

five Americans in Hamas's captivity, four have been confirmed to have been murdered.

As the families have spent over a year in anguish, waiting for any sign of their loved ones, desperate for their safe return, Hamas has kept their bodies and refused to return them to family and friends, compounding the grief of loved ones. All Americans would say this cannot stand.

The United States must remain steadfast in its commitment to securing the release of these hostages and holding Hamas accountable for these atrocities. Under President Trump's leadership, that is exactly what our country is doing because of President Trump's support for the State of Israel and his stand against hostage taking.

To the families of these hostages, we grieve with you. We share in your pain, and we share in your hope as well.

To the hostages still in captivity, we want them to know they are not forgotten.

The world is watching, and we will not rest until justice is served and you are safely returned home. God bless you all.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, this evening, President Trump will come to the Capitol to address Congress. I am looking forward to hearing the President discuss his accomplishments so far and outline his vision for our country.

President Trump may have been in office for a matter of weeks, but he has already built a considerable record of success. Chief among his successes, of course, is the work he has been doing to confront illegal immigration and restore order to our southern border.

Over the weekend, it emerged that there were just 8,450 encounters, approximately, at our southern border for the entire month of February—at least a 25-year low. That is a stunning turnaround. To put that number in perspective, under President Biden, the Border Patrol sometimes saw that number in a single day. It is incredible what President Trump has accomplished in just 6 weeks.

I haven't even mentioned how his administration has been making our communities safer by arresting and deport-

ing criminals here illegally. In just 6 weeks, they have taken a lot of dangerous people off of our streets.

It all goes to show what is possible when you have a President committed to protecting our border and our Nation's security.

Of course, that is not all the President has accomplished during his first 6 weeks in office. Among other things, he has also been laying the groundwork for unleashing American energy. While Democrats may not like to admit it, the United States is rapidly heading toward an energy crisis where we simply don't have the supply to meet the demand.

The Washington Post noted last March:

Vast swaths of the United States are at risk of running short of power as electricity-hungry data centers and clean-technology factories proliferate around the country, leaving utilities and regulators grasping for credible plans to expand the nation's creaking power grid.

That is a pretty serious situation.

Instead of taking steps to increase our energy supply, the Biden administration pushed us further toward crisis with measures designed to restrict conventional energy development and force Americans to adopt electric cars, putting a vast new burden on our electric grid.

Fortunately, President Trump recognizes the precarious situation we are facing, and he is already demonstrating his commitment to increasing our Nation's supply and promoting a secure and affordable energy future. I look forward to hearing from him as he discusses the work he has been doing tonight.

Here in the Senate, we have been working to support President Trump's agenda first and foremost by getting his Cabinet in place. I am proud to report we have confirmed 20 of the President's 22 Cabinet nominees—a substantially faster pace of confirmations than in any of the three previous administrations.

In addition to Cabinet nominations, we have also been laying the groundwork for making the tax cuts we passed during the first Trump administration permanent as well as delivering a transformational investment in our border, national, and energy security.

Of course, we are currently working to overturn burdensome Biden administration regulations using the Congressional Review Act.

This week, we are taking up two rules that infringe on Americans' financial freedom. First, we will vote on Senator CRUZ's resolution to stop the Biden administration's digital asset broker rule, which puts at risk the privacy and security of tens of millions of Americans who trade digital assets. This rule could also mean forfeiting American leadership in financial innovation by giving the advantage to foreign companies that do not have to comply with the rule and driving innovation overseas.

Later this week, we will vote on Senator RICKETTS' resolution to prevent an unnecessary expansion of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, or CFPB. The Biden administration made a last-ditch effort to increase government supervision of nonbank payment apps like Venmo and PayPal by expanding the CFPB's authority. But these types of apps are already regulated, and they accounted for just 1 percent of the CFPB's consumer complaints in 2023. Why add another layer of bureaucracy?

Apparently, Democrats can't help but see innovation as an opportunity for regulation. All told, the Biden administration saddled Americans with \$1.8 trillion in regulatory burdens. That is a big weight on the economy and on crucial industries like American energy, and we will continue our work to alleviate these burdens. The Biden administration left our Nation facing a lot of challenges, but we are turning the page on the Biden administration's failed policies, and I firmly believe there is a brighter future ahead.

I look forward to hearing from President Trump tonight as he outlines his vision for American greatness.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS

Mr. SCHUMER. So, Mr. President, tonight, Donald Trump will address the Nation before a joint session of Congress. This will be the fifth time Donald Trump speaks from the House Chamber, and by now, the American people know just what to expect.

They can expect Donald Trump to launch a deluge of mistruths and falsehoods. But tonight, we won't hear one peep from Donald Trump about his broken promise to bring inflation down on "day one." We won't hear one syllable about how Donald Trump's policies are making inflation and the costs that average American families pay worse.

So this morning, let's start with that here, starting with tariffs. Last night, for the first time in decades, the President of the United States imposed 25 percent tariffs on nearly all goods coming from Canada and Mexico.

What does this mean for the American people? What do Donald Trump's tariffs mean for the American people? They are going to pay more. Everyday

costs are about to become more expensive. It means, according to the CEO of Target, to take one example, consumers could see higher prices within days. This is not something 6 months out. That includes everything: the price of gas, produce, cars, cheese, dairy products, coffee, even chocolate.

American farmers will pay more for fertilizer, which means food prices go up. New furniture will become more expensive, as Canada is a major supplier of lumber. Refrigerators, washers, microwaves, laptops, smartphones, clothing, and shoes all will likely see increases.

Hold on to your hat, Mr. and Mrs. America. When you bring it all together, the average U.S. household could see \$2,000 in increased expenses a year, and that is a conservative estimate. Let me repeat that. The average American family—\$2,000 more out of their pockets, their hard-earned dollars that they are struggling to stretch. And now another added increase, all that didn't have to happen, because Donald Trump is imposing tariffs on Canada and Mexico.

It has been clear that in the past, when applied intelligently and precisely, tariffs can be a useful tool against adversaries that engage in unfair trade practices that harm American workers. The tariffs against China years ago are one example of this. But the situation today is completely different. It makes no sense to start a trade war with America's closest trade partners because the casualty of that trade war will be consumers and American households.

So let's get it straight: Donald Trump's tariffs are a tax on working Americans to the tune of \$2,000 or more a year.

Why are they doing this? Why are they doing this? Well, he says fentanyl, but less than 1 percent of the fentanyl that comes into the country comes from Canada.

It is one of the ways they can close that budget hole when they take huge tax breaks for billionaires. This is another place—another place—where Donald Trump and the Republicans are raising your costs so they can cut taxes for billionaires. It is unbelievable. I don't think this is going to be seen very positively by the American people.

Now let's talk about 1 month into the Trump administration. So, on his first day in office, Donald Trump promised a golden age was coming over the horizon. But when Donald Trump speaks tonight, his promise of a golden age will feel like ancient history.

So this morning, let's talk about Donald Trump's many broken promises. As a candidate, Donald Trump promised, "When I win, I will immediately bring prices down, starting on day one."

"Grocery prices will come tumbling down," he said, when he gets elected.

Instead, what has happened? Inflation has gone not down but up. Gas

prices were 2 percent up from the previous month. Chicken, pork, beef—all more expensive. Eggs, 15 percent higher than last month.

And what is Donald Trump's solution to all of this? The Secretary of Agriculture said yesterday Americans should just buy their own chickens to lay their own eggs. Is he serious? This is the Agriculture Secretary? Americans should buy their own chickens to lay their own eggs? Whom are they kidding?

As a candidate, Donald Trump also said, "Vote Trump and your incomes will soar. Your net worth will skyrocket."

Now, to be fair, if you are a billionaire, he is telling you the truth. But if you are not rich, Donald Trump and Republicans' signature legislation is to cut Medicaid and Social Security and other programs by hundreds of billions of dollars in order to pay for tax breaks for the billionaires club.

Let's look at another claim by Donald Trump:

The next economic boom will begin the instant . . . Donald J. Trump has won 4 more years.

That is his quote. He said:

The next economic boom will begin the instant . . . Donald J. Trump has won 4 more years.

Well, let's look at what has actually happened. Last month, consumer confidence took its biggest nosedive in years. Retail sales dropped unexpectedly by 0.5 percent. Unemployment filings hit their highest levels since last fall. The S&P 500, one of Donald Trump's favorite measuring sticks, has erased all the gains this year, and now Donald Trump has started a trade war with our closest trading partners. That is not what an economic boom looks like.

This is economic anemia created by Donald Trump's own policies.

I could go on because there are so many people being hurt and such policies of foolishness. Donald Trump promised to take care of veterans. Yet DOGE tried to fire hundreds of critical staffers from the VA, including crisis hotline staff and funding for cancer treatments. Housing costs are up. Electricity bills are up.

If there is any golden age to be had under Donald Trump, it is a golden age for lawlessness; it is a golden age for billionaires and their club. It is not a golden age for Americans who work hard every day to live an honest life to make ends meet. But I doubt we will hear any of that from Donald Trump tonight.

Finally, I am proud to welcome seven New Yorkers to tonight's joint meeting of Congress. These New Yorkers are examples of some of the very people whom Donald Trump promised to help but whom he has left behind.

First, I am honored to welcome Emma Larson, a 12-year-old middle school student from Long Island with a rare genetic disease which has been treated thanks to NIH-funded research.

Emma was diagnosed with spinal muscular atrophy as a 1-year-old. At the time, there was no cure. Her parents were anguished. But thanks to research at an NIH-funded lab in Cold Spring, NY, Emma received a breakthrough drug that changed SMA's prognosis.

Emma's story shows why NIH funding is lifesaving, and we should stand up against efforts to slash funding. Imagine slashing funding to NIH, which helps people like Emma live, so you can give a tax break to billionaires who are already doing very well, thank you.

I am also proud to welcome Alissa Ellman, a disabled Army veteran recently fired from the VA in Lockport, NY, in Western New York. Alissa served honorably in Afghanistan and was diagnosed with a rare cancer associated with toxic burn pit exposure.

Even while receiving treatment, she wanted to work; she wanted to serve her fellow veterans. She got a job at the Buffalo VA.

But guess what, last week, Alissa found herself locked out of her computer and later found out DOGE eliminated her position. This woman served our country, working in the Veterans Administration to help other veterans. All of a sudden—no word, no notice—locked out of her computer, and found that DOGE eliminated her position.

Is that the golden age? For whom? Alissa is 1 of 2,500 VA employees who were fired by DOGE, putting the care of our Nation's veterans at risk.

Tonight, I also welcome Tiffany Ramos from Rome, NY, who worked at the USDA office in Syracuse and was fired from her job helping rural farmers and businesses across Upstate New York. Tiffany is just one of many USDA employees fired with no notice despite years of service, leaving farmers across America wondering who is left to help.

It is amazing. These people worked hard. There was nothing against them. They didn't get a notice saying: You didn't do this, this, this; you can improve this way, this way, that way. They were just fired. It is cruel. It is heartless. It is nasty. It is lacking knowledge and fact-based, and it hurts America—in this case, our farmers.

I am also proud to welcome two Medicaid recipients, Jessica Martinez and Ana Medina Garcia. Jessica and Ana are both cancer survivors who depended on Medicaid to afford their medication and receive treatment.

And, finally, it is truly my honor to welcome Oran Neutra, mother of Omer Neutra, and Ruby Chen, father of Itay Chen. As we all know now, Omer and Itay were tragically murdered by vicious Hamas thugs right on October 7, the day of the massacre, the day of the invasion of Israel.

In the case of Omer's family, it wasn't until a year later they learned he was murdered by Hamas on October 7—how cruel. Hamas let them worry. I met with them numerous times: Is our

son alive? Is he dead? Is he OK? Is he wounded? Viciousness of Hamas—the viciousness.

As for Itay, he was taken hostage and tragically murdered by Hamas on the border of Gaza on October 7. After months of fighting for his return, Itay's family learned that he was also murdered that terrible day.

This is the depths of Hamas' cruelty. For months, they refused to even acknowledge that Omer and Itay had been murdered. They kept these families in anguish, in the dark. What a horrible feeling to wonder if your child is alive or dead. Hamas knowing it, dangled cruelly the possibility of maybe they are alive when they weren't.

The families wondered over and over again: Are our children alive? Are they dead? And, of course, tragically, their worst fears happened. What Omer and Itay's family have endured is beyond comprehension.

I am inspired by their perseverance, by their resolve to keep calling for the safe return of remaining hostages, even though their loved ones are gone, and for the return of the bodies of their loved ones, which is essential by Jewish law.

There is no time to waste. I will continue working for as long as it takes to finally bring every last hostage and the remains of the hostages no longer with us home to us. It is an honor to welcome all my guests to the Capitol.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, tonight President Trump will take the podium, and he will have a joint address to Congress, and, clearly, to the Nation.

I just heard the minority leader of the Senate come to the floor and talk about President Trump's promises. Well, let me talk about those promises—promises made, promises kept by President Trump.

He has only been in the office now for 7 weeks, and he has a very strong record of accomplishment in those 7 weeks. What did he promise he would do? He said he would cut wasteful Washington spending. Well, that is a promise that he has kept.

What we are seeing is the most comprehensive audit of Federal spending of money in history. This administration already, in just these short weeks, has identified \$55 billion of savings.

President Trump promised to secure the border. Well, he has kept that promise as well. He immediately began deporting criminal illegal immigrants. They are here in the country illegally, and they were criminals—heinous crimes. We are talking about murderers, rapists, drug dealers. The word got out around the world. Illegal border crossings in February dropped to an alltime low.

President Trump said he would unleash American energy. He has kept that promise as well. On day one, President Trump declared a national energy emergency. Now, this is going to unlock America's full energy potential. He withdrew from the Paris climate accord. Did it once before, but Joe Biden put us back in.

What we saw in the Biden administration is they applied handcuffs to American energy producers and American energy production. President Trump said: No, we are not doing that. He has opened Alaska's vast amounts of energy for the American people.

He pulled the plug on Biden's electric vehicle mandates. He reopened 625 million acres of offshore drilling. Remember, Joe Biden, in the final days of his administration, with his midnight regulation to ban that exploration for American energy.

President Trump promised to protect women who participate in sports. He kept that promise. The Trump administration marks the return to common sense.

We have seen that return to common sense, also, Mr. President, in here in the U.S. Senate because we are determined to get America back on track. There is no time to waste.

One measure of our rapid start is the historic pace with which we have been able to confirm members of President Trump's Cabinet.

Senate Republicans have now confirmed 20—20—members of President Trump's Cabinet. We confirmed President Trump's Education Secretary just last evening. So compared to previous Presidents, this is a remarkable pace. More confirmations than President Obama had at this point in 2009; more confirmations than President Biden had in 2021. It surpasses the timeline of any President in recent history.

President Trump's nominees are strong. They are smart. They have a history of success, and that history is going to continue now that they are members of the Cabinet.

Our success has had a direct impact on President Trump's agenda. With his team in place, President Trump has been able to execute effectively and efficiently.

The Senate has also acted decisively to secure the border. Within days of taking office, Senate Republicans passed the Laken Riley Act. The Laken Riley Act is named after a young nursing student in Georgia. She was murdered by an illegal immigrant. She was just out for a jog. We named the bill in her honor. The Laken Riley Act saves American lives. It requires illegal immigrant criminals to be deported. It was bipartisan legislation. And 12 Democrats voted with us to pass this legislation, and it is now law of the land.

The Laken Riley Act sends a clear message that tragedies like this never be allowed to happen again in the United States of America, that the era of open borders is over.

Senate Republicans mean business. After years of crises, we are now securing the border. The numbers tell the story. We are deporting illegal immigrant criminals on a daily basis, and we are also working with the House of Representatives on our shared agenda. We are delivering on the promises that we made to the American people. We are going to secure the border, we will restore peace through strength, we are unleashing American energy, and we are going to stop the Democrats' oncoming freight train of a \$4 trillion tax increase.

Democrats oppose all of these things. They want to raise American public taxes by \$4 trillion. Mr. President, we are going to stop that. President Trump is only 43 days in this office in his historic Presidency, an incredible comeback victory—the comeback king, as I call him from his ability to win this election. He won 312 electoral votes, every one of the battleground States, and this President has not wasted a second, a minute, an hour, or a day in office because he knows how important it is to act quickly.

He is doing that. He is solving the urgent problems facing our Nation, what American people elected him to do, what the American people expect, and it is what the American people are seeing. So the President is working with the House and the Senate, all of us working together to get America back on track, and we are going to deliver what the Americans have asked for: safety and prosperity for the people of this great country.

I yield the floor.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Illinois.

JANUARY 6 PARDONS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I have been honored to serve in the U.S. Senate for a number of years, and I carry with that service a great number of memories. But there is one that is particularly personal that I will never forget. The year was 2021, and the day was January 6.

The Senate Chamber was filled with Members who were witnessing a meeting required by our Constitution, where the Vice President presided over the Senate where the Presiding Officer is sitting. We gathered here and counted the electoral votes to determine who was the President as a result of the 2020 election. It is a fairly routine undertaking, but there is some solemnity to it because the Constitution requires it.

And I can recall that episode because it was a hectic day. It was the same