

Payments Act, in violation of every appropriations bill that we have ever passed as it relates to U.S. aid since the original Foreign Assistance Act. This is not actually a close call.

You can hate USAID—I don't; I think it is great—or you can think it needs reform. I also think it needs reform. But the way to enact a law is to enact a law. The way to enact a law is not to just break a law and see if a judge will impose parameters on you. Trump literally fired the people whose job it is to identify and combat waste. That is not the kind of thing that you would do if you were interested in combating waste.

There was a person at USAID who basically wrote a bunch of factual memorandums to senior staffers saying: This is the consequence of what you are doing. Among other things, it said, specifically: Hey, you might have a waiver program in place to allow lifesaving aide to continue, but you sent everybody home and locked them out of their email.

They sent everybody home and locked them out of their email, and then we are to believe that this waiver process is somehow going to push through the billions of dollars for lifesaving aid that are needed and expected.

So what is happening? These big providers—I won't even name them because they are so terrified—good organizations, no political valence. If they have any political inclination, they tend to be Christian organizations doing, literally, God's work all across the planet. They are laying off people. They are literally closing up tents. People are flying home back to the continental United States or Hawaii or Alaska—wherever they live—and just saying: We are out of here now.

So babies are getting HIV AIDS from their moms now because the PEPFAR funding is frozen. And don't let anybody tell you that PEPFAR is unfrozen. Everything is frozen. Why? Because—I might be getting this number slightly wrong, but as I recall it, there is about 70 people left. And this is a tens-of-billions-of-dollar enterprise.

How the hell are you going to consider a waiver for 5,800 individual programs when you have 70 human beings, not all of them in this particular bureau, to try to process the waivers?

What I have been told is: Hey, if there is anything especially important to you, sir, let me know. I am thinking, I am not here to petition the King for mercy. The way this works is everybody operates within the law.

We lost the election. Democrats lost the election. We lost the House, we lost the Senate, and we lost the Presidency. And we lost it all fair and square. But now it is on Republicans to operate fair and square.

What is happening at USAID—I understand this is not the most compelling issue for people back home in Hawaii or people back home in Alabama or people back home in Illinois or any-

where. It is not like most people's burning desire. But people do understand following the law or not following the law. What is happening right now is plainly unlawful. They are violating multiple statutes, and the consequences are not some arcane discussion about legal principles or the rule of law. Millions of people will die.

I am still new enough to the Senate—I am not that new to the Senate—but I am still new enough to the Senate where I don't say anything I don't mean to say on the floor. I want anybody who is listening to understand, if we don't resolve this, millions of people will die. Millions of people will die because of an illegal decision made by this administration.

We all have to decide: Are we going to stand up for some basic American values? What are those American values? We are the good guys. When people see that USAID logo, they should say: Awesome, the Americans are here. When they see that food grown in Georgia, processed in the mid-Atlantic States, grown in Kansas and other places—when they see that food arriving to prevent malnourished kids from going in the wrong direction, they should say: I am so thankful that America exists, not just as a country but as an idea.

We are the good guys. And part of being the good guys is even if you hate something, if it is a law, it is a law. There are a lot of laws on the books that I hate. The Global Gag Rule is the first one that comes to mind, but there are probably a dozen more I could come up with. It literally never occurred to me to ask Joe Biden or Barack Obama or Donald Trump or anyone else to violate the statute and see what the judge says.

We as the article I branch and we as patriots have to wrap our arms around this problem, get the aid of the enterprise back up and running for humanitarian reasons, for geopolitical reasons, for legal reasons, for moral reasons, and for reasons related to what we are here to do, which is we are here—if this enterprise needs to be reformed, count me in. But this is a lawmaking process, not a lawbreaking process.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I want to thank my colleague from Hawaii. If he can spare 30 seconds, I would like to tell him a story.

Years ago, I went to India to the dusty villages—not the big cities—just to see what USAID was doing. I heard about it. I wanted to see it. The most graphic example I can remember from that experience was when they showed me a bag of some grain supplement, and on it was written “USAID from the people of the United States of America.” What they were doing with this was making a lunch for the children in the village. I don't think your kids or mine would have touched it. It looked like some odd rice crispy ball that was

held together with water. They sat with little tin plates with this rice crispy ball on it from the USAID package to eat their lunch. But before they ate their lunch, they paused. I said, “What is going on?” The guide said to me: They are saying a prayer of thanks to this United States of America for giving them food to eat.

I thought to myself, for goodness' sake, it is 1 percent of our Federal budget—1 percent—that we spend in this manner to try to give kids around the world a chance to survive. There are many other things we do, but that basic example with those kids sitting in the dust of that village eating that rice crispy ball and thanking the United States of America for it touched my heart and still does to this day. Thanks for what you said. I appreciate it so much.

PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN SPORTS
ACT OF 2025

Madam President, I want to say a word about what we are going to vote on today, an issue that is going to come before us.

I might ask my colleagues if they could answer the following question: How many athletes, NCAA athletes, are there in the United States? I asked Mr. Baker, the former Governor of Massachusetts, that question. He said over 500,000—500,000. I said: Of all those athletes, what percentage are transgender?

Oh, fewer than 10.

I said: Fewer than 10 percent?

No, fewer than 10 total out of 500,000 are transgender.

Yet we are going to come to the floor with a proposal from Senator TUBERVILLE to vote on this issue. He is going to attempt to bring to this floor a bill that targets trans youth.

This bill would revoke Federal funding from schools with athletic programs that allow trans girls to participate on sports teams for women or girls. The bill, which has no enforcement mechanism, could subject women and girls to physical inspection by an adult if someone from an opposing team accused them of being transgender.

Think about that for a second. Your daughter, someone in your family is going to play a sport, and someone on the other team challenges them: That is not a little girl; that is a transgender boy.

This bill we are about to vote on gives authority to someone to make a physical inspection of that little girl if someone from the opposing team accuses them of being transgender.

Does that sound a little extreme to you? Well, it sure does to me too. This infringes on the privacy of girls and women as a dangerous use of the powers of government to target children and their families.

Put yourself in the shoes of these families for just a moment. Imagine being the parent of a trans kid and telling your child they are not even allowed to play on the same sports team

as their friends at school because a politician said they couldn't.

Coincidentally, I had a hearing on this subject in 2023. A teenager named Harleigh Walker, a 16-year-old transgender girl from the State of Alabama, spoke with an unwavering voice in front of the Senate Judiciary Committee about what it was like to be one of the children affected by these anti-transgender laws. Harleigh Walker, from the home State of Alabama, had enacted a law threatening her ability to access the care she needs to be happy and healthy. Harley told the committee:

I want all of you to look at me, here and now, and hear my words. I am a very happy 16-year-old. I have wonderful friends who accept me . . . for who I am. I'm active in my school's debate team and other extracurricular[s] . . . I'm just trying to be a teenager in America. Same as any other teen, but I keep having to jump through hoops that other people my age don't have to . . . I'm here in front of this Committee instead of enjoying summer vacation, just to try and ensure my right to exist isn't taken away.

It is that personal. It is that important, and we are going to vote here to give someone unspecified the right to physically inspect a girl or a young woman if the other opposing team accuses them of being transgender. My goodness. Is this what we are all about here in the U.S. Senate?

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

Madam President, on a separate topic, tomorrow night, Members of Congress and their guests will gather on the floor of the House to hear the President on the status of our Nation. This annual address traces its roots back to the Founding Fathers, but I doubt they would recognize their beloved country today.

With President Trump and Elon Musk acting unrestrained, we are barreling down a dangerous path to a constitutional crisis. In the Judiciary Committee, which you serve on, we had three witnesses last week—nominees to serve in important positions in the Department of Justice. The question that was asked to them was very basic: Would you advise a public official in the United States of America to follow a court order? Just that simple, to follow a court order. They hemmed and they hawed and they said: Generally so; generally this.

The most lucid statement was made by a Republican Senator JOHN KENNEDY of Louisiana, who said the answer is, yes, you either follow a court order, or you resign your office; it is that basic.

But if you listened to those three witnesses, there is a serious question whether that would happen. It is a question whether there is any check or balance on the executive branch if they will not live by the findings of the court. That troubles me. It continues to trouble me. It is at the heart of our concern about the future of our Constitution.

Madam President, I am going to have a guest at the State of the Union to-

tomorrow night, Dr. Elizabeth Sokol from Lurie Children's Hospital in Chicago. I know that hospital well. My daughter was treated there for years. I think it is one of the best on God's green Earth.

For more than a decade, Dr. Sokol has been a pediatric oncologist at Lurie Children's in Chicago. She treats young children with neuroblastoma, the leading cause of cancer death for children age 1 to 5. Dr. Sokol's work, which includes conducting clinical trials on neuroblastoma brain cancer research, is funded by the National Institutes of Health. The NIH is, quite simply, the premier medical research Agency in the world. It provides over \$38 billion in research funding to all 50 States, including yours and mine, studying everything from pediatric cancer to dementia, Alzheimer's, ALS, diabetes care, heart disease. Breakthrough research supported by the NIH has made a difference.

You know all those ads you see on television about those drugs you can hardly pronounce their names or remember—people skipping through fields of flowers, feeling better because they take the drugs—99 percent of all the new drugs in the United States, all of them—99 percent started in research at the National Institutes of Health. If they are good and they are important, you can credit taxpayers for creating an Agency that does the research. That breakthrough research has made the difference in the lives of thousands of people. Yet this is one of the Agencies—the National Institutes of Health—that President Trump is dismantling through a series of abrupt and illegal, devastating funding cuts, gag orders, and mass firings.

As a result of President Trump's actions, Dr. Sokol's work on neuroblastoma in kids—brain cancer in kids—and the lives of the kids who depend on it is in serious danger. Rather than empty rhetoric, Dr. Sokol actually does the work to make America great in offering families hope. You don't think that these families think it is great if she can find something to cure their child? Donald Trump and Elon Musk are trying to stop her. That sounds like a rash political statement, but it is true.

At the same time, Dr. Sokol's hospital, Lurie Children's, is staring down massive cuts to Medicaid for the lifesaving treatment of critically ill children. Medicaid is the lifeline for Children's Hospital. If we go through with the planned budget we hear from the House, the cutbacks of 14.5 percent in Medicaid funding will dramatically hit American hospitals. Rural hospitals will close. Children's hospitals will close. Programs will be shut down. Medicaid is their lifeline. It covers nearly half the kids in this country. If you slash Medicaid funding from Lurie Children's in Chicago, Cincinnati Children's in Ohio, and the Children's Hospital in Pennsylvania, you are harming lifesaving treatment for kids with cancer and other serious conditions.

For as long as I can stand to speak, I will be standing and speaking in support of NIH funding and the work of people like Dr. Sokol. She will be my guest tomorrow night because I want my colleagues, when we sit down together for a light dinner before the Address, to meet this NIH researcher and hear from her firsthand what the cuts of Elon Musk and Donald Trump are doing to children's research in America. Surely, we are better than that.

NATO

Madam President, the last point I want to make is this: Today is a special day in the State of Illinois and no other State that I know of today. It is Casimir Pulaski Day.

Casimir Pulaski was a Polish patriot who decided to help America in the Revolutionary War. He came over, and his military experience led him to create the U.S. Calvary. He was in the Battle of Savannah and was severely wounded and died. He served our country as a patriot even though he was a Polish person, not an American.

Well, we take that pretty seriously in Chicago, where there are more people of Polish ancestry than any other place on Earth except for Warsaw, Poland. We are pretty proud of that fact, and, today, we are proud of the fact that the President of Poland came to Chicago. President Duda and his wife were given a warm welcome at the Polish National Museum.

I recall the time—and it really wasn't that long ago—when, finally, that Iron Curtain came down, and we had a question to ask: How are we going to protect the nations that used to be part of the Warsaw Pact or nations that used to be Soviet Republics? What is going to protect them if they want to aspire to democracy and move toward the West?

We came up with the obvious answer. There was only one alliance that could protect them—NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization—because, in the 80 years now that it has been in existence, it has done its job of avoiding World War III and strengthening the countries in the alliance because we stand arm in arm next to one another. As I said today, it was a Pulaski moment. The United States and Poland stand together again for the future of both of our nations.

I believe in NATO, and I don't know what we will do without it, but now we have to consider that. This new President, just a few weeks into his Presidency, is threatening the very future and existence of NATO. If we walk away from it—if the United States disengages from NATO—the question is whether or not Europe can stand on its own feet. I think they will eventually, but in the meantime, countries like Poland, the Baltic nations, and many others are vulnerable to Putin's aggression. What he did in Ukraine 3 years ago—and even before that—he will do again. Smaller nations don't have a prayer in fighting it.

I am saddened, shocked, stunned at what happened in the Oval Office last