

take those fingerprints. Had the Biden-Harris Department of Homeland Security and Customs and Border Protection done their job, there is a chance that Ms. Morin would be alive today.

This Executive action couldn't come soon enough. That is why I am pleading with President Trump or his staff to follow up and make sure that justice is brought to these three whistleblowers. Then the President is going to see that the law is enforced. I don't have any doubt about the President seeing that this law is carried out in the future because full compliance with the law will make our border stronger and our citizens safer.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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 majority leader is recognized.

HALT FENTANYL ACT

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, in just a few short weeks, President Trump has restored order to the southern border. If initial reports are accurate, approximately 8,450 illegal immigrants were apprehended trying to cross the border last month. Not long ago, Border Patrol would sometimes apprehend that many illegal immigrants in a single day—in a single day.

With less chaos, Border Patrol can focus on the criminals, cartels, terrorists, and traffickers who used to try to hide behind the surges, and that makes our country safer. But we have more work to do. Illegal drugs continue to plague too many communities and take too many Americans' lives. More Americans die of drug overdoses each year than Americans who died in the entirety of the Vietnam war. The New England Journal of Medicine estimated that 22 teenagers died of overdoses each week in 2022. That is an entire high school classroom lost every week to the scourge of drugs. And so many of these tragedies are from a lethal dose of fentanyl in a single pill—fentanyl that can frequently be traced back to the southern border.

This crisis is affecting every part of the country. We have seen it in South Dakota. Police in Sioux Falls seized enough fentanyl to kill 2.5 million people last year. Law enforcement reports that cartels have a presence in our area, and the price of a single pill has dropped from \$40 a few years ago to \$5 per pill today, largely because of increasing supply.

I am grateful for the men and women in law enforcement and first responders who work every day to save lives, and we need to help them get these drugs off our streets and prevent more overdose deaths.

The President is already taking major steps to halt the supply of drugs

flowing across our borders, and, later today, the Senate will vote to begin consideration of the HALT Fentanyl Act, which will provide law enforcement with a critical tool to combat fentanyl.

Until a few years ago, the fentanyl analogs that have killed so many Americans were generally classified as schedule II substances, meaning they were less tightly regulated and violations carried lighter penalties. And if a particular analog was moved to schedule I, cartels would slightly alter the chemical composition of their fentanyl equivalents to avoid a crackdown—changes that made those drugs no less deadly.

But in 2018, President Trump put a stop to that. All fentanyl analogs were temporarily reclassified as schedule I drugs, enabling law enforcement to go after the people bringing this poison to our communities. Congress has extended this provision several times because it works, but the most recent extension expires at the end of this month. It is time that all fentanyl analogs are permanently classified as what they are: the most deadly kind of drugs.

Our colleagues Senators CASSIDY, GRASSLEY, and HEINRICH have put forward a bill to do just that, expanding on Senator JOHNSON's leadership in this area and Senator GRAHAM's good work. The HALT Fentanyl Act would permanently list fentanyl analogs on schedule I. Doing this will help law enforcement keep pace with the evolving threat of fentanyl that is driving drug overdoses in our country.

It has backing from a number of State attorneys general and from law enforcement. Attorney General Bondi has endorsed the bill. It has bipartisan support here in Congress, including bipartisan cosponsorship and strong bipartisan votes in both the Senate Judiciary Committee and in the House of Representatives.

I am also proud that this bill has come to the Senate floor through regular order. The Senate Judiciary Committee held a hearing on fentanyl, where members heard the heart-breaking stories of lives taken or changed forever by deadly fentanyl analogs. The committee held a markup and reported the bill to the floor by a bipartisan vote of 16 to 5, and now we are going to have a debate on the bill here on the floor of the U.S. Senate. And I hope that, in the coming days, we will have a productive process to make a law that will save American lives.

So, Mr. President, I thank Senators CASSIDY, GRASSLEY, and HEINRICH for their leadership on this issue, and Senators JOHNSON and GRAHAM for their work, as well, and I am looking forward to sending the HALT Fentanyl Act to President Trump's desk soon.

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 Democratic leader is recognized.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, well, last night, reports came out that President Trump is preparing to sign an Executive order to abolish—end—the Department of Education as soon as today. If this report is true, this would be one of the most destructive and devastating steps Donald Trump has ever taken—and the main victims of this decision: American children.

This right here is why every single Democrat said “hell no” to the nomination of Linda McMahon. This is why we did it. Linda McMahon is an Education Secretary who personifies nails on the chalkboard. I have never heard before of a Secretary who wanted a Cabinet job solely for the purpose of detonating the very Agency she seeks to lead. I have never heard of an Education Secretary who wants to give every teacher in America a rotten apple. But this is where we are.

These are not just metaphors of the moment. They are the perils of the present. This would be horrible for our schools, our school leaders, our families, and the children Secretary McMahon is supposed to serve. The blast radius of this order will harm nearly every child, every teacher, every family, and every community in the country.

Don't forget: Defunding education means property taxes will go up to make up the funding gap. Homeowners are about to get blindsided by the toxic brew of seeing their property taxes go up while seeing the quality of many schools that depend on funding go down.

But nobody—nobody—will suffer more from Donald Trump's decision than our kids. Almost 90 percent of the students in America attend public schools, and they will suffer because of what Donald Trump is doing. Why?

The Department of Education is a lifeline for public schools across the country. It is particularly strong in rural areas because there is not much choice. There is one school in the town.

With Federal funding, many rural schools will vanish and some schools will crumble at the foundation, literally. Education is the best investment for turning a struggling community around. With good schools and without the funding to support these schools, our children will be hurt, our country will be worse, and the notion of the American dream will fall by the wayside.

Rural schools will be particularly hard-hit because rural communities often only have one school in the area, and if that disappears, the communities will deteriorate. Kids with special education needs will be left out in

the cold. Public schoolteachers already worked to the bone will be thrown into chaos; class sizes will explode; job training programs will vanish; school districts will be at the mercy of State budgets that are already struggling to fund education; and the albatross of student debt will become insurmountable for tens of millions of Americans, many of whom come from working families.

Every single one of us wants our schools to do better, our students to perform better, and eliminate wasteful spending. Education reform is necessary, but to make things better—to improve education—you do not use a chain saw. Using a chain saw will make things worse because it doesn't discriminate between the funds that are needed and the funds that may be necessary or should be redirected.

Erasing the Department of Education in the blink of an eye is not what education reform looks like. Donald Trump should immediately reverse course before he causes irreparable harm to our students and our classrooms.

Again, let me just repeat that you do not—you do not—hire a Secretary whose purpose—whose very purpose is detonating the very Agency she seeks to lead. That makes no sense.

#### SOCIAL SECURITY

Now, on Social Security, I want to point my colleagues to a profoundly disturbing report this morning in the Washington Post. This morning we learned that the Acting Head of the Social Security Administration admitted what many of us feared: DOGE is calling the shots and their mistakes are going to put Social Security benefits in danger.

Listen to these stunning quotes from the acting head of the Social Security Administration. He says:

Things are currently operating in a way I have never seen in government before.

He says DOGE are:

[O]utsiders who are unfamiliar with the nuances of [Social Security] programs.

And he admits:

[T]hey will make mistakes.

Well, that is unacceptable. Social Security is perhaps the most sacrosanct program in government. It has helped seniors and people with disabilities for nearly close to a century. Now, for the first time, DOGE is putting Social Security benefits in real danger. The American people are frightened and outraged at the same time. DOGE is spreading outlandish lies about fraud and waste that we all know doesn't actually exist. They are cherry-picking data to spin a fantasy detached from reality so they can again use that chain saw.

Social Security is the last place where a chain saw should be used. Mr. President, the Senate, Democrats and Republicans need to wake up to this crisis. It is a disaster waiting to happen. I urge my Republican colleagues: Are you all fine with this? Are you all

comfortable letting Elon Musk and a bunch of inexperienced people bulldoze their way through Social Security benefits?

Mark my words: If DOGE's chain-saw approach leads to people missing their checks, the uproar from people back home will make all of Washington, DC, go deaf. Let's not kid ourselves: This is all part of the plan for Donald Trump. Donald Trump, Elon Musk, and DOGE are coming for people's Social Security benefits. They want to hide behind the boogymen of fraud we all know doesn't exist in order to justify stealing people's checks. They are already doing it.

Cutting 7,000 employees from SSA is a benefit cut. Closing field offices and eliminating customer service staff is a benefit cut, and I am alarmed this only might be the beginning.

I yield the floor.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, 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. BARRASSO. 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 majority whip.

#### GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, the American people know our government is too big, and it spends too much. The American people want to see an end to this wasteful Washington spending. They want Washington to work for them, not for Washington.

President Trump shares those views, and he wants government to work both efficiently and effectively. He is putting a stop to waste, to fraud, and to abuse. Democrats in this body are now, believe it or not, threatening a shutdown—a shutdown of the Government of the United States.

Shutting down the government is not an outcome that President Trump wants. It is not an outcome that any of the Republicans want. It costs money to shut down the government; and then it costs even more money to open the government again.

These shutdown-Democrats are acting irresponsibly. Why are they doing it? Because they want to defend the wasteful Washington spending that has gotten the American people so upset. What kind of waste have people been finding?

Let me point out, Mr. President, what we have been seeing that President Trump and those working with him have been able to find in terms of government waste:

\$2 million to develop sustainable recycle models in the Balkans; \$19 million on biodiversity conversations—conversations on biodiversity in Nepal; \$47 million to improve learning outcomes in Asia; \$1.5 million on “voter confidence” in Liberia, Africa; \$21 million for voter turnout in India.

That is why the Democrats want to shut down the government. They want to continue this reckless Washington spending. They want to stop Republicans from rooting out the waste, the fraud, and the abuse.

This government runs out of money in 8 days. We need to pass legislation to get beyond that, but more and more Democrats in this Congress are calling for a shutdown as this deadline nears. Here is a headline from Politico this past week: “Democrats are serious about a shutdown.”

Here is another from The Hill this past week:

Democrats digging in against full-year CR as shutdown deadline ticks closer.

Senator ANDY KIM of New Jersey said:

Yes, Democrats would shut down the government.

Senator CORY BOOKER of New Jersey who is a member of the leadership of the Democratic Party said:

Democrats will use every possible tool to stop President Trump.

Senator JEFF MERKLEY from Oregon, what did he say? He said he is open to shutting down the government.

Democrats in House leadership also refused to come to the table and negotiate a spending deal.

The Senate should reject these reckless efforts. A shutdown strains Border Patrol agents. A shutdown strains our military because we know, Mr. President, Border Patrol agents and our troops will have to work regardless, and they won't get paid during the shutdown. They get paid later, but not during the shutdown. It makes very difficult to make ends meet if the paycheck isn't there at the end of the week.

These brave men and women should not have to pay the price because Democrats hate President Trump. These people make enough sacrifices on behalf of keeping our Nation safe and secure. Congress should be willing to make sure that they get a paycheck, not get caught in political games.

Make no mistake, Mr. President, the American people want President Trump's urgent action. They want it to continue. President Trump is doing exactly what the American people voted for.

Democrats calling for a shutdown are failing the American taxpayers. They are failing our servicemembers, and they are failing our Border Patrol agents. They sat on their hands during President Trump's inspiring address to the Nation the other evening. They oppose the commonsense changes that Americans voted for.

If there is a shutdown, Mr. President, it will be driven by and directed by the Democrats. Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip.

#### TRUMP EXECUTIVE ORDERS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it is my understanding that the new Secretary