

well drilled offshore in the Gulf of America was drilled 87 years ago, in 1938. Since then, we have drilled, I think, 6,000 wells. There are 6,000 platforms in the Gulf of Mexico.

Now, before an oil company drills a well, on its own volition and at the suggestion of the Department of the Interior, the oil company surveys the seabed. It just makes sense for safety reasons but also for the sake of history because we want to look for shipwrecks.

We have found—I don't know how many—shipwrecks. I had it written down: 4,000 shipwrecks. We have surveyed the entire Gulf of America in the 87 years since we started drilling there. We have surveyed 311,652 square nautical miles, the surface area of Texas and California put together. That is how we found 4,000 shipwrecks. And it has cost hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars. So we know what is there. We know what is there.

Well, in September of 2024, the Department of the Interior, in a midnight regulation, in an effort to try to further hurt fossil fuels, passed a new rule, and they said: Look, we know we have surveyed the entire gulf, and we know we have found 4,000 shipwrecks. And we know that the area that we surveyed is the size of California and Texas put together. But every time you drill a new well, we want you to survey again.

Well, why? I mean, what is the benefit? We know what the cost is. It costs anywhere from \$10,000 to \$1 million to resurvey again. It just makes no sense.

And a third of the production in the gulf is from independent oil companies. Maybe the majors can support this, but if an independent oil company has to survey what has already been surveyed, it can add, as I said, \$10,000 to \$1 million to a well cost.

What is the point? I can tell you what the point is. Somebody over at BOEM, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Department of the Interior, hates fossil fuels—somebody or somebodies.

Now, I am not saying that the person who came up with this rule is the dumbest guy in the world, but that person better hope that the dumbest guy in the world doesn't die because this is just bone-deep, down-to-the-marrow dumb. This is the kind of "spending porn" that we all ought to abhor.

So I am going to try to kill the regulation today under what, as the Presiding Officer knows, is called the Congressional Review Act, and we will be voting on that shortly.

I realize that common sense, as I have said before, is illegal in Washington. This is not a normal place. But I hope folks who still have common sense will vote to get rid of this foolish rule.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

NOT VOTING—4

Alsobrooks Tuberville
Cramer Van Hollen

The motion was agreed to.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT RELATING TO "PROTECTION OF MARINE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES"—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 15, S.J. Res. 11.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant executive clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 15, S.J. Res. 11, providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management relating to "Protection of Marine Archaeological Resources".

VOTE ON MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. KENNEDY. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Maryland (Ms. ALSOBROOKS) and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 54, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 91 Leg.]

YEAS—54

Banks	Graham	Moran
Barrasso	Grassley	Moreno
Blackburn	Hagerty	Mullin
Boozman	Hawley	Murkowski
Britt	Hickenlooper	Paul
Budd	Hoeven	Ricketts
Capito	Husted	Risch
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Rosen
Collins	Johnson	Rounds
Cornyn	Justice	Schmitt
Cortez Masto	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Crapo	Lee	Sheehy
Cruz	Lummis	Sullivan
Curtis	Marshall	Thune
Daines	McConnell	Tillis
Ernst	McCormick	Wicker
Fischer	Moody	Young

NAYS—42

Baldwin	Hirono	Reed
Bennet	Kaine	Sanders
Blumenthal	Kelly	Schatz
Blunt Rochester	Kim	Schiff
Booker	King	Schumer
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Coons	Lujan	Slotkin
Duckworth	Markey	Smith
Durbin	Merkley	Warner
Fetterman	Murphy	Warnock
Gallego	Murray	Warren
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Welch
Hassan	Padilla	Whitehouse
Heinrich	Peters	Wyden

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT RELATING TO "PROTECTION OF MARINE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES"

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the joint resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (S.J. Res. 11) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management relating to "Protection of Marine Archaeological Resources".

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the provisions of 5 USC 802, there will now be up to 10 hours of debate equally divided.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 1:02 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. BRITT).

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT RELATING TO "PROTECTION OF MARINE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES"—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

CHINA

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, it has been a little over a month since President Trump was inaugurated as the 47th President of the United States. One of his key promises on the campaign trail—and, really, throughout his service in the White House—has been to confront the threat of the Chinese Communist Party and to hold China accountable for failing to play by the rules. The American people voted resoundingly for that agenda this past November, delivering both the electoral vote and the popular vote to President Trump, as well as Republican majorities in both the House and the Senate. Now, the task at hand is to actually begin to implement those promises to hold China to account.

Xi Jinping has made clear his plans to "reincorporate" Taiwan in 2027, just 2 years away. We don't know exactly what that entails, but the threat is ominous.

Time is running short to make any potential conflict with China undesirable from their standpoint—in other words, to reestablish deterrence. But the good news is, we have a number of tools available to us and a track record of success on confronting the threat of the CCP during the Trump administration.

Back in 2018, I was proud to work with President Trump on modernizing the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, otherwise known as CFIUS. This interagency committee reviews foreign direct investment into the United States for potential national security concerns.

The bill we ultimately passed and that was signed into law by President Trump was called FIRREA, the Foreign Investment Risk Review Modernization Act. In that law, we updated CFIUS to expand its scope and process to ensure that we are more comprehensively reviewing any investments that might allow influence by foreign entities for nefarious purposes in the United States.

This bipartisan legislation was signed into law by President Trump as part of the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act. FIRREA was a critical step toward derisking from China.

While this was a big win for Republicans and for President Trump, the truth is we still have more work to do. The top of our to-do list now is to address outbound investment flowing into China by American investors.

At this very moment, American investors—some of these are businesses; some of these are individuals. The investments they are making are fueling China's military buildup and modernization by funneling capital into potentially dual-use technology and military capabilities that could eventually be used against the United States and our allies.

According to the U.S.-China Economic Security and Review Commission's 2024 Report to Congress, U.S. investments in China's semiconductors, quantum computing, and AI alone totaled about \$2 billion in 2023.

In 2020, more than 90 percent of these investments were concentrated in the semiconductor industry. And from 2015 to 2021, U.S. investors made up 37 percent of China's global funding for artificial intelligence.

Congress is acutely aware of the threat posed by China's rapid capture of the autonomous vehicle market, advanced cellular technologies, and semiconductor manufacturing. We have acted on these issues before, and it is time to do so again.

I was proud to lead the CHIPS for America Act to help the United States reestablish manufacturing for advanced semiconductors here in America, where the percentage of advanced semiconductors that fuel everything from our cell phones to the avionics in an F-35 Joint Strike Fighter—only 12 percent of those were made here in the United States. The rest of them were

made in Asia, principally in Taiwan and South Korea. But we are in the process of turning that around.

But there is another side to this coin. How can we expect to outcompete or even catch up to Chinese companies if, unbeknownst to us, American dollars are continuing to fuel their rise, economically and militarily?

We are simply not being serious about confronting our greatest strategic adversary if we continue to be blind to the investment of billions of dollars in the very technologies that could be potentially used to kill American soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines.

Now, we have an opportunity on a bipartisan basis to finish the job we began with CFIUS reform just a few short years ago. We can do this by passing legislation to address outbound investment into China. To start with, we need greater transparency. We need some sort of accountability so we know exactly what the facts are.

It is no secret to any of my colleagues that I have been working on this issue for some time now. During the previous Congress, my amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act with provisions to increase transparency around outbound investment passed by a vote of 91 to 6, demonstrating the high level of consensus in this Chamber on this issue. But, unfortunately, this amendment was dropped from the National Defense Authorization Act when it went to conference, and it didn't make it into the final version that was sent to the President's desk and ultimately signed into law.

Then, last year, we made progress along a bipartisan path and in a bicameral manner, with Speaker JOHN-SON and Congressman MICHAEL MCCAUL, who was then the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, working on the House's legislative provisions around outbound investment. But, unfortunately, that didn't make it across the finish line before the end of the year.

But there are reasons for optimism that this year will be the time we get these provisions over the finish line. We have worked hard to work with the House's version and to work with the Senate version that passed overwhelmingly, previously, to make sure we marry those up and we establish a bill that enjoys bipartisan, bicameral support.

I have been working with everyone, from the Speaker of the House to the chairman of the Select Committee on the CCP, JOHN MOOLENAAR, to Congressman MCCAUL, as well as TIM SCOTT, chairman of the Banking Committee here in the Senate. We have all made input into a piece of legislation that will finally accomplish what we have been working on for these last few years.

We know time is of the essence, and we are working hand in glove with the Trump administration to ensure this

legislation actually accomplishes the goals that we set out for it.

I can't emphasize what a great opportunity this is and what a great win it will be for all parties involved. Addressing U.S. outbound investment in China will be a great opportunity for all of my colleagues here in the House and the Senate to deliver a big win for our country and for our national security.

It will be a home run for all Americans, who can feel safe that American companies and investors are not helping China not only rebuild its economy but also its military as well. And, of course, China continues to be our greatest strategic adversary on the planet.

The only party that stands to lose from this legislation will be the Chinese Communist Party, and it is high time that they be held accountable.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

S.J. RES. 11

Mr. HEINRICH. Madam President, I rise today in opposition to S.J. Res. 11, which would repeal a policy that helps protect archeological sites in the ocean when oil and gas development is planned in the area.

I want to be clear that this policy does not prevent any oil and gas development. It simply requires that companies take a good look at the ocean floor with sonar where they are planning to drill a well and see what historic and prehistoric resources are there.

The Outer Continental Shelf, where these wells are typically drilled, is home to one-of-a-kind cultural resources, from incredible historic shipwrecks to old maritime infrastructure, even evidence of human settlements on land that used to be on dry ground but is now on the sea floor.

This policy is a small change, and it simply brings offshore oil and gas up to the exact same standard that we already apply to offshore wind projects. It is entirely reasonable to require energy developers to identify archeological sites and other cultural resources on the ocean floor, just as they do when they produce energy on land.

In fact, in my home State of New Mexico, energy companies routinely work with Tribal representatives, State agencies, and other experts to identify cultural resources in an area proposed for development and to make a plan to limit the impact of development on those resources. It is reasonable for us to expect the same of offshore energy developers.

This policy was supported by two federally recognized Tribes, the Chickahominy and the Rappahannock. Passage of this resolution means not only that this would be repealed but that any similar policy could never be put back in place.

Our cultural resources are too valuable to let them go unprotected just because they are on the ocean floor, and I would urge my colleagues to oppose the resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BANKS). The Democratic whip.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. RES. 91

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, over the years, Federal funding for medical and scientific research has helped split the atom, defeat polio, create the internet, map the human genome, and so much more. No nation has ever made such a significant investment in science and medicine—none. And no nation's researchers have done more to approve the quality of life, not only here but around the world.

But we are in a pivotal moment in history. All the progress we have made—all the progress we hope to make—is in danger because of Donald Trump and Elon Musk. That is right. These two men promised to bring down the price of eggs and gasoline and make housing more affordable. Well, none of that has happened. Instead, they are carrying out an unprecedented and devastating campaign to cut research on cancer, ALS, Alzheimer's, dementia, and infectious diseases.

Instead of making life better for Americans, they want to slash research funding for the National Institutes of Health. If you have never heard of this Agency, I hope you will Google it or take a look and research to figure out who they are and what they do. It is the premier medical research agency in the world.

If you or someone you love receives a dreaded diagnosis, you turn to the doctor and ask: Is there a cure? A surgery? A medicine? I know I have been there and asked those very questions.

There is a difference between the doctor saying, "I'm sorry, there is nothing we can do" and "I have got some good news; there has been some research at NIH we should look into."

You know all the miracle drugs you see on TV? You can't get away from them, can you? And 99 percent of those drugs approved in the last 10 years were the product, in some way, of NIH research. NIH funding is why people are beating cancer, why babies are being spared from preventable diseases, why HIV is no longer a death sentence, why progress is being made on dementia and other neurological diseases.

Since the start of this administration, we have seen the White House unleash a lawless chaotic attack on everything from funding for farmers to biomedical research. Planes are crashing, and they are cutting aviation safety. Avian flu is on the rise and threatening to make that leap to humans, and we are cutting public health experts. Elon Musk dances across the stage with a chain saw; people laugh and cheer. First, let me tell you this: There is nothing to cheer about when it comes to medical research.

It was this bizarre memo from Office of Management and Budget that illegally froze Federal grant funding. They even prohibited the recipients of Federal grants and medical research from physically meeting in the same place. Oh, you are going to hear arguments:

We have got to cut back on the waste and fraud and abuse. I am all for that. But having researchers unable to even sit down and talk about the next breakthrough, how can that possibly be good for our country?

These cuts that were announced by this administration were quickly halted by a Federal judge in a Federal court. There was comment on the floor earlier today that too many people are going to courts. Thank God they went to courts to keep this policy from being implemented by this administration.

But it seems, even though the court made a ruling, this administration is still holding up funding in violation of the court's order. As a result, NIH is delayed awarding approximately \$1 billion in grant funding, delaying research at institutions nationwide. Does the delay hurt? Not unless you are the one sitting in that waiting room at a doctor praying to God there is a breakthrough to save your child.

Listen to what is at stake for one of my constituents, Dr. Timothy Koh, professor of kinesiology and nutrition at the University of Illinois in Chicago. For 15 years, Dr. Koh has been researching why people with diabetes develop wounds that do not heal, as well as researching treatments to address these wounds.

While having steady Federal funding for his research through the years, Dr. Koh was recently informed in the last few weeks that his NIH grant application is on hold because of the Trump-Musk Federal funding freeze. His current grant is scheduled to end on Friday of this week. And if his grant is not renewed, he will have to lay off his lab staff and will see major setbacks in the research he has been involved in. Dr. Koh said:

It's going to potentially put an end to my research career and we won't be able to develop these new therapies for diabetic [patients].

Is diabetes research important? If it is someone in your family, it is very important.

Make no mistake, under the Constitution, Congress is supposed to have the power of the purse—that is what it reads. But over the decades, bipartisan Members of Congress have worked in concert on a bipartisan basis to do something about NIH funding. It was a little over 10 years ago—Francis Collins, I consider to be an American hero and a saint. He headed up the NIH. And I went out to see him, and I said: I can't double your appropriation. I would do it if I could. What can I do to help you?

He said: Give the NIH Agency 5 percent real growth every year, and I will tell you this: Two things will happen. We will line up the scoreboard with breakthroughs and cures for diseases in America; and, secondly, my researchers will take heart because one of the things that destroys their interest in pursuing a career is the uncertainty of Federal funding.

Well, we went from \$30 billion to \$48 billion in 10 years because we had a bipartisan team to do it. PATTY MURRAY joined me on the Democratic side. She has always been a champion of medical research; and on the Republican side, Senator Blunt of Missouri was the leader. He was the best. When he chaired a subcommittee on Appropriations that funded this Agency, he was committed to the 5 percent. And then Lamar Alexander of Tennessee—both of those gentlemen have retired. The four of us put together an effort to raise the NIH funding from \$30 billion 10 years ago to \$48 billion—a dramatic, dramatic increase.

We did it because we all agreed this is not a partisan issue. It should never be. We knew that NIH funding leads to new cures and treatments for patients in need. It supports well-paying jobs nationwide. And it cements our global leadership.

Illinois universities and hospitals receive approximately \$1.2 billion in NIH funding a year, which supports 14,000 jobs in our State and 3.5 billion in economic activity. But I will tell you, Mr. President, virtually every State in the Nation can tell that story in one form or another.

Each year, the State of Wyoming receives approximately \$12 million in NIH funding. Now, Wyoming is a small State, but they clearly have good research facilities that merit NIH grants. This money supports 265 jobs in Wyoming and \$49 million dollars in economic activity. The top NIH funded institution in Wyoming is the University of Wyoming.

With this NIH funding, researchers at the University of Wyoming have recently conducted the following projects. See if any of these sound close to home or close to your family:

No. 1, why Alzheimer's disease and dementia can worsen at specific hours of the day.

No. 2, a project in Wyoming, links between menopause and cardiovascular disease in women.

And developing a new noninvasive tool to help treat people suffering from epilepsy, schizophrenia, anxiety, and autism.

They all sound like worthy projects to me.

Unfortunately, President Trump and Elon Musk aren't finished there. They tried indiscriminately to slash how NIH pays for indirect costs. Without funding, universities wouldn't be able to afford the technology that allows them to conduct research. Cuts to indirect costs are, simply, cuts to research, period.

The other day, we had a debate on the floor on this NIH. One of the Republican Senators talked about the outrageous outlying indirect cost in this country. Let's look at them. Let's review them.

But to stop all meetings of all medical researchers while we do this, to stop the funding for all the grantees, to stop all of the medical research because there might be 1 or 2 or 10

schools that ask for too much or hospitals—thankfully, the Illinois Attorney General, along with 21 other States' leading attorneys general, sued and secured a temporary reprieve for universities and researchers.

Trump and Musk illegally froze Federal medical research funding. They tried to illegally cut funding for medical research, and now they are firing the medical researchers themselves.

Reports indicate that 1,200 NIH employees have been fired so far, from experienced vaccine researchers to the next generation of scientists to the Acting Director of the NIH's Alzheimer's and dementia program.

Further, Trump and Musk have reportedly ended a popular trainee program that brought 1,600 young scientists just out of college to the NIH world-renowned campus in Maryland to get them started working in labs and eventually running labs. They are our future when it comes to medical research, and the Trump and Musk chain saw of chaos of budget cuts has made them victims.

How does this make us a greater nation? How does this make us a healthier nation? A better nation? It doesn't.

NIH research leads to new cures and treatments that extend, improve, and save lives, which is why I am introducing this resolution today to simply say to Senators of both sides of the aisle: Let's pledge our support to make NIH an exception. Let us not let wanton cuts stop something very valuable.

The resolution is straightforward. It says: The work of NIH should not be subject to interruption, delay, or funding disruption in violation of the law—in violation of the law. And it reaffirms that the workforce at NIH is essential to sustaining medical progress.

Can we really debate that point? Do we think the best medical research Agency in the world is being staffed by people who aren't the best? This is not controversial. It shouldn't be. Americans get sick on a bipartisan basis; shouldn't we support medical research on a bipartisan basis?

For as long as I can stand and for as long as I can speak, I will fight to protect NIH and medical research. I hope my Republican colleagues wake up and join me before it is too late.

So, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 93, submitted earlier today; further, that the resolution be agreed to, and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

The Republican whip.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, reserving the right to object. The American people voted to get spending under control.

Two in three Americans say that a major problem that we face today in this country is government ineffi-

ciency. And I agree. Three in four Americans support eliminating waste, fraud, and abuse in government spending; and there is plenty of it.

We need to review how much money we spend. We need to see where it is going. We need to see what is effective and what is not. This is common sense. Families have to do it. States do it. Washington ought to do the same thing.

Every family audits their own budgets, their own spending. Every CEO audits their business operations.

President Trump and Republicans are doing exactly the same thing, and it is something that the Federal Government has not done for a long time.

Let me be clear. I am a doctor; I support so much of the good work being done by the National Institutes of Health and through the universities around the country. It is essential that America continues to lead the world in medical innovation.

I am a strong supporter of continuing smart investment in our National Institutes of Health. Americans deserve better care. Americans deserve better prevention and, of course, better transparency.

So the total budget for the NIH is almost \$48 billion. Hard-working taxpayers deserve smart scrutiny and serious transparency over that kind of money.

There is indisputable evidence that there is wasteful overspending of administrative costs associated with medical research, and this is why I am here saying this must stop. In 2024, Harvard University spent \$135 million of government grant money on overhead costs. Clearly, we can do better. They used hard-working taxpayer dollars to pay for heating bills, electricity bills, for maintaining buildings. They used it to cover payroll for people not involved in research. This is money that should have been spent on advancing researching for cures.

Harvard's overhead costs related to the National Institutes of Health research—69 percent of the money goes for overhead. That is taxpayer money, Mr. President. That is one university, one year. Clearly, we can do better—if you look at that all across the country.

Imagine all the new cures we could find if we just spent the money efficiently. That is what is at stake today, and that is why I am here on the floor of the Senate.

Democrats don't want to have a serious debate about wasteful Washington spending. Instead they are wasting the Senate's time on predictable distractions like this one. And, therefore, Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Democratic whip.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, if standing in this Senate and asking Republicans and Democrats to come together to preserve and build medical research is a waste of time, what in the world are we doing here?

If you were asked to take the Federal budget and put your priorities in there, maybe No. 1 would be national defense. Well, I might make that No. 1 as well; but I can tell you, No. 2 is medical research.

Because what happens when you reach a point where you cut off medical research? These researchers leave the laboratories and say: Honey, I don't know if I will have a job here next year. Let's start looking someplace else.

That is not an unusual thing to occur. So the next generation of researchers are being discouraged by the uncertainty of funding, and this notion that we have to get spending under control—how much does it cost to find a cure? What does it cost to have no cure? Let's get down to the bottom line here. We are talking about how long people stay in the hospital or whether they are alive at the end of the experience or not.

Some of these medical treatments they have to turn to are extremely expensive, unless you can find a cure at the front end of it. And you don't find it by saying, Well, maybe next year we will spend some money on medical research. That isn't the way it works. You want to have a good doctor you can trust from year to year, not a new one every year with a question mark.

The same thing is true with researchers. If you have the best researchers, why in the world would you discourage them from their continued work?

I listened to this comment about \$48 billion. It is a lot of money, for sure. That is taxpayers' money, and I take it very seriously. But how much do you think it would cost if we didn't find these cures, didn't find these drugs? What would it cost in human terms and the experience of families who would give up hope because there is no place to turn? That is the reality.

We all have friends—and I had one today—I won't get into the details—who has just learned that he has pancreatic cancer. We don't have a cure yet. If we could find one, do you know how that would change the lives of so many people and their families? Is that worth putting our research into, our tax dollars into, or is it, as the Senator who objected to my resolution said, just wasting time here on the floor?

Well, I am going to come back and waste time over and over again. I am not giving up on this. I am not giving up on families who are waiting for cures and research. I am not giving up on the researchers who dedicate their lives to finding them.

Of course, if we have some overspending, whether it is at Harvard or Illinois or even the University of Wyoming, let's clean it up. But is it possible to clean that up without jeopardizing the basic mission of the National Institutes of Health? I certainly hope so. To think that we would have to close down the whole Agency because a handful of schools are overcharging the Federal Government—and there is no

proof that they are—I think that is part of the reality.

This is an issue that is important to every single American whether they know it or not. We can get spending under control and do it thoughtfully but not at the expense of the best researchers in the world and the expense of cures which would give families hope once and for all.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, I would like to speak about DOGE.

The verdict is in: It has been a colossal failure. It has done immense damage to many of our institutions and inflicted immense pain on innocent people. Also, it is not going to be successful in its stated goal of reducing spending and wasteful spending.

But before I go on, let me just say what all of us know. Every single person in this U.S. Senate is all in when it comes to attacking waste, fraud, and abuse. Every single one of us knows that we should kick the tires on every program we have in the Federal Government and look to see how we can make it be more efficient. And there may even be some programs where we say: You know what, its purpose has been served; it is time to move on.

So those of us who are being critical of DOGE are just looking at what DOGE is doing but not at all quarrelling with the notion that every one of us, Republican and Democrat and Independent, has a responsibility to be the best stewards of taxpayer money that we can be.

But here is my problem with DOGE: They are not looking in the right places. There is so much rip-off that is going on. Let's just talk about a couple of examples in our healthcare system. United Healthcare is rigging the system on Medicare Advantage Programs. Our seniors—we want them to have the healthcare they need. But they have set up these billing systems where they have paid nurses and forced doctors essentially to overanalyze and overprescribe and overstate what medical conditions were. This was not to help the senior on a Medicare Advantage Program; this was to pad their bottom line and make billions of dollars.

Of course, I am referring to the series of articles that was in the Wall Street Journal that documented the rip-offs and what I think were corrupt practices by United Healthcare.

Where is DOGE? All that money is just wasted. It has gone into the pockets of executives at United Healthcare. It has gone into shareholder payouts and dividends, but it hasn't gone into improving healthcare for seniors.

Another one: the pharmacy benefit managers. They are ripping us off so badly. We had a bipartisan bill with enormous Republican support and Democratic support to curb the rip-offs in the PBM industry. That was in our final budget deal last year. It got derailed. Why? Elon Musk. He was against it, and he gave the word that this has got to go down. The thing blew up, and we don't have the PBM reform that both sides of the aisle knew was necessary—something that was going to save hundreds of billions of dollars for American taxpayers and allow us to reinvest in healthcare and make things better.

So my first question with DOGE is, Why don't you look where the money is, where the rip-offs are, instead of just sending out emails overnight telling people they are fired whose performance has been absolutely exemplary?

So that is the core question I have about DOGE. Why are you leaving these practices that we know are really corrupt and a rip-off untouched, unexamined, and allowing them to continue when it is hammering taxpayers and citizens?

We have work to do on saving money, and we have places where it is absolutely essential that we act. DOGE is blind to all of those, all of those situations, and that is disgraceful, especially when you have Elon Musk as the person who sabotaged our effort for PBM reform.

The second thing is, there is a basic question if you are going to go about examining a program. You can ask hard questions. You can look under the hood. How is it working? How is it not working? Where do we have too many personnel? Where can we actually improve the practices and the performance by some reforms?

DOGE is not doing that. It literally is not doing that. It has not even taken a day, an hour, to come up with a plan on how to examine the various programs they are engaging with. What they are doing is firing people. People are waking up in the morning, and they are getting an email that says: Due to your poor performance, you are gone.

Now, this is a situation that obviously is incredibly cruel. You are working at the Department of Agriculture, you are working at the NIH, you are working on a USAID program, and life is going on, and suddenly you get this email out of the blue that clearly is a mass email but has a very specific impact on you, your life, your livelihood, and your hopes and dreams. That is just a savage, savage way to treat people who have been working in our various governmental Agencies, and it has enormous impact on our communities.

By the way, DOGE is picking on veterans. Literally thousands of veterans have been fired. The VA has announced the dismissal of more than 1,000 employees. That includes researchers working on cancer treatments, opioid

addictions, prosthetics, and burn pit exposure.

So the issue here was not “How do we help them do that job better? Where are there ways we can economize?” The procedure is “You are gone; that is it.”

President Trump and Elon Musk fired around 350 employees at the National Nuclear Security Administration. These are folks who safeguard nuclear weapons. Now, it was so embarrassing that even Musk had to acknowledge it was a mistake, and those people are now back on their job.

But what it does I think very clearly is show how there is nothing about a plan to execute a thoughtful way to save taxpayer money. It is just shoot first and aim later. And 4,000 employees at the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

By the way, this is incredibly important: These are all things that affect red States and blue States. This has no political orientation on one side or the other because the impacts of these are going to be felt by the farmers in Indiana just as they are going to be felt by the farmers in Vermont.

Another example that is really pretty cruel, and I just don't understand this: We have farmers across the country that I have spoken to—farmers in Vermont—who entered into contracts with the Federal Government under the provisions of the Inflation Reduction Act. What the deal was is the farmer agreed, say, to install solar panels or create a buffer zone between cattle grazing in a streambed or change the tillage practices to try to improve the soil.

I get it that President Trump and Mr. Musk are against the Inflation Reduction Act, and they have a right to do everything they possibly can to try to reverse that policy. So this is not about their right to use Executive authority. But here is what I don't understand: How do you stiff farmers who went out and borrowed money because they had a contract, they agreed to do certain things around their farm, and then they get an email saying: Just kidding. We, the Federal Government, are not going to honor our contract.

I am thinking of one farm in my own town of Norwich, VT, where folks did borrow the money and they did the work, and it was in anticipation of the Federal Government keeping its part of the bargain and coming through with the cash that it had agreed to, and they are told: No, we are not doing it anymore.

I know that the Presiding Officer is like me when it comes to keeping your word. You give your word; you keep your word. The folks you represent, the folks I represent, that is what they do, that is what they expect. But we have DOGE saying: Well, that doesn't apply to us because we want to “save money.” That is just flat out disgraceful and unacceptable.

FEMA. FEMA is absolutely essential to help folks respond to a catastrophic event. We need reform in FEMA, and I

want to work with colleagues in order to do that. But when that disaster comes—you know, a fire in Hawaii or California, floods in Vermont or North Carolina, hurricanes down south, or drought—the response from FEMA is essential because the local community doesn't have the infrastructure in place to provide that immediate emergency assistance that folks need for saving lives and keeping themselves together during that immediate storm event.

We are hearing that DOGE and the President want to just abolish FEMA. We have to be there for one another when it is our community that is affected by a catastrophic event where our citizens, the folks we represent, to whom we have a real duty—it is no fault of their own—they are on the receiving end of Mother Nature. It has always been the tradition in the Senate that we help one another on that. That is not a partisan deal. DOGE is hammering us on that.

The people who get hurt—it is the everyday people whom we represent that are working hard, who are struggling each month to pay their bills. They are anxious about the safety of their kids, they are anxious about inflation, they are anxious about meeting the challenges of daily life, and they want to make a contribution to strengthening their community as well as their family, and they are getting hammered.

I mentioned, too, that among them are the 6,000 veterans who have been fired by DOGE across the Federal workforce. I mean, that just astonishes me. How do we say to a veteran who showed up to serve us and protect our country and to whom we claim we have great respect and allegiance—how do we send them an email that says “You are fired,” with no explanation, no sitdown, no face-to-face, just contempt for the value of what they contribute and how hard they are working? I do not understand that. I just don't.

Even in a tough business environment where some of our employers have to make tough decisions because they just know their business can't handle the workforce they have and they may have to make, against their desires, some reductions in force, our employers will sit down with folks face to face: Here is what we can do. Let's work out a plan. We know you need healthcare.

DOGE just dispenses with that when it has no plan. So the cruelty—the cruelty of this is so abhorrent to me.

We as a society, really, despite whatever our differences are, have to have some mutual respect, and is it so essential to people that they have meaningful work. If we are going to make adjustments, we have to have a plan to include them, where DOGE says: We don't have to do that.

This isn't just about Elon Musk being a multibillionaire. No matter what happens, it is not really going to affect him. It is about Elon Musk treating people with what I think is the utmost cruelty. You are gone—you

are gone—such disrespect for people who work hard at the VA, work hard in the NIH, work hard in the Department of Agriculture, work hard in the Department of the Treasury. So that element of this, we should all be shocked at.

You know, I can give a few examples of people in Vermont, but I know I am like every single Member of the U.S. Senate: We can give examples of people in the States we represent.

Our Small Business Administration Office has been a real help to Vermonters—very effective. One employee there got a performance review that—this is shortly after the performance review:

In a very short period of time, you established yourself as an invaluable asset.

That was the performance review. The next day, February 7, she was fired because the email said:

Your performance has not been adequate to justify further employment at the Agency.

So arbitrary, so unfair, so Elon Musk-like. We have a scientist at the Department of Agriculture, Caitlin Morgan. She studies sustainable agriculture and food systems at the agricultural services Food Systems Research Center. She was fired despite glowing performance reviews.

So what we have with DOGE is an assertion that they are seeking to cut waste, fraud, and abuse. Who is to argue? There is not a person here that wants to vote in favor of waste, fraud, and abuse, but the reality is they do have a plan. It is not to look at each Agency and then make adjustments so that the Agency, at the end of the operation, will be fit for purpose and better able to do its job.

They have a very simple plan: Kill the headcount, reduce the headcount, fire people. That is it. That is the plan.

So we are going to be left with a decimated FEMA, a decimated Department of Agriculture, a decimated National Institutes of Health, and then who is going to put it back together? This brings me back to the cruelty of a guy like Musk. He doesn't have to worry about that. That is not his concern. Tesla is doing fine. SpaceX is doing fine. You know, things are great for him.

But they won't be great—not just for the people whose jobs have been savagely terminated, it will be bad for the cancer research that scientists are doing. It will be bad for our Vermont farmers who now find themselves deeply in debt because the Federal Government stiffed them. It will be bad for our FEMA response to the next community in our country that gets hit hard by a natural disaster.

So we have got to wake up here and be honest about what is going on with DOGE. We do agree—we do agree, I believe, Republicans and Democrats—that we have got to kick the tires on programs in government, and it is everything from food programs to commodity programs to the Defense De-

partment. And we may have some fierce debates about what the priorities are and what we think is important and what we don't think is important, but that has got to be an on-the-level debate.

What Musk has done is just said: Hey, leave it to me. Let me send out a bunch of emails. Let me fire a lot of people in a lot of Agencies. Let's move fast and break things, and it will come back together.

It doesn't work that way. You know, you destroy the foundation of your house just like you destroy the foundation of a government program like FEMA or the National Institutes of Health, it just doesn't come back overnight because the organizations that we are trying to build, institutions that are essential to the well-being of our own country, those often take generations to create. It takes the commitment, the service, the dedication, and hard work of Americans of all kinds in all States.

This guy Musk is just destroying it all and cavalier about it and contemptuous to the rest of America about what he is doing. We can pay the price.

It is wrong what they are doing and how they are doing it. My view is that we do, in fact, have an opportunity here because both sides are quite willing to come to the table and ask these questions: How can we do it better?

But you know, if we came to the table and we asked how can we do it better, we would be looking at the long-term function: How do we have FEMA work better; how do we have our NIH work better; how do we assess grants better; how do we help our Small Business Administration be more effective in helping our young entrepreneurs? We would be asking those questions.

The other thing we would be doing—and I believe this because I have such respect for all of my colleagues here—we care about how it affects the people. We might have to make some tough decisions because this program could be cut; this one might have to be expanded. But we wouldn't just send off an email telling people to get lost. We wouldn't just be sending off an email to a farmer who just went to the bank and got a loan based on the credit of the United States of America promising to contribute a grant.

We would be considering that. DOGE isn't. In my view, we should all be outraged at the cruelty with which DOGE is operating. It is cruel to the institutions that are important for each of our States, and it is cruel to the people who have been doing this work in good faith for so long.

We have got to speak up and acknowledge that DOGE is destructive. We can embrace the effort to address waste, fraud, and abuse. We can embrace the opportunity to streamline and save money, make things work better, but we can never abandon our commitment to the people of this country who work so hard. We can

never abandon, in a cavalier way, the veterans to whom we have an immense debt of obligation.

Mr. President, DOGE is pretty dumb and pretty cruel and pretty destructive the way that it has operated under Elon Musk.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

ENERGY

Ms. LUMMIS. Mr. President, I rise to speak in support of President Trump's energy dominance agenda and to oppose my colleagues who want to keep America literally in the Dark Ages when it comes to producing energy. This, the greatest energy-producing country, is being asked to take a step back.

Our energy is cleaner. We produce it cleaner. We transport it cleaner. And yet the Biden agenda had us deferring to other countries that produce energy dirtier, transport it to countries that are paying for it so the Russians, for example, can spend money to fight a war that we are on the other side of.

These are matters that President Trump is addressing and has committed to the American people, pursuant to his Executive order on January 20 of this year—the first day he took office—to make it a priority. As we all know, during President Trump's campaign, he chose to make exporting energy dominance and energy independence a hallmark of his campaign.

He did it because he knows about the connection between energy independence and bringing down inflation. When you go to the grocery store, we see products all over the shelves that have been brought there by trucks—trucks that are paying a lot for gasoline and diesel fuel.

You see frozen food refrigerators lining the aisles that are plugged into electricity that comes from oil, gas, coal, wind, and solar. And the more expensive it is, the more expensive the products are that we buy in those stores.

The same is true in any retail store around this country. Over the last 4 years, the Biden administration worked overtime to stick it to the energy industry at every turn while my colleagues here cheered them on and helped them. On day one, President Biden placed a moratorium on public land energy development that never truly went away until January 20, 2025, when President Trump was sworn into office and signed an Executive order.

Wyoming and the West have fallen victim to the previous administration's regulatory regime designed specifically to kill the industry. Then, once he kills it, he goes overseas and asks countries like Saudi Arabia and Venezuela to fill in the difference. These are countries that cannot produce energy as cleanly as we can and do, and yet he would rather get the energy from them to placate the radical environmental community in this country—that very same community that knows that we can do it cleaner here.

During the Biden administration, the BLM declined to offer up lands for oil and gas leasing. And when they did, they ignored the spirit of the law and offered the fewest acres possible.

In September 2023, the BLM collected a measly and insulting \$27,000 from an oil and gas lease sale in Wyoming. Compare that to the September 2021 lease sale that netted over \$1.3 million.

The people of Wyoming are elated that President Trump, on day one, committed to fixing the sins of the previous administration by declaring a national energy emergency.

You know, I was in Seoul, South Korea, last spring. And one day, we had clear air. The next day, it was so dirty that you couldn't see, Mr. President, from where I am standing to where you are sitting. And I said: What went wrong over 24 hours? And they told me the wind shifted and was coming in from China. China's dirty air was blowing in because China is producing dirty energy.

And yet we would rather defer to them when we know we can produce it cleaner. In my State of Wyoming, the Dry Fork energy plant is the cleanest coal-producing energy ever produced anywhere. In fact, it is so clean that when they began emitting from that plant, they didn't want to tell the U.S. EPA how clean they could do it for fear that the EPA would apply that same standard to all of America's legacy coal plants—none of which could afford to retrofit to the modern technology of Gillette's coal-fired powerplant.

In Wyoming, we have abundant oil, gas, uranium, coal, and more. Under the order, Wyoming's public lands can return to Congress the intended goal of multiple use, which includes responsible resource extraction. If you go back to FLPMA, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, which passed in the 1970s, it mandates multiple use of public lands—not single use, not preservation or conservation alone, not oil and gas alone, not recreation alone. It is all of these multiple uses.

Energy production is the backbone of my State and many other Western States. We are proud to power the Nation and to support a President who supports us.

With the rise of artificial intelligence and a thriving data center industry, our Nation will need all the energy it can get. I was out in California during October and went to AI companies—large, medium, and small—and they all told me the same thing: that the bottleneck for America in being the world leader in AI is energy.

We are going to need way more energy than we have needed in the past, and in order to make artificial intelligence work for us and to be dominant in this technology, we need more energy, not less. And we know we can do it cleaner than other countries.

If my colleagues succeed in passing their resolution that is under consideration, we are setting the stage for failure. We are setting up our economy

and future generations for failure. Voting to approve the resolution is a vote for an unstable energy supply, higher energy costs, and more.

I urge my colleagues to vote no against the resolution that is brought by my colleague Senator HEINRICH from New Mexico. I urge my colleagues to stand with President Trump and to oppose this resolution.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

FINLAND

Mr. KAINÉ. Mr. President, I rise to describe an amazing journey that I took this weekend that was a powerful journey connected to my Virginia National Guard and also to issues that are very, very prominent right now in the world.

We finished voting on the Senate floor a little bit before 5 a.m. on Friday, on the reconciliation bill, and, a few hours later, I went to Dulles Airport and flew to Finland, landed in Helsinki at about 1:30 on Saturday, went back to the airport at 1:30 on Monday—spent 48 hours on the ground with one of our newest NATO allies to work together with them on a number of issues.

The reason for the visit over the weekend was to see my Virginia National Guard. The Virginia Guard, as in most States, are active participants in the State Partnership Program that was established back in the 1990s, where a State's Guard unit connects with the military of an allied country and engages in joint training exercises. Once Finland decided to join NATO, Virginia—which already has a partner in the State Partnership Program—reached out and said to Finland: We would like to work together with you as well.

My Governor, Governor Youngkin, helped preside over the signing of this partnership program in 2024, and the Virginia Guard—about 50 members of the Guard—were engaged in the first training exercises in Finland.

As Governor of Virginia, I used to be the commander in chief of the Virginia Guard. I have been very close to them, and I wanted to go see my Virginians training in snowy birch forests in southern Finland this weekend, and I was able to do that.

My Guard unit is training with the Karelia Brigade, which is one of the three brigades of the Finnish Army. It has got a long history of very heroic service. And on Sunday, it was a delight to drive 2½ hours outside of Helsinki and visit with my 50 Virginians and to hear the Finnish Army brag about them: Your Guard are well-trained. They are great marksman, even shooting Finnish rifles, which are

different than the rifles they use every day and doing it in temperatures that are far colder than Virginians normally have to experience on training exercises.

In addition to my time with the Virginia Guard. I spent time in Finland with our own Embassy team; with representatives from EUCOM, the European Command of the U.S. Army; with the President of Finland, President Stubb, who is a pretty amazing guy, who attended Furman University on a golf scholarship and manages to drop the word “y’all” into a lot of sentences in a pretty thick Finnish accent. I spent time with the Foreign Minister and the Permanent Defense Secretary, and also visited the Helsinki Shipyard, which is about to start working in tandem with the United States and Canada to build icebreakers, which is something we desperately need.

So it was a great trip—too short but really powerful—and I returned last night having interacted with my Virginians and knowing a lot more.

There was a sobering element to it, too, and that is really why I wanted to come and speak. To be in Finland, a nation that had to fight two wars against Russia in the late 1930s, early 1940s, to maintain its independence, and to be there with those leaders on the third anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine was sobering and thought provoking.

Finland knows Russia and Russian leadership better than just about anybody because of these hundreds of miles of border between the two nations. And that memory of fighting two wars against Russia to maintain Finnish independence is still a very present-day and palpable memory for the Finns, even though those wars happened in the late 1930s and early 1940s.

And you can be sure that our friends, our allies, those we are training together with, had some pretty strong thoughts about Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and the commemoration of the third anniversary. I was very disappointed and I think many were yesterday that the U.N. considered competing resolutions on the third anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

One was a Ukrainian resolution that talked about Russia as the invader, Russia as the instigator of the war. That resolution passed the General Assembly, but in a shocking move, the United States voted against it because of the language placing the blame for the war on Russia.

There had been previous resolutions after the invasion and on the second anniversary and the first anniversary saying that this war was started by Russia. The United States led those resolutions. But now the United States, through our President, through our Secretary of Defense, through the U.N.—we don’t have a permanent U.N. Ambassador now—through the U.N. representative at the U.N. was unwilling to sign on to and vote for a resolu-

tion that talked about Russia as being responsible for the war.

So we opposed the Ukrainian resolution. Who voted with us to oppose this resolution? Russia opposed, North Korea opposed, Nicaragua opposed, and another 15 nations opposed. About 60 nations abstained, including China. China wouldn’t vote no. China abstained, and 90-plus nations voted yes. The resolution passed, but it passed with the United States unwilling to sign on to the proposition that Russia started this war and should not have done so.

There was also a U.S. resolution that was tendered to the U.N. General Assembly. That U.S. resolution did not mention anyone being responsible for the war but called for a cease-fire and peace, obviously. The U.S. resolution was subject to an amendment that was offered by the UK and other nations inserting the language that Russia is responsible for the war and should not have done so. That amendment passed, and because it passed, the United States ended up not even being willing to vote yes on its own resolution and instead abstained.

These Finnish colleagues who are friends and allies were pretty candid about their disappointment in the United States for not being willing to state a truth—that this war was instigated by Russia—and they deeply want to be partners with the United States on defense; hence their accession to NATO; hence their agreement to the State Partnership Program with Virginia. But they are puzzled with an American leadership—from the President, to the Secretary of Defense, to the U.N.—that is unwilling to state that Russia started this war.

I came home last night. It was a long flight made too long because of a cancellation. I got back a little bit later than I originally planned. But I had a lot of time to think. What I thought about was basically this: We need to learn some lessons.

We need to remember the lessons of 1938. Neville Chamberlain, the Prime Minister of England, went to Munich, thinking he could find an end to war and deliver what he called “peace” in our time. He negotiated with the German Government and came back to England and said: There is now peace in our time—which anyone in politics would love to be able to say. But we all know that Munich Agreement was a disaster. It was negotiated between England and Germany, but many of the other nations that were later invaded by Germany weren’t there, and it wasn’t a peace agreement, and they suffered.

But did England at least protect itself from suffering by signing a deal and proclaiming peace in our time? No. England was attacked as well after the Germans had attacked Belgium and France and Poland and other nations.

So an illusory “peace in our time” deal was just that—it was illusory. You can’t appease a bully. They will bully

you and others unless you stand up to them.

We could remember 1975. In 1975, the Helsinki Accords, right in the community where I was visiting, were signed—the Soviet Union was a signatory, along with the United States and Canada and European nations—to guarantee certain principles, including the guarantee of the inviolability of national sovereignty and that no nation should be able to invade the sovereignty of others. We need to remember that. We celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Helsinki Accords this summer. We need to remember those principles and who has violated them and who has not.

Let’s remember 1995. In 1995, as an aftermath of the Helsinki Accords, we helped form the OSCE, the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe. It is the one organization that includes all European nations, including Russia. NATO doesn’t include them all; the OSCE does. The OSCE was committed to the principles of the Helsinki Accords protecting national sovereignty, and we need to remember who has violated those principles and who hasn’t.

We should remember 2020, 5 years ago this week in 2020—the Doha accord. President Trump negotiated a “peace” accord with the Taliban—a peace accord with the Taliban. Afghanistan was not allowed to be at the table. The Government of Afghanistan that had been our partner, in whom we had invested hundreds of billions of dollars, was not allowed to be at the table. So, yes, there was a “peace” deal. There was peace in our time, but the peace proved to be illusory and catastrophic months later when the United States removed troops pursuant to the Doha accord.

The absence of inclusion of the Afghan Government led to a demoralization and a collapse. The inspector general that analyzed the end of our military participation in Afghanistan had plenty of blame to assign—blame to the Biden administration but also blame to a President, President Trump, who negotiated a deal without including the party that was most affected.

I thought of the Doha accord when I saw the news of negotiations in Riyadh between the United States and Russia to end the war in Ukraine and noticed Ukraine was not at the table. A peace deal about a nation’s sovereignty where you are not allowing that nation to be at the table is doomed to failure.

We need to remember those lessons in connection with any discussion about the future of Ukraine.

Mr. President, you don’t even need to completely remember history; just remember what your mom or dad told you. I know I had this call, and I think most people will remember this. You are getting bullied at school, and you go home and complain to your parents. What do your parents tell you about bullies? If you give in to them, they will keep bullying you and others. If

you stand up to them, they are more likely—not guaranteed but more likely to stop bullying.

The United States should have been willing yesterday in the U.N. to stand up to a bully. The United States should have been willing to say that this was an illegal war unjustly initiated by Russia. If you are unwilling to state a truth, you begin in a very weak position.

So my thought in coming home from visiting my own troops, who are sacrificing and risking to train for an action that they know they may one day be called on to support—else they wouldn't be conducting training in a snowy birch forest in southern Finland in February of 2025—they are there because they are willing to sacrifice. It takes sacrifice to protect democracy.

Our Nation is coming up on the 250th anniversary of our democracy—and not only our democracy but our leadership role in democracies around the globe. The world needs us to continue to stand strong. Our friends like Finland are hoping and praying that we continue to stand strong. It is my belief that in the heart of the American people is a desire to continue to stand strong.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 724

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, we are dealing with a crisis that all hundred Members of this body understand has taken the lives of hundreds and hundreds of thousands of people, and that is the scourge of fentanyl.

One of the things we have been doing as a result of that is temporarily scheduling fentanyl analogs, these horrific substances that are manufactured in order to pour onto our streets. Such a small amount of this drug—it literally could be the size of one pill—as they say, one pill can kill. It is very important to me that we see the temporary scheduling of this continue until the Senate finds a more wholesome response to this crisis. We must rise to meet this crisis in a wholesome way, in way that meets the gravity of the crisis and does not just continue to do the things we have done over and over again.

So as we are working in a bipartisan way in the Senate Judiciary Committee with the understanding that the temporary scheduling may expire in the coming weeks—in order to remove that pressure and allow us to work in a bipartisan fashion, I have come to the floor today to ask for unanimous consent that we continue that temporary scheduling while we work in a bipartisan fashion to make sure that we give the most fulsome response possible to this crisis.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 724, the Temporary Extension of Fentanyl-Related Substances Scheduling Act, which is at the desk; I further ask unanimous consent

that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, for years, one more time, Congress has refused to make a definitive, permanent decision. It has failed to make schedule I classification of fentanyl-related substances permanent.

Law enforcement needs permanence. It needs a definitive change to combat the opioid crisis and go after the criminals flooding communities with deadly drugs.

Congress's inaction only emboldens China, drug cartels, and other criminals who exploit our communities, and that should not happen.

We need a lasting solution. There is no reason to do any temporary extension. We have the bipartisan votes to make the schedule I classification permanent.

This Thursday, the Senate Judiciary Committee, with the support of Judiciary Chairman GRASSLEY and Senator HEINRICH, is marking up the Halt All Lethal Trafficking of Fentanyl Act, or the HALT Fentanyl Act. This legislation permanently classifies fentanyl-related substances as schedule I controlled substances.

Let's be clear. The HALT Fentanyl Act is not controversial. For two consecutive Congresses, it passed the House of Representatives with strong bipartisan support. There are enough votes to pass HALT in the Judiciary Committee and on the Senate floor this Congress. My Democratic colleague's legislation delays that permanency. Schedule I classification will once more be in jeopardy when the next deadline comes around. Law enforcement cannot continue to have this uncertainty.

That is why, after my objection, I will ask unanimous consent to pass the HALT Fentanyl Act. This legislation has already passed the House of Representatives and has bipartisan support in the Senate. I hope all my Democratic colleagues will join in supporting the bill.

We have a responsibility to provide law enforcement the tools they need to address the scourge of deadly drugs in our communities. Failure to act puts Americans in harm's way.

For those reasons, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CURTIS). Objection is heard.

The Senator from Louisiana.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 27

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, because of my objection, I ask unanimous consent to pass the HALT Fentanyl Act to permanently classify fentanyl-related substances as schedule I controlled substances. The bill also removes barriers that impede the ability of researchers to conduct studies on these substances.

The HALT Fentanyl Act has already passed the House of Representatives with overwhelming bipartisan support. It has support from Democrat and Republican Senators now.

This is the bill the Senate should be voting on today, not just a temporary extension that creates greater uncertainty in our effort to address the opioid crisis but, again, one which establishes permanence, something which gives certainty to law enforcement to combat this, as I said earlier, scourge of illegal fentanyl.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 27 and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration. I further ask that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. BOOKER. In reserving the right to object, this is why I am down here today—really, literally, at this point—and I want to jump here.

I thank the Presiding Officer for recognizing me. I truly appreciate that, but this gets me excited because this is the point that I want to illustrate.

My colleague is far smarter than I on medical issues. I could not have passed organic chem at Stanford. I am sure he passed it with flying colors. Of my colleague, who is truly one of my more favorite colleagues in this place because of how rational and pragmatic he is on approaching real crises like this, I am begging and hoping he will listen to me, and I am begging this body to listen to me.

We have had a fentanyl crisis in this country of monumental proportions. It is one of the greatest killers in America. Fentanyl and fentanyl analogues have literally been responsible for lowering the life expectancy for Americans. It is one of the greatest crises we have seen to human life in America in my lifetime. There is so much data-driven evidence and evidence-based answers to this, of how we can approach this crisis, but yet the only bill that we seek to do is a bill that does what we have already done on a temporary basis. I support classwide scheduling for fentanyl analogues, but here we have this bill, the HALT bill, that my colleague pointed out did pass in a bipartisan way and now is in the Judiciary Committee.

The reason I am down here is not to drag my dear friend down here because he is a busy man, and I wanted to go over to him before this conversation started to apologize, but I needed to make this point on the floor in this kind of standoff.

He is asking us to pass the HALT bill, which would give classwide scheduling to fentanyl analogues, which we have already done. For years, it has been temporarily scheduled, and what

has happened to opioid deaths in America when we have used this that law enforcement has called for, “Schedule. Schedule. Give us these tools?” Well, we have had these tools, and deaths in the Presiding Officer’s State, deaths in my colleagues’ States, and deaths in my State have continued to go up.

Now, here is the beauty of the conversation we are having and why we should be passing the temporary one to let us go back to work, and I know this because I know his heart and I know your heart. There are evidence-based, bipartisan amendments to that HALT Act that are widely supported. My colleague’s partner Senator from his State, in committee, said: I don’t understand why we are not putting the test strips on this. Why? Because kids who are using fentanyl right now don’t know that they are using this fentanyl analogue. Kids in your State and my State think they are taking Adderall, not realizing that this has those toxic things that can kill.

Here we were in committee, with a bipartisan test strip bill, and my colleague’s partner Senator said: This makes sense to me. And the one excuse they were using for not doing a bipartisan bill to give us more of a response than doing what we are already doing and wiping our hands and saying, “We did great things,” was saying, “We didn’t have time” because of this artificial deadline.

So I am down here to say: Wait a minute. Let’s do the temporary extension and take time to do bipartisan bills.

But don’t take my word for it. Take the word of the Republican witnesses who came to our hearing. We just had a painful hearing of law enforcement leaders and other Republican witnesses who told us the scourges of fentanyl that we all know. Those people all said that this can’t be all Congress does; that the HALT bill cannot be our only response because the whole bill permanently schedules what we have already scheduled temporarily.

I believe in the 99 Members here who know that our response to this crisis cannot be what we have already been doing for the last 5 years when there are bipartisan bills that we could be putting on this bill to show America that we are not going to just puff ourselves up and make permanent something that was already done in a temporary way.

Let me read some of this pleading from Republican witnesses.

Republican witness Jaime Puerta, a courageous parent who lost his child to an overdose, testified:

It is imperative that we educate our children on the dangers of any kind of drug use due to the lethality that can come with any kind of experimentation or self-medication . . . we must have specific fentanyl education introduced to . . . our schools as soon as possible; otherwise, more children will . . . die.

That doesn’t even cost money.

We could be doing things through the Department of Education in supporting

education campaigns. Bipartisan support for that idea—is it on the HALT bill? No. Let me go on.

Republican witness Sheriff Donald Barnes highlighted the successes of a multifaceted strategy to address both supply and demand for illicit drugs. These are the bullet points he said that we should do, imploring Congress: Don’t just do what you have already done. Do something more. Give law enforcement officers naloxone to reduce overdoses; education for fifth and sixth graders; ensure the continuity of care and successful reintegration of people who are returning to the community from the scourge of these drugs.

Witness after witness—from law enforcement to scientists to doctors—have offered up bipartisan supportive ideas so that our response to one of the biggest scourges of our country isn’t just to do what we have been doing for the last half decade or more.

I have got bipartisan bills on the committee, and my colleagues from Texas have bipartisan bills on the committee, and the only excuse that people gave for us not to have more consideration was: Oh, well, the deadline is coming up in a few weeks for temporary passage. But I realize we have passed temporary scheduling by unanimous consent before. It is not hard to do.

I beg of my colleagues—I beg of my colleague who is here and others: We have a moving bill that has to go back to the House because we have already added a managers’ package to it. I promise you, if we add truly bipartisan things that give a more fulsome approach—a more comprehensive approach—to stop our children from dying, it will pass in the Republican-controlled House of Representatives because it was a bipartisan year. I am in agony over the deaths in New Jersey. I have met with parents who have looked at me and said: What are you going to do?

Let me read to you the words from one of these parents.

Susan Ousterman, who is a courageous mother who lost her son to an overdose—I beg of my colleagues listen to this—said:

I urge you to stop crafting policies based on stigma, false narratives, and political loyalty, and most of all, stop using our dead children to justify these failed approaches. Harsher penalties for drugs, like those for the HALT Fentanyl Act, do not deter drug use. They only push people into riskier behaviors, increase the likelihood that someone will die rather than call for help, and make our communities less safe. How many more Americans must die before we finally admit that the War on Drugs was a failure?

I am a former mayor. I oversaw a police department that had to answer the calls with children dying on floors. They had these law enforcement tools. They would tell me more needs to be done. The HALT Fentanyl Act will get passed. Fentanyl analogues will never again be unscheduled in our country. That is not the challenge right now to save lives. The challenge to save lives

in America right now is, What are we going to do more than is being done right now? Fentanyl analogues are scheduled right now, and if the only thing we can do—the only bill that is moving through here—is to just do what we have been doing, shame on us.

I am asking this body to give time. Extend the temporary scheduling so that we can work in a bipartisan fashion, like Senator KENNEDY, who said: I want more time to look at this. This seems rational; this seems logical; it seems like something we should do. Then, when bipartisan Senators step up like that and say, “I want to work with the man or the woman across the aisle,” we will have the time to do it.

So, God, I am sorry that my friend who is truly a great American leader and one of the smarter people in here—I am sorry that he objected to my bill, but I will stand up in our committee meeting on Thursday and make this same plea; that we don’t just pass the HALT Fentanyl Act but that we actually put things in it that aren’t partisan ideas. They are the ones that law enforcement is calling for. They are the ones that scientists are calling for. They are the ones that doctors are calling for—bipartisan bills.

Dear God, the parents of dead children are calling for us to step up and do more than the same old thing we have been doing around the War on Drugs since I was a kid myself.

With that, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, I appreciate my colleague’s passion.

Everybody watching me right now knows somebody who has died from a fentanyl overdose. You cannot minimize the impact of this on everyday families, but what is presented to us is a false choice and I would say the wrong choice.

I think my colleague is saying, unless we pass his amendment to put this temporarily on hold—and, once more, refuse to make a decision to make this permanent—that somehow things will not get better.

Let me repeat what I said in my earlier remarks: This Thursday, the Senate Judiciary Committee, with the support of Judiciary Chairman GRASSLEY, a Republican, and Senator HEINRICH, a Democrat, is marking up the Halt All Lethal Trafficking of Fentanyl Act, or the HALT Fentanyl Act. This Thursday is when it is going to be marked up.

Now, this is a moving piece of legislation. If you want to do something more than this legislation does, you should have 2 months ago started working with that committee. Don’t stop now. Call people tonight, and say: Listen. On Thursday, we are going to be marking this up. Will you consider my amendment? Make the case that was so impassionately given that we have got to do more than what we are doing.

I agree. So the way to do it—because this has not yet been marked up this

can still be modified. By the way, this is not the end of what we are going to do to address the issue of fentanyl. It does allow law enforcement to say: Listen, this isn't temporary. We now can kind of go to the bank, if you will. This is the law going forward. But if my esteemed colleague wants to make this more than it is now, that is the opportunity on Thursday. The process matters. Going Thursday, on a bipartisan basis and getting that buy-in, sitting down with a Senator who is undecided and working through it with that Senator and getting him or getting her to a yes, is part of that process. Delaying once more—delaying once more the permanence? Then we will say a year from now, once more, we will make it temporary, and we will make it temporary.

There is something about deadlines. Deadlines sharpen a man's mind. If there is a deadline Thursday to get this on and then, when it is brought to the floor, there is a deadline to amend it on the floor, now is the time to act, but now is not the time to delay.

I appreciate my colleague's passion, and I look forward to working with him. Neither of us ever wants to go to a family member, to a friend, to a fellow American and have to comfort them over the issue of another death from opioids. I just think that this is an important step and that, if there is more to be added, then let's add it, but let's not complain because it hasn't already been added.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I just want to clarify because my colleague pounded on the desk, and that was hard for me to watch. I am not here because we haven't been trying to get a bipartisan consensus on this and calling and doing all the work. I have watched this now for three Congresses. Number 2, I am here not because I am trying to stop the HALT Act. I am here because I heard two Republicans in our committee say the only reason we can't consider bipartisan approaches, even if they are good ideas, is because of the urgency of this moment.

All I am saying is—this is, obviously, a fait accompli—I just don't want my colleague to walk away thinking this is some kind of stunt. This is my attempt to take away an argument for us to do the work on Thursday. Clearly, it has been objected to. I am going to go back and try my hardest on Thursday to do something more.

The one prediction—I don't want to call it a "prediction." But my colleague says we have a lot more time. I have watched now for at least three Congresses that I have worked on trying to get a larger approach to meet the fentanyl crisis; and in three Congresses, this body has failed to rise to the challenge.

I am dying to be here when my colleague tells me: I told you so—and I give him permission to do that—that

this body would do something beyond just scheduling. Because, as I have read, law enforcement, scientists, doctors, and parents are not just asking for the HALT Fentanyl Act; they are asking for us to do more to save lives.

Now, I have only been here 12 years, but I know the window is open to get things done when something is a must-pass bill to move. This is an opportunity to put some things on to show the larger public that we are not going to do what we always do.

I am really worried when this window closes, there will be a lot of people thumping their chests and saying: We have dealt with the fentanyl crisis, and all these other ideas won't have vehicles to go through.

I will not stop working until this body does more than just scheduling what has already been scheduled. People on both sides of the aisle are demanding us to do more. And we don't need to go left; we don't need to go right. We need to do the commonsense, evidence-based approaches that are being supported and called for. In fact, some of the commonsense amendments are already bipartisan supported by Senators. So I am grateful.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

S.J. RES. 11

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I have a resolution under the—we call it a CRA, to rescind one of President Biden's regulations.

In 1938, we drilled the first well in the "Gulf of America," which some people still call the Gulf of Mexico.

Since then, 87 years have passed, and we have drilled about 6,000 wells in the gulf. We have laid hundreds of thousands of miles of pipelines.

The oil and gas companies who did this have surveyed, they have x rayed every square inch of the seabed in the gulf. They have surveyed, they have x rayed 311,652 square nautical miles in the gulf. Put Texas and California together, that is the geographical area that has been surveyed by the oil and gas industry.

Why did they do that? For safety reasons. So before they put a platform in the gulf, they knew where they were putting it. And, No. 2, to preserve history, because we have—or had a lot of shipwrecks in the gulf, from which we can learn about the past.

In fact, as a result of this effort by the oil and gas industry to x ray the entire gulf, we have discovered 4,000 shipwrecks.

In the waning days of the Biden administration, September of 2024, the Department of the Interior, under the Biden administration, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management—we call it BOEM—promulgated a midnight regulation. This is what the regulation said: You have to survey it again. Even though the entire gulf has been surveyed, you have to do it again, oil and gas industry. If you want to drill a well, or if you want to lay some pipe-

line, you have got to x ray it again. Why? Because the government says so.

This is going to add anywhere from—I don't know—\$20,000 up to, potentially, \$1 million to the cost of drilling a well, to x ray after an x ray has already been done. That, of course, is going to increase the cost of the well, which is going to increase the cost of the oil and gas from the well, which is going to be passed on to the consumer, which is going to raise the price of energy, which is going to contribute to inflation in America.

You want to know why we had such outrageous inflation under President Biden? Because of regulations like this. And there are hundreds more that increased prices needlessly. That is why under President Biden, the average person's electricity bill in America went up 20 percent under President Biden.

We don't need this regulation. I do not know—well, let me put it another way. I am not saying that the person at the Department of the Interior who came up with this idea is the dumbest person in the world. I am not saying that. But I am saying that the person at BOEM who came up with this idea better worry that the dumbest person in the world doesn't die because he is in the running.

My CRA would kill this rule dead as Woodrow Wilson, and I hope my colleagues will vote for it.

I yield back all time on Calendar No. 15, S.J. Res. 11.

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

The clerk will read the title of the joint resolution for the third time.

The joint resolution was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading and was read the third time.

VOTE ON S.J. RES. 11

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The joint resolution having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the joint resolution pass?

Mr. KENNEDY. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE).

The result was announced—yeas 54, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 92 Leg.]

YEAS—54

Banks	Crapo	Husted
Barrasso	Cruz	Hyde-Smith
Blackburn	Curtis	Johnson
Boozman	Daines	Justice
Britt	Ernst	Kennedy
Budd	Fischer	Lankford
Capito	Graham	Lee
Cassidy	Grassley	Lummis
Collins	Hagerty	Marshall
Cornyn	Hawley	McConnell
Cortez Masto	Hickenlooper	McCormick
Cotton	Hoeben	Moody

Moran	Risch	Sheehy
Moreno	Rosen	Sullivan
Mullin	Rounds	Thune
Murkowski	Schmitt	Tillis
Paul	Scott (FL)	Wicker
Ricketts	Scott (SC)	Young

NAYS—44

Alsobrooks	Hirono	Sanders
Baldwin	Kaine	Schatz
Bennet	Kelly	Schiff
Blumenthal	Kim	Schumer
Blunt Rochester	King	Shaheen
Booker	Klobuchar	Slotkin
Cantwell	Lujan	Smith
Coons	Markey	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warnock
Fetterman	Murray	Warren
Gallego	Ossoff	Welch
Gillibrand	Padilla	Whitehouse
Hassan	Peters	Wyden
Heinrich	Reed	

NOT VOTING—2

Cramer Tuberville

The joint resolution (S.J. Res. 11) was agreed to, as follows:

S.J. RES. 11

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That Congress disapproves the rule submitted by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management relating to “Protection of Marine Archaeological Resources” (89 Fed. Reg. 71160 (September 3, 2024)), and such rule shall have no force or effect.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

EXECUTIVE SESSION—Motion to Proceed

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 24.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

VOTE ON MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE).

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 93 Leg.]

YEAS—51

Banks	Graham	Moran
Barrasso	Grassley	Moreno
Blackburn	Hagerty	Mullin
Boozman	Hawley	Murkowski
Britt	Hoeben	Paul
Budd	Husted	Ricketts
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Risch
Cassidy	Johnson	Rounds
Collins	Justice	Schmitt
Cornyn	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Crapo	Lee	Sheehy
Cruz	Lummis	Sullivan
Curtis	Marshall	Thune
Daines	McConnell	Tillis
Ernst	McCormick	Wicker
Fischer	Moody	Young

NAYS—47

Alsobrooks	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Baldwin	Hirono	Sanders
Bennet	Kaine	Schatz
Blumenthal	Kelly	Schiff
Blunt Rochester	Kim	Schumer
Booker	King	Shaheen
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Slotkin
Coons	Lujan	Smith
Cortez Masto	Markey	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warnock
Fetterman	Murray	Warren
Gallego	Ossoff	Welch
Gillibrand	Padilla	Whitehouse
Hassan	Peters	Wyden
Heinrich	Reed	

NOT VOTING—2

Cramer Tuberville

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Linda McMahon, of Connecticut, to be Secretary of Education.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 24, Linda McMahon, of Connecticut, to be Secretary of Education.

John Thune, Cindy Hyde-Smith, James E. Risch, Katie Boyd Britt, Tommy Tuberville, James Lankford, Markwayne Mullin, Marsha Blackburn, Tom Cotton, John R. Curtis, Bernie Moreno, Tim Sheehy, Mike Rounds, Joni Ernst, Roger F. Wicker, David McCormick, Rick Scott of Florida.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, with me today is Mr. John Lowery, who is one of my colleagues from my office, who has been a big help to me.

NATIONAL DEBT

Mr. President, as you know, when Vice President HARRIS and President Trump ran against each other for the Presidency, one of the planks in President Trump’s platform was that he was going to review every penny of Federal Government spending.

Why did he say that? Why did he promise to do that? Well, first, there is a moral principle involved. People work hard for their money, and when they give it to government, they are entitled to expect government to spend it efficiently.

Number 2, President Trump ran on that plank because of our debt. The Federal debt is \$36.5 trillion. You know, we throw these numbers around—like a trillion, you know—and we start to take them for granted.

To give you a little perspective, this \$36.5 trillion grows bigger by the second. It is going to increase—if we just keep doing what we have been doing, it is going to increase \$1 trillion every 100 days. If we just keep doing what we have been doing, it is going to increase \$10 billion a day. Today, nothing changed. We added \$10 billion in debt. That is also \$417 million an hour. That is \$6.9 million a minute. I think I have been talking about a minute; we just added \$7 million to our debt. That is why the President wants to get rid of spending porn.

The reaction here in Washington has been breathtaking. I understand Washington is not exactly a slice of America. I get that. I understand that Washington is not normal. Normal in Washington, DC, is a setting on the dryer. So I get all that. We are different in Washington. But the pushback to President Trump’s effort through Mr. Musk and his team to reduce spending has just been extraordinary. I mean, people are barking and yelping and shrieking about it. They sound like the game room in a mental hospital.

I get that a lot of people don’t like President Trump, and I get that many people don’t like Mr. Musk. I get that Mr. Musk is different. I kind of like that. I mean, I like different. You know, he is the sort of guy that would wear—I don’t know—he would wear Crocs to a wedding. I get that. I find it kind of refreshing. But nobody has ever called him a dummy. And he has found an incredible amount of waste and abuse of taxpayer money, what I call spending porn.

I am not going to repeat everything I have repeated or said the first time we talked about this, but it just seems to me to be, once again, extraordinary that people are mad at President Trump or Mr. Musk for the process they are using, but they are not mad about the money being wasted.

I mean, Mr. Musk, whether you like him or not, has found, for example, \$7.9 million that we spent to teach Sri Lanka journalists to avoid binary gendered language. He found money that was given to an NGO to empower the LGBT community in Armenia. He found \$1.5 million that we spent to rebuild the Cuban media ecosystem, \$2.1 million to the BBC to strengthen the media ecosystem in Libya, and \$8.3 million spent for equity and inclusion education in Nepal. Does no one care about how the money was actually abused and wasted?

It is not unusual for me to be disappointed for some things I see in Washington, and under the last administration, I have to admit, I was disappointed just about every single day. I had almost gotten used to it.

But last week—and this is what I want to talk about—I read a story. It