

SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER

(Mr. AMO of Rhode Island was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. AMO. Madam Speaker, I rise today because something is rotten in the state of our government.

Over the past 50 days, Donald Trump, Elon Musk, and DOGE have willfully spread chaos and confusion inside Federal agencies. They have gleefully fired thousands of employees. By taking out their chain saw and cutting down to the bone, this Republican administration is maliciously hurting the American people. We also know they have their sights on Social Security and Medicare, per Elon Musk's statement that it is the "big one" to cut.

This isn't fear-mongering. It gives me no pleasure to report these facts, but we need to be honest. The speed, scope, and scale with which these bad-faith actors are disrupting lives is unprecedented.

While attention has been on the impact of firings in Washington, this is not a Washington story—far from it. In fact, fewer than one in five Federal workers live in D.C., Maryland, or Virginia. That is right, the ongoing efforts to cut back the Federal Government are falling on the over 80 percent of workers who live outside the beltway. They are falling on everyday Americans who rely on our government in countless ways, big and small.

Today, I would like to share some stories from Rhode Island of those being hurt by Donald Trump's callous disregard for public service.

I will start with a constituent of mine from Barrington, Rhode Island, who works in international development. Since December, she has been employed by a nonprofit organization that helps children with disabilities outside of the United States. The way she explains it: "Eliminating USAID in its entirety has hollowed out what used to be the largest bilateral aid agency in the world. When these programs stop, kids suffer. They lose access to shelter, medical care, clean water, food, and education."

Cuts to U.S. foreign aid have forced the nonprofit to start laying off people. They have lost thousands in the field and terminated hundreds more on the international programs team. This hurts our humanitarian and national security goals.

Every day, my constituent goes to work worried that their job will be next on the chopping block. Worse still, because of potential cuts to Medicaid that Republicans are pursuing in their budget resolution, she is worried whether her family, including her two young sons, will have health insurance if she loses her job.

My question is: Is the cruelty worth it, Madam Speaker?

It is not just those who project American influence abroad. It is also those who carry their service forward after serving in uniform. The Federal Government is the largest employer of

our brave veterans. Thirty percent of the Federal workforce are veterans, including one of my constituents from Bristol, Rhode Island. As a disabled veteran with 23 years of service, my constituent was unceremoniously fired from his position at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration on February 27.

In his letter, he had asked the Department of Commerce if he could receive a letter of displacement to acquire another Federal position versus having to apply as a member of the public. He received no answer, but then again no longer had the access to find out. Thankfully, we learned yesterday that he was reinstated and will report to work tomorrow.

The question is, though, how many veterans have not been so lucky? How many are now scrambling for a job, wondering if their "thank you for your service" is an unceremonious pink slip?

It is shameful. It is un-American. It is wrong.

I want to end on a hopeful note. Recently, I heard from Stephanie, a constituent from North Smithfield, Rhode Island.

Stephanie isn't a Federal employee. She is a researcher who went into the field after personally experiencing and seeing her loved ones experience diseases with few treatment options available.

Stephanie earned her Ph.D. in experimental and molecular science. Today, she is a post-doctoral research fellow working to find treatments for neurofibromatosis type 1. Currently, her job is safe. Cuts to research through the National Institutes of Health have been halted by a Federal judge. I proudly led more than 150 of my colleagues in a letter to support this bipartisan—yes, bipartisan—funding priority.

The overall point remains, though: Cuts to Federal funding and Federal workers affect millions of Americans across the country.

Our community is lucky to have researchers, veterans, international aid workers, agricultural experts, and meteorologists. They work to find cures, promote American interests, predict the weather, and keep us healthy, fed, and safe. Their jobs aren't just a line item on a budget. They are about people. They are about Americans who care about our country and the direction of where we are going. Each one of them has done the most American thing possible. They have dedicated their lives to making our Nation a better place.

FIGHTING MEDICAID FRAUD

(Ms. MALLIOTAKIS of New York was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS. Madam Speaker, I rise to highlight the rampant fraud, waste, and abuse in Medicaid that is draining American taxpayers and hurting our most vulnerable seniors, dis-

abled, and other Americans who rely on this program.

Yesterday, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, Russell Vought, told us something shocking, that one out of four Medicaid payments are improper payments—one out of every four.

This echoes a 2024 report from the Biden administration's Office of Management and Budget that designated Medicaid and Medicare as a high priority for susceptibility to fraud, waste, abuse, improper payments, and overpayments.

In 2024, the Government Accountability Office released a report estimating over \$100 billion in improper payments were made in the Medicare and Medicaid programs for the fiscal year 2023.

Now, I could read some of these headlines that highlight it in the media. There was a CNBC report that detailed how Medicare and Medicaid programs are being brazenly targeted by sophisticated criminals to the tune of \$100 billion a year.

"Lack of State oversight spurs Medicaid fraud," says Spectrum New York.

"Scammers ripped off NY's controversial Medicaid home care program to the tune of \$68 million," from the New York Post.

The New York Times says: "Staggering Rise in Catheter Bills Suggests Medicare Scam."

"Florida Man Indicted for [Medicare and] Wire Fraud . . . in \$97 Million Scheme."

"Medicaid program suspended from two south Jersey nursing homes," after being "accused of taking \$83 million from nursing homes funded by New York Medicare and Medicaid."

"Fiscal year 2023 proved to be a high-value one for healthcare frauds and settlements, with the DOJ totaling \$2 billion in illicit activity."

In California: "Attorney General Bonta Announces Indictment of Southern California Healthcare Provider for Medi-Cal Fraud of Nearly \$60 Million."

CEO of "Digital Health Company Arrested for \$100M Adderall Distribution and Healthcare Fraud Scheme."

In New York: "Doctor Convicted of \$24M Medicaid Fraud Scheme."

"Attorney General James Announces Convictions and Sentences of Five Taxi Company Owners in Orange and Rensselaer Counties for Stealing Millions from Medicaid."

"Florida Telemarketer Sentenced to 15 Years in Prison for \$67 Million in Medicare Fraud Scheme."

In San Antonio: "Hill County doctor sentenced 10 years in prison, \$26 million in restitution for Medicaid fraud scheme."

I can go on and on, reading headline after headline about the rampant fraud and abuse in this program that is actually taking away—that is what is hurting our vulnerable Americans who rely on this program, the fraudsters who are stealing the money.

My Governor, Kathy Hochul, lied to New Yorkers about what Republicans

are really trying to do. Our real goal is to root out this waste, fraud, and abuse to protect benefits for our eligible recipients.

Kathy Hochul said it herself in her own words. She pointed out how fraudulent the program is. In July 2024, the Governor said that the State's Medicaid Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program has "become a racket." She said it is "one of the most abused programs in the entire history of the State of New York." She said that the current trajectory of Medicaid spending is "not sustainable."

Other Democrats have pointed out the same things. Attorney General Garland, President Biden's Attorney General, in a 2024 speech regarding healthcare fraud, announced charges against 193 defendants for over \$2.75 billion in false Medicare and Medicaid claims, and that was just one event.

New York Attorney General Letitia James, in a January 2025 speech, said: "Companies that illegally profit by exploiting Medicaid patients steal taxpayer money and undermine the healthcare system that all New Yorkers rely on."

To my colleagues, Republicans and Democrats, let's work together to actually fix this. Let's work together to go after those fraudsters to eliminate this abuse that we are seeing in this system so we can preserve this very important program that our seniors, our disabled, our children with developmental disabilities, and vulnerable Americans rely on. Let's not play partisan politics with something that is so critically important to so many New Yorkers and Americans across the country.

ISAIAH MISALEGALU'S VOICE IS SAMOAN SILK

(Ms. LEE of Nevada was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. LEE of Nevada. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate who I believe will be the next winner of "American Idol," Sierra Vista High School's own and Nevada Third District constituent Isaiah Misalegalu.

Over the weekend, I watched Isaiah get his golden ticket to Hollywood after singing "A Song for You," with his uncle playing the guitar by his side. With a voice like his, it is no wonder they are calling him Samoan Silk.

Not only is Isaiah a powerful and talented singer, but he also shines on the football field and volleyball court and in leading his school's Polynesian Club.

No matter what Isaiah does, I hope he knows that the entire southern Nevada community is behind him chasing his dreams. I wish him the best of luck on his "American Idol" journey.

□ 1045

CR FUNDING FOR DEFENSE AND VETERAN PROGRAMS

(Mr. LAMALFA of California was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Madam Speaker, as we take on the continuing resolution, once again it is not the best way of doing business around here. We should be grinding through the twelve different points that the appropriations process has.

At least there is good news as CRs go in that part of it that is being plussed up includes the issue with our military.

A lot of times when CRs occur, our military is the one that gets shorted on that. They have to plan for the long term for weapons systems, what they need in upgraded facilities, and take care of the personnel in the process. This does boost up our military needs to an extent in the CR.

It will upgrade all four branches—Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines—that are on the front lines. It will strengthen their readiness and help modernize some of their infrastructure. Delays, of course, put these projects at risk. That is why it is important that the CR be done timely.

As I mentioned, family housing is a very important aspect for the comfort and efficiency of our personnel. It is directed towards improvements in the living conditions for the servicemembers and their families. Stable funding makes sure these projects stay on track.

The Arlington National Cemetery, of course, has amazing meaning to our whole country, especially those that have fallen and would be interred there. There are improvements there for a better process for people to be able to get in and out of the facility, as well as the ceremonies that might be held there.

We have a significant improvement in veterans' healthcare, medical services, community care, and facility improvements to ensure veterans can get the good healthcare that they need and deserve. Uncertainty does not help that to remain. That is why passing the CR at this time is important.

For retirement homes for veterans, it ensures they will have facilities that continue to stay on track, whether new ones are built or continued upgrades and maintenance is not passed over.

One of the aspects that we are disappointed with not getting into the continuing resolution has bipartisan support. I am pleased to work with my colleague from Colorado (Mr. NEGUSE) on what is known as Secure Rural Schools. That is a fund that we do every single year. It is nothing new. It is nothing that is going to plus-up spending around here or require additional budget effort. It is something that is basically there to supplement the income at the local level, for counties.

It is called SRS, Secure Rural Schools. A large part of it goes to help local schools, as well as county roads. This funding used to come from the timber industry which overlaps so many of the areas that the SRS fund would go to.

With the decimation of the timber industry starting really in the late sev-

enties and the eighties, and the spotted owl movement and other environmental concerns that have made it just nearly impossible in some cases to do the timber harvest that is really needed to be done, this program came along and replaced those receipts.

It is fairly tough every year to come here. Our county supervisors come here hat in hand every year and ask us to support the SRS one more time. These are dollars that have to come from the U.S. Treasury rather than from the forest and the industry.

Until such point as we can get a much more viable timber industry going again in this country with a much more streamlined process of permitting, especially on Federal Forest Service land, why should it be difficult to do things that make good sense as far as thinning our forests and harvesting from it? It is a renewable resource. We plant it back, and the trees grow again.

What we do instead is we seem to ignore that fact and just let them burn year after year, especially in the Western States. In my own district, we had a million-acre fire 3 years ago; a 400,000-acre fire last year; a 600,000-acre fire a couple of years before that, time after time.

All my colleagues in the Western States pretty much can point to that same thing happening in their States as well, millions of acres burned every year in the West. For some reason, the U.S. is now the number one importer of wood and paper products and the number one importer of lumber. What are we doing here?

We have to come hat in hand each year and ask for funding from the Treasury to replace an industry that we need and to replace wood and paper products that we use regularly in our daily lives. Heaven knows, this place goes through a lot of paper. Why should we have that come from foreign forests somewhere?

When I am at the railroad crossing back home waiting on a train, I see all these loads of lumber and Canadian wheat coming south. Why aren't we doing that at home? We need to get SRS in the next round.

MAKING OUR VOICES HEARD

(Ms. KELLY of Illinois was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I rise today in defiance of the House Republicans' partisan funding bill.

Democrats pulled up a seat for Republican leadership at the negotiating table to discuss a bipartisan solution, but Republicans walked away.

What did Republicans propose instead?

A blank check to Donald Trump and Elon Musk to take money away from you and spend as they will.

For years, I have heard my Republican colleagues talk about the power of the purse and how that power belongs to Congress and Congress alone.