

whatever it takes to keep Americans safe.

President Trump began his first day in office by signing dozens of Executive orders. He cracked down on illegal immigrant criminals in each and every one of our communities.

He empowered the Border Patrol agents. They are securing the border once again. He launched the largest deportation operation in history. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers have started to deport the worst illegal immigrant criminals.

President Trump also made sure American taxpayers stopped paying billions of their dollars on free hotels, on free phones, on free healthcare for illegal immigrants, which, of course, acted as a magnet to bring more illegal immigrants into the country. Not the message they are hearing today.

Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid are for American citizens, not for illegal immigrants. President Trump's actions are going to protect and preserve these vital programs for the very people that the programs were intended from the beginning.

The American public overwhelmingly supports what President Trump is doing. CBS News, the same people that did the poll this morning on how successful and how much the people of this country welcomed the President's address last night—well, last week, CBS News reported that 59 percent of Americans approved of President Trump's deportation program. And 64 percent say the President's actions are reducing illegal migration and crossings at the southern border.

It is what the American people want. It is what they voted for in November—a secure border. People around this country oppose what the Democrats are doing in sanctuary cities like Chicago, Los Angeles, Denver, and Boston. They oppose funneling their hard-earned taxpayer dollars to pay for benefits for illegal immigrants. People want safety, they want security, and they want some sanity coming out of Washington that they didn't have in the last 4 years. That is what President Trump and that is what Republicans are delivering.

This is only the beginning. Last night, President Trump laid out a clear path forward. He said the Department of Homeland Security needs backup, needs manpower, we need to finish the wall.

Manpower, technology, the wall, they are essential for full border security. That is why 2 weeks ago, the Presiding Officer and I and other Members of our colleagues here on the Republican side of the aisle passed a budget that increases for border security. Senate Republicans voted for more border agents, more detention beds, more deportation flights. Every Democrat, when having an opportunity to vote for those things, voted no.

Securing the border is why I introduced a bill called the Build the Wall Act. My legislation finishes building

the wall along the southern border, and it was paid for with unspent COVID money. The money is still there. Stopping the killer cartels is why the Senate needs to now pass the HALT Fentanyl Act. Lives are on the line. Fentanyl is the No. 1 killer of Americans between the ages of 18 and 45.

Permanently listing deadly illicit fentanyl as a schedule I drug, I believe, will save lives. The HALT Fentanyl Act is bipartisan. It passed the Senate Judiciary Committee, 16 to 5. It passed the House of Representatives with the support of 98 Democrats, and I am grateful that Leader Thune is preparing to bring it to the floor.

The Senate is going to deliver a secure border and safer communities. That is what the American people demand, and it is what the American people deserve.

WAIVING QUORUM CALL

I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum call with respect to the Blanche nomination.

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

I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The bill 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. 27, Todd Blanche, of Florida, to be Deputy Attorney General.

John Thune, Roger Marshall, Tommy Tuberville, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Tim Sheehy, Katie Britt, Tom Cotton, Pete Ricketts, Kevin Cramer, John Barrasso, James Lankford, Rick Scott of Florida, Jon A. Husted, Markwayne Mullin, John R. Curtis, Roger F. Wicker, Bernie Moreno.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Todd Blanche, of Florida, to be Deputy Attorney General, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS) and the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Michigan (Ms. SLOTKIN) is necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 51, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 104 Leg.]

YEAS—51

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

NAYS—46

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

NOT VOTING—3

Lummis	Murkowski	Slotkin
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The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 51, the nays are 46. The motion is agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Todd Blanche, of Florida, to be Deputy Attorney General.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, there is a lot going on here in Washington, DC. That is an understatement. But I want to highlight the meeting that I had—that I attended, along with many of my Senate colleagues—last week, with Elon Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency team. That is a topic that has gotten a fair amount of information and visibility in the press, but much of it has been misinformation. I would like to address some of that and the importance of this effort, here, in the next few minutes. We had a very informative meeting with Mr. Musk and his team about the work they are doing on behalf of the American people.

I first met Elon Musk maybe 15 years ago, when he came to my office and said he had a new company called SpaceX, and he wanted to be able to compete with other companies that had all of the NASA contracts for space. I guess, looking back on it, that was quite a long time ago, but we see how far SpaceX has come, which now

covers the vast majority of payloads into space for the U.S. Government and for the private sector.

Interestingly, and to the point of the Department of Government Efficiency, Mr. Musk had to sue the Federal Government in order to compete, which tells you a lot about the problems that the Federal Government has; that it is not open to competition and, thus, creates a lot of the problems now that I think the Department of Government Efficiency is now looking at.

But in addition to all of that, Mr. Musk has now moved personally his family and his businesses to Texas. So I am happy to have him as a constituent. He has created a lot of jobs in my State, anywhere from Boca Chica in South Texas, in Cameron County—which is now, I think, officially renamed Starbase—and the Tesla gigafactory, which is right outside of Austin, which I visited a few months ago with Mr. Musk; Starlink, obviously, providing internet access to people in remote parts of the planet that would never hope to have that access—all sorts of interesting things that he is involved in.

Certainly, I think we can all acknowledge, whether you like Mr. Musk and what he is doing or you don't like him, he is obviously a brilliant individual and, certainly, among the most brilliant people I know.

So you have to ask yourself: Why would a guy, maybe one of the richest—maybe the richest—human beings on the planet, do what he is doing for the U.S. Government? I think that is an important question to ask.

Certainly, he is not doing it for the money. He is certainly not doing it for the glory, because anytime you start messing with the status quo here in Washington, DC, you can be assured you will become a target. You will be criticized. You will be demagogued against. You will be lied about. It just goes with the territory, and it is something, I am sure, he has not necessarily experienced before. Frankly, I am glad he is willing to put up with all of that in order to do some important things.

But, of course, what the Department of Government Efficiency is focused on is efficiency—something that we purport and claim to be focused on here in Washington, DC: waste, abuse, and fraud. We talk about it a lot, but that is basically what we end up doing—talking about it and not doing much, if anything, about it.

Right now, the U.S. national debt—that is like our credit card—sits at over \$36.4 trillion. I am sure that the American people—certainly, it is true in my case—can't really get your heads around how much money that really is. To me, one of the most telling indications of how big a number that is, is that we are now spending more money on interest on our national debt than we are on our defense, which is the most fundamental and important role that the Federal Government plays.

I know, sometimes, when you have such a big number or a big challenge or

a big problem, it is easy to say: Well, it is just too hard. We can't do anything about it.

In the case of politicians, some may say—and I bet there are more than a few: Well, it is too politically risky to try to deal with the status quo because I am sure there are going to be some sacred cows or some pet projects that individual Members of Congress or maybe constituent groups or special interest groups want to preserve. So they don't want you looking at that. They don't want you disrupting the status quo.

But the reality is—and as we heard from President Trump last night, as well as news reports—there are many examples of outrageous expenditures of taxpayer dollars that need to be exposed, and they need to be addressed. We have to start somewhere, and I would submit that there is no time like the present.

If you spoke to someone struggling with a substance abuse problem, an addiction, you would never say to that person: Well, the situation with your addiction is just so bad that it is hopeless. It is simply too hard to change. There is nothing you can do.

The truth is, Washington, DC, is addicted to spending and has been for a long, long time. And we have no responsible choice but to address it.

So I am glad that Mr. Musk and his team have stepped up. And while DOGE may not erase that national debt overnight, they are certainly highlighting the problems that those taxpayer expenditures present. And I think this effort will be part of the answer to how we get back on track and correct our fiscal challenges here in our country.

Now, of course, there are many in Washington who want nothing to change. I think we saw some of them last night sitting on their hands during the President's State of the Union speech. They like the way things are. They like the status quo. As a result, there has been a lot of wailing and gnashing of teeth and, frankly, dissemination of a lot of erroneous information, again, which is just simply not reality.

Now, some in the media have created, for their own reasons, misperceptions that Mr. Musk and his team are going in and making personnel and financial decisions on their own or forcing these decisions on the respective Agencies that they are researching, but that is simply false. Let me say that again. Some may have the perception that Mr. Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency team are themselves making personnel or financial decisions on their own. That is false. The reality is that those working for the Department of Government Efficiency are doing so in compliance with the law.

Each Agency's DOGE employees have gone through the Presidential personnel office onboarding process. They have appropriate security clearances and are direct contract employees of

these Agencies, and they must abide by the same guidelines and rules as other employees to ensure the protection of sensitive information.

The reality on the ground is that DOGE employees are reviewing systems, processes, data, personnel, and making recommendations—recommendations—to the Agency heads. Then the Agency head—in most cases, a Cabinet member appointed by President Trump and confirmed by the Senate—is the one with the authority to make those discretionary calls.

Now, of course, it is a tremendous project, as I indicated earlier, to reform our government's giant bureaucracy, and with any undertaking of this size, it is a given that there will be some trial and error, some mistakes that are made. But, hopefully, those can be readily addressed once pointed out. And the administration has made those course corrections, and they should continue to do so and, I believe, will do so. But there is much to be hopeful about.

One example that DOGE identified—and it is just, to me, a symptom of the problem—is reforming software licenses and subscriptions. We were told at the meeting at the White House with Mr. Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency that some Agencies are finding out that they are paying for as many as 37,000 software licenses but only about 10,000 employees are responsible for functions that require those licenses—37,000 licenses but only 10,000, arguably, would be required. Now, think about what this means for a minute. And, again, this is just a symptom, I think, of a larger problem. This means taxpayers are paying for a lot of software licenses that are sitting around and are not being used.

Imagine if a private company let something like this go unaddressed. Of course, they wouldn't, because if they did, they eventually would go out of business. They would go bankrupt and cease to exist. But the Federal Government doesn't work that way. Some of these things that Mr. Musk and his team are finding should be an embarrassment.

I can tell you that my constituents back in Texas are paying close attention and mainly like what they see. But the perennial problem is that the Federal Government just is very slow to change, and part of that has to do with the incentives that exist in the private sector that don't exist in the public sector. As I indicated, a private business couldn't do what the Federal Government does, or they would go belly up.

This is part of the reason that our national debt has been growing by leaps and bounds without any credible effort by the Congress or the Federal Government to change. And change we must. It is unsustainable.

Now, here in Congress, we have a certain amount of accountability because we run for election. We have to stand

for reelection. Our constituents get to vote for us or against us, and we, naturally, want to be responsive to what our constituents are telling us. There is always a sensitivity, for example, in what we spend in our offices. We take great care—I bet, to a person—not to waste the taxpayers' dime. Now, that is the sort of accountability that democracy provides: government of the people, by the people, for the people.

But when you look at the bureaucracy—a word that literally means ruled by the desk—there are no such incentives; there is no accountability—until now. So to have someone like Elon Musk and DOGE come in and shake things up is just exactly what Washington needs. And, again, it should be no surprise to any of us that there are some folks here in town who don't like what they see. There are many people who want nothing to change.

And we are definitely hearing a lot of speculation, in addition to the misinformation, about what this means and where it will ultimately lead, but many of these stories have turned out to be nothing more than that: stories.

We know there has always been waste, fraud, and abuse within the government, but it does not have to be that way. The problem is big, but it is our job as elected Members of Congress—working as part of the Federal Government, working for the American people—not to ignore it, not to give pretty speeches talking about how bad the problem is; but, actually, our job is to do something about it.

That is why I appreciate what the Department of Government Efficiency and the Trump administration are doing. I truly believe this is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to actually get our fiscal house in order. This is not easy. If it were easy, we would have done it before. This is hard. It is politically risky. But it is absolutely critical that we do so.

If we look at what the voters told us on November 5 of last year, we saw an overwhelming desire of the American people to change the direction of the country. They gave President Trump and us a mandate for change, and I think what DOGE is doing, along with the Trump administration, is very much in line with the mandate that we got from the voters on November 5.

So I support the efforts that the Department of Government Efficiency are undertaking, and I look forward to continuing to work with Mr. Musk and President Trump, as a member of the Senate Caucus for DOGE, the Department of Government Efficiency, so that we can get our Nation's fiscal trajectory back on track. It is absolutely essential that we do so.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RICKETTS). The clerk will call the roll. The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. WARREN. 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 Massachusetts.

CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION BUREAU

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, today's vote on this Congressional Review Act resolution could not be more straightforward: Vote yes if you want more Americans to get scammed. Vote no if you don't.

Vote yes if you want Elon Musk to have a get-out-of-jail-free card when he scams people on xMoney. Vote no if you don't.

Three-quarters of Americans use digital payment platforms like Venmo and Cash App, and reports of scams on those sites have skyrocketed.

So CFPB investigated and then stepped in with a new rule to help prevent this fraud. The CFPB's rule also helps protect consumer privacy, and it combats deep banking on these platforms.

Now, ask any American how much they like getting scammed and whether they think there should be stronger protections against it. Listen to how angry people get over these scams.

Look, nobody wants to be scammed, and no one wants fewer protections against getting scammed. In fact, the only people who want weaker rules against scamming are the guys who run the scams, and that may explain why Elon Musk is hoping that the Senate kills this new rule today because Elon's new xMoney digital payment platform would be subject to CFPB review.

Elon wants to take the cop off the beat. He wants what amounts to a "get out of jail free for Elon" card, and that is what the vote today would actually give him.

Look, I think it is pretty clear what Elon's play is here. He wasn't very subtle when he tweeted "CFPB RIP." The next thing you know, his DOGE team then locks the CFPB staff out of their own building. That was act one.

Now is act two: He wants Congress to block this CFPB rule.

Now, what will Elon get out of it if the rule is blocked? Well, he will get a clear runway for his payment app without having to worry about whether there is a cop on the financial beat who would catch him if he rips off customers who use his new app.

But this is really a three-part play, not just a two part play. Act one was closing down the CFPB so that the financial cops were shut out, at least for a while. Act two is the part we see now, with Elon rolling back a rule that, when cops are back on the beat, a financial cop could use that rule to go after Elon if he breaks the law.

Act three comes next week, when Republicans try to move forward with legislation that will clear the decks for Elon to issue xMoney as his own stablecoin, without any guardrails to protect consumers, to protect national security, or to protect the financial stability of our economy.

Put simply, Republicans are setting the stage for the richest man in the

world to issue his own currency that competes with the U.S. dollar.

Act one protected all the scammers. Act two protects the cash app scammers, in particular. And act three, as currently drafted, will roll out the red carpet for Elon and Jeff and Mark and maybe a few other Big Tech billionaires to seize control of our money and payments, which underpins the entire economy.

So the question is, Will Congress go along? Will Congress protect Americans from getting cheated out of their money? Or will Congress give Elon Musk a get-out-of-jail-free card so he can scam whoever he wants to scam and know that the CFPB can't touch him?

Look, this may feel like just one more vote on a busy day, but rewarding Elon Musk and a handful of billionaires will mean real cons go forward in this country.

I urge my colleagues to vote no.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I join my colleagues today to talk about the importance of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau in defending typical Americans against scams and multinational banks. This Agency's entire purpose is standing up for regular people as a watchdog against the powerful and the corrupt.

Donald Trump and Elon Musk are attempting to close the CFPB, and they are demonstrating their priorities. They have systematically kneecapped every part of the government that can stand in the way of their spree of looting the government to make themselves and their wealthy friends even wealthier. This unlawful freeze threatens Oregonians' economic opportunity and our country's economic stability.

Donald Trump pledged to the American people to level the playing field and lower prices. His actions and the actions of many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle do the opposite.

Just yesterday, my office heard from veterans who served our country and now go to college in Oregon. These are brave young people who are not wealthy. They shared details about how veterans routinely face predatory, for-profit, fake colleges that just want to target their post-9/11 GI benefits. If not for the work of the CFPB, many young veterans would have been robbed of tens of thousands of dollars each in earned benefits.

My constituents shared that they are really worried about what is going to happen in terms of our student veterans if Donald Trump and Elon Musk succeed in shuttering the CFPB. Either Donald Trump and Elon Musk didn't know that the CFPB has an entire office dedicated to protecting veterans and servicemembers from bad actors. Or possibly, they just didn't care.

Since the Bureau's start just 13 years ago, it has returned over \$21 billion to