don't have to be a rocket scientist to know that, as coal use goes up, global emissions increase. The administration's thinly veiled plan to reduce global emissions actually backfires. It backfires because, if other countries don't get our natural gas, they burn their coal, and global emissions increase.

The administration's war on American energy didn't just affect our allies; it also wages a war on American workers. Two-thirds of U.S. liquefied natural gas is exported from Louisiana, providing thousands of Louisianians with good paying jobs. The Biden-Harris freeze impacted 18 LNG export facilities, 12 of which were going to be built in my State.

Now, "to be built" is the key phrase here, because it didn't just affect energy jobs; it affected construction jobs as well. Because the Biden-Harris administration wants to appease the rich climate lobby, the future and financial security of construction workers in Louisiana and across the country is thrown into limbo.

Now, even though we have this court ruling, we are not out of the woods.