

Rest assured that nobody on Earth was happier with what happened last Friday in the Oval Office than Vladimir Putin. Our allies will also watch in horror as Donald Trump and Pete Hegseth make America less safe, the world less safe. There is no other way you can look at it when they give Putin a free pass to launch cyber attacks against the United States while we disarm our own cyber operations against Russia. Can you believe that? Letting Putin attack us, and we are saying we won't attack him in terms of cyber warfare. What is going on? The world has turned inside out and upside down, all to the detriment of the safety and security of America and its people.

Tomorrow, as Donald Trump addresses our Nation, our Western allies will wonder about the future of NATO. So these are difficult and dangerous times, and Donald Trump is taking America, our democracy, and the world down a dark and deeply troubling path.

But, finally and most importantly, the American people will not take Donald Trump's agenda lying down. You can see frustration boil over in townhalls in Georgia and Kansas and Oregon and everywhere in-between. Republican leaders are telling their Members to cancel townhall meetings. They are running away from the people because they know how badly the people have been hurt by what they are doing.

Maybe they don't want to do it, but they are forced to because President Trump wants tax breaks for billionaires. You can see the frustration in the polls too. A majority of Americans believe that Donald Trump has ignored the No. 1 issue they care about: inflation, rising costs. You can see the frustration online. Last week, I joined a Zoom, over 3,000 New Yorkers got on the Zoom ready to mobilize against Republican attacks on Medicaid. And many of my colleagues had similar meetings with similar strong responses. People are ready. They are energized.

You can also see it in the courts. The American people can rest assured that whenever the administration breaks the law, we will take them to court. It will be one of our best tools for protecting our country and putting a stop to the worst abuses of Donald Trump's agenda. And for the most part, the courts are rejecting much of what Donald Trump has tried to do.

The more Donald Trump pushes our democracy to the limit, the more Americans will push back. Organizing is never easy, but it works. It works. That is what we will continue to do. We shall organize here in the Congress, organize in the public square, organize in court to protect the country we all know and love. Nothing that Donald Trump says tomorrow will change that fact.

#### SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Mr. President, now on Social Security, something terrible is happening that Democrats have long warned about. American Social Security bene-

fits, one of the most sacred things people have, one of the most popular Federal programs that has ever been created, Social Security benefits are coming under attack.

Last Friday, Elon Musk claimed that Social Security is the biggest Ponzi scheme of all time, and now the Trump administration has announced massive cuts, more than 7,000 workers, to the Social Security Administration. These cuts could affect workers who process checks, answer customer service calls, work in field offices across the country. The cuts could very well delay Social Security benefits.

It means longer times on the phone to resolve issues. Everyone knows how frustrating it is, especially seniors who need their checks. When they haven't gotten it, they want to get on the phone and find out what happens and now have to wait for hours. It could mean local offices, like in my home State, close down.

It could mean more Americans get sicker, go hungry, get their checks far too late. You don't need to scratch your head and wonder what Donald Trump and DOGE are doing when they fire Social Security staffers and call Social Security a scam, they are getting ready to go after people's benefits, plain and simple.

Let's be clear. If Americans can't get their checks in time because staffers have been fired, that is a cut in benefits. If Americans can't get an issue resolved over the phone because there is nobody to take calls, that is a cut in benefits. If field offices are closed, if troubleshooting is halted, if checks come late in the mail, that, too, is a cut in benefits.

The only scam going on here is the one where the President of the United States would try to fleece Social Security from the American people to help pay for tax cuts for their billionaires club. Democrats will not let it happen.

#### NOMINATION OF LINDA MCMAHON

Mr. President, and finally, on Linda McMahon, the nominee for Secretary of Education. I am very proud that every single Democrat will vote against Mrs. McMahon. Mrs. McMahon's confirmation will be a slap in the face to students, parents, teachers who care about our public schools. Americans believe in public education. They don't want to see these cuts. They don't want to see the Department of Education abolished.

If the Trump administration follows through on cuts to education, schools will lose billions in funding, and what is going to happen, Mr. and Mrs. Average American Taxpayer? Your property taxes will go up. The least popular tax probably that there is.

The American people do not want to see cuts to education and the consequent rising property taxes, but that is the danger of confirming Mrs. McMahon. Before Republicans vote for Mrs. McMahon, you should remember, slashing funds for schools, students, parents, and teachers, all for the sake of

billionaire tax breaks, is a very bad idea. Senate Democrats know it is a horrible idea. The American people know it is a horrible idea.

Today, we will see where Senate Republicans stand.

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

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

#### PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN SPORTS ACT OF 2025

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, the price of everything is going up. Outbreaks of measles and bird flu are killing people. Airplanes are almost crashing or actually crashing and falling out of the sky. Tens of thousands of Federal workers, including veterans, are being laid off in Donald Trump's government purge. So obviously it is a Monday, and we have two votes tonight, and so we are going to address one of those critical issues. Oh, no. Actually, we are going to do something totally irrelevant to 99.9 percent of all people across the country.

Now, let's just start with the basics, which is that everyone has and deserves human dignity without stipulations or preconditions—not just the people you like, not just the people you understand, not just the people you agree with. Every human being is God's creature. Everyone—especially in the United States of America—has the right to be left alone. That is what freedom means, right? You have to be left alone to live your life however you want within the bounds of the law.

So what Republicans are doing today is inventing a problem to stir up a culture war and divide people against each other, and, worse, they are trying to distract people from what they are actually doing, which is, at a time when people are finding it harder and harder to afford the basic necessities, at a time when diseases we eradicated almost 20 years ago are making a comeback and killing kids, at a time when people are getting on flights and saying an extra prayer or breathing a little heavier, you have Donald Trump and the Republicans saying: You know what, let's cut taxes for billionaires. Let's take money from regular people and the things they rely on—Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, the Affordable Care Act. Let's take hundreds of billions of dollars from there and shovel it into the pockets of the richest people who have ever walked this earth because that is what we need and that is what people voted for.

Republicans are focusing on the wrong 1 percent. Trans people are not the reason people can't afford groceries or healthcare or housing. The other 1 percent, the top 1 percent economically, is responsible for a lot of that,

and that is who Republicans are desperate to help. They are doing it by going after some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

I will be joining my Democratic colleagues in voting no on the pending legislation.

(Mrs. BRITT assumed the Chair.)

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Madam President, we are witnessing one of the worst starts to any Presidency in generations, and it is not even close. There is a possibility of negative growth in the first quarter of this year—which would have been unheard of—so bad economically that the Secretary of Commerce is trying to concoct another way to calculate GDP. If you wonder how bad the data is, you have the Secretary of Commerce going, like, “Well, this whole GDP thing—we have been measuring it wrong for all of these decades.”

There is no comparison for the staggering—staggering—levels of incompetence and lawlessness coursing through this administration, and regular people are paying a steep price.

Tomorrow night, the President will try to rewrite his record and recast blame when he addresses Congress. I want to go over some of the worst things that he has done that actually hurt people, because unless you are a billionaire, life has gotten harder, not easier, over the last couple of months.

No. 1. He is actively raising the price of everything. He is actively raising the price of everything. After specifically promising that he would bring down prices on day one, he has gone out of his way to raise them. The price of eggs is up 15 percent. Coffee prices are at record highs. The price of everything from tomatoes, to strawberries, to clothes, to toys, to cars, to homes and home building is about to go up starting tomorrow because Trump is picking a needless fight with our largest trading partner with tariffs. Prices will skyrocket, businesses will be hurt, and people will lose their jobs.

No. 2. Not even a week into his second term, Trump illegally froze Federal funding for all 50 States—all 50 States. With one Monday night memorandum, the White House locked States out of portals for everything from Medicaid payments to housing assistance. Schools, childcare centers, rural hospitals, and VA clinics were suddenly left wondering if they would have to close their doors or lay off staff. Almost a month later, the taps are not fully turned back on.

As a result of the freeze and Trump's other Executive orders, hundreds of billions of dollars continue to be withheld from States and communities where they belong. These are taxpayer dollars. These are dollars that are appropriated by this branch of government, the article I branch of government.

If you don't like how appropriated funds are going to be spent, there is a mechanism for an executive branch to do something about it. They can propose a new budget, and they can either

sign or veto a new appropriations bill. But that is not what they did. They just acted as though they could cross out things that they found objectionable. And it is not even as though they did that in some sort of methodical way. They had a bunch of kids going in there—literally kids—going “Control+F.” Oh, gender? Kill that. Oh, Native? Kill that. Oh, climate? Kill that. That is how they figured out what they were going to cut.

No. 3. Trump is illegally firing tens of thousands of government workers, many of whom are veterans, and he is not done yet. These are people who have dedicated their careers to public service, and in the case of veterans, risked their lives to protect our country. They are just like the rest of us—bills to pay, kids to feed, parents to care for. And they are being discarded. This is the biggest mass firing of veterans in U.S. history.

No. 4. No one stands to benefit more from this ransacking of the government than billionaires, which is no surprise considering it is being led by the richest people on the planet.

Eliminating the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau that was created in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis specifically to protect people from fraud and deceptive lending practices or dramatically shrinking the IRS, which means refunds will be delayed during tax season, and tax fraud will skyrocket without proper scrutiny—none of that benefits a regular person. None of that benefits a regular person, but it is great news if you are a billionaire trying to wiggle out of paying taxes or a shady lender who is looking to defraud people.

No. 5. If all of this wasn't enough, Trump and the Republicans are working to cut taxes for billionaires and make regular people foot the bill. Now, that is not unusual for them. Cutting taxes for billionaires is kind of their thing. They like it. It is their reason for being. But it is alarming nonetheless in the brazenness of how they are going about doing this.

They basically want to cut money that goes to regular people and book that as savings, right? So whenever you do a tax bill, if you are doing it right, it pays for itself, which means you have to have something on the side of the ledger where you are bringing in more money and then another side of the ledger where you are cutting revenue, and then it adds up to zero, nets out, deficit neutral.

The problem is, they can't really figure out how to deliver this \$4 trillion-or-so tax cut to the wealthiest corporations that have ever existed in human history and do it in a deficit-neutral way, and so they are just, like, committing arson within Departments and then trying to book that as savings to pay for the tax cut.

Now, it is true that—well, all political parties have a tendency towards exaggeration, and so you would be forgiven if you hear this and go “Well, the

Democrats are saying this is what the tax policy is, and maybe it is not exactly like that.” But I want you to understand that what is happening in the U.S. House as they negotiate over this big tax bill is exactly that.

They are demanding more and more cuts from the Affordable Care Act; from the Social Security Administration in terms of the staffing of the place; from Medicaid, where they want to turn it into block grants, which is just a euphemism for “Medicaid cuts.” Then they want to take all of those savings and not, like, reinvest it in some other part of the government, not put it in the Department of Education, not give it to low-income individuals so that they can climb out of poverty; they actually just want to take trillions—trillions—of dollars from you and give it to them.

USAID

Madam President, since taking office just over a month ago, Donald Trump has rapidly obliterated America's standing as the leader of the free world. Decades of hard work, extraordinary sacrifice, and painstaking bipartisan diplomacy to lead our allies and partners against the forces of autocracy and repression have been crushed, and America's reputation as the indispensable Nation is in tatters.

It started with the illegal dismantling of the U.S. Agency for International Development and continued with the unlawful elimination of virtually all foreign assistance and culminated this last weekend—Friday—with the Oval office meeting with Ukrainian President Zelenskyy last week.

Trump has undermined American values and interests at every turn. This is not a doctrine that somehow puts America first. Past Presidents of both parties, with different words and different means, have aggressively pursued American interests.

I have to say on the specific question of how USAID operates with the State Department, you hear Secretaries of State of both parties saying: Hey, it would be great if USAID and the State Department were better aligned.

I am the top Democrat on the SFOPS Committee, which is the funding committee for foreign aid, and I sat down with the chairman, LINDSEY GRAHAM, and I said: I think there is some opportunity to do some bipartisan work here in reforming the foreign aid enterprise.

We had a really constructive conversation. That was 2 days before all hell broke loose at USAID—all hell broke loose at USAID. Trump froze all foreign assistance and then moved to illegally shutter USAID, which is responsible for implementing most of our foreign aid.

None of it was about achieving efficiency or rooting out waste; it was about Trump trying to wish away whatever parts of the Federal Government he doesn't like, in violation of the law, in violation of the Foreign Assistance Act, in violation of the Constitution, in violation of the Prompt