

painkiller, but that half a pill contained a deadly dose of fentanyl. The dealer who had supplied Ashley's boyfriend with the pill that took her life is believed to have sold pills that killed several other people.

One of those individuals was Jonathan Ellington. Jonathan had become addicted to OxyContin when it was prescribed to him for a high school soccer injury. He got clean and stayed clean for about a decade, until another injury and another prescription got him back on it. When his prescription ran out, he bought some pills from an acquaintance. It only took one pill with a lethal dose of fentanyl to take Jonathan's life.

Mr. President, these are just a few of the stories that families have shared with the Judiciary Committee in support of the HALT Fentanyl Act. Unfortunately, there are many more like them; lives lost, futures destroyed, families changed forever.

One in three Americans know someone who has died of a drug overdose. We are losing young people, teenagers, young parents, and people with bright lives ahead of them. When the Trump administration temporarily classified all fentanyl analogs as schedule I substances, law enforcement gained a critical tool to combat fentanyl and go after people who are bringing this poison into the United States.

Congress has extended this temporary classification several times because it works. Now we need to make it permanent by passing the HALT Fentanyl Act.

I was very pleased at the strong bipartisan vote this bill received last Thursday, and I hope the vote on final passage will be equally robust.

As I said, classifying all fentanyl analogs as schedule I substances gives law enforcement a critical tool to go after the criminals bringing this poison into our country and selling it on our streets, and it joins other efforts to end the fentanyl crisis in our country.

President Trump is taking significant steps to halt the supply of drugs flowing across our borders. Senator BLACKBURN has done great work bringing attention to the role of social media, which is often the link between teenagers and drug dealers. And the Senate will continue working to stop fentanyl from taking more American lives.

Fentanyl has caused too many tragedies. I am grateful to the families who have lost loved ones to this deadly drug for sharing their stories. The HALT Fentanyl Act is moving forward due in no small part to their support.

I yield the floor.

Mr. President, 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. 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.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, yesterday afternoon, Elon Musk confirmed what many of us have been warning about for a long time: Republicans are getting ready to gut Social Security and Medicare.

Let me repeat that. Elon Musk confirmed what many of us have warned about: Republicans are getting ready to gut Social Security and gut Medicare.

Here is what he said during an interview with FOX Business. The richest man on Earth repeated again a bevy of lies that entitlement programs that tens of millions of people rely on are riddled with fraud and abuse. That is a pretext to slashing, but it is false.

He added that "most of the Federal spending is entitlements"—that is true—"so that is the big one to eliminate," meaning Social Security.

Let me quote Elon Musk again: "That is the big one"—Social Security—"to eliminate." It is rare to hear Republicans tell the truth about their plans so directly.

What Elon Musk is saying is that sooner or later, Republicans are going to target people's Social Security and Medicare benefits.

The outrage that the richest man in the world would tell millions of seniors who depend on those checks each month that it is fraud, that it is waste, is outrageous. He doesn't have any idea the harm it would do, and it isn't fraud. Donald Trump, Elon Musk, and Republicans know that the math on their billionaire tax cuts will not work without going after these benefits, and all they care about is cutting their taxes further—outrageous.

As America begins to hear this, America is going to realize what a bad bargain Donald Trump was in the election. It is another awful reminder that under Donald Trump and Elon Musk and Republicans, billionaires win, American families lose.

There is something truly rotten about the Republican agenda when a multibillionaire—the richest man in the world—is allowed to lie so casually about one of America's most sacred programs in order to justify taking benefits away from hard-working Americans. Few programs have done more good, have helped more people, have been more popular than Social Security has for nearly a century. Few programs are as beloved by Americans as Social Security. Americans, of course, support eliminating waste, but they do not want to see their Social Security benefits get taken away.

How is Elon Musk trying to do this? He is using the oldest trick in the book: shamelessly lying about Social Security—just as Donald Trump did in his State of the Union Address, where he listed hundreds of people who were born 120 years ago and couldn't show a single one was getting Social Security.

Musk is shamelessly lying about Social Security, claiming it is riddled with fraud, in order to justify taking benefits away from seniors and retirees. He ignores the very bold, plain fact that the Federal Government already conducts an audit of Social Security every year. It is a legit audit, not a partisan audit. It has been done during Trump's Presidency and Biden's Presidency. What did it find? Less than 1 percent—1 percent—less than 1 percent of all payments from 2015 to 2022 were made in error.

That, Mr. Musk, is not what fraud looks like.

He cherry-picks data to suggest that tens of millions of dead people are getting checks. This is a lie.

To be sure, this isn't just about Elon Musk's rhetoric. The assault on Social Security is taking shape in practice. DOGE has already taken over the Social Security Administration Agency and has free access to the private data and benefits of tens of millions of Americans. The Trump administration has already begun to fire 7,000 staffers, which means local offices will shut down, customer service wait times will explode, and the risk of delayed benefits will skyrocket.

So I ask my Republican colleagues: Are you all fine with this?

Are they fine with Musk calling Social Security one giant scam? Let's find a single person here on the Republican side who starts rebutting Musk once and for all when they know he is doing what the American people hate and is not telling the truth.

Do our colleagues agree with Musk's lie that hundreds of billions of dollars in outright fraud has compromised Social Security?

Mark my words, if Elon Musk and DOGE continue their attacks against Social Security, if the President continues his attacks, which he made in the State of the Union, sooner or later, benefits are going to be delayed, mistakenly halted, and the political uproar from Americans from one end of the country to the other—red, purple, and blue—will be immense.

And more trouble for the Trump administration—the Trump economy. Donald Trump promised Americans a golden age on day one. Well, today is day 50, and Americans are wondering, scratching their heads, where is this golden age in the inflation numbers because inflation has gone up under Donald Trump, from groceries, to retail, to cars. He campaigned prices will begin going down on day one. That is by the wayside, that is for sure.

You can't find this golden age in the stock market either. We know the stock market is Donald Trump's favorite measuring stick. But right now, because of him—his actions, his erraticness—his own actions have plunged markets and therefore people's retirement accounts into chaos. Yesterday, the Dow fell by almost 900 points, 2 percent. The S&P 500 plunged

2.7 percent. The NASDAQ Composite fell by 4 percent.

Why is this happening? One of the reasons is the President's tariffs on Canada and Mexico, but the other is pure chaos—no stability, no certainty for businesses, total confusion in the economy. One thing businesses tell us: They want certainty, and they want stability. One thing they are getting from Donald Trump: uncertainty and chaos.

By starting this foolish and chaotic trade war—on again one day, off again the next day—Donald Trump has singlehandedly poured a bucket of ice water on the economy. Trump thinks he can just yak: Oh, I am for it, and then the next day, I will say I am not for it. But businesses can't plan that way. If they think there is a chance he will come back and do it, they don't plan, they don't buy, they don't go forward.

Businesses right now are in a state of total confusion. They have no idea what Trump is going to do next. Is he going to impose tariffs today? tomorrow? next month? How big will they be? What countries? What products? Every day, you hear a different answer on something that is so important to the American economy and the world economy.

American consumers are also anxious. If you don't know what tomorrow will bring, you are going to spend less today.

Donald Trump himself knows that tariffs will hurt working families. When asked on FOX Business about the possibility that his tariffs could trigger a recession, he refused to even downplay the possibility it could happen. This was a rare moment of truth from Donald Trump. He said: Yeah, my tariffs can cause a recession. And then he seemed to say with his body language: Who cares? Amazing. The guy who said he would lift the economy not only is beginning to cause the beginnings of an economic downturn, but he seems to be proud of it. Wow. Is that what America bargained for? I don't think so.

When Donald Trump says there is a "period of transition," it is just gibberish. What Donald Trump means when he says "period of transition" is that "I will hurt you slowly, not all at once." It means "Yes, my tariffs will raise prices on the American people." Donald Trump knows his tariffs could wreck the economy, but he is doing it anyway, all so he can use the income from tariffs to pay for tax cuts for billionaires—his North Star.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor having just listened to the minority leader of the Senate come to the floor, and I listened to what he had to say.

You know, it has been 10 weeks now that Republicans have been in the majority and the Democrats have been in the minority after the historic victory

in November. The contrast is pretty significant. Senate Republicans made promises to the American people. We promised to get the country back on track. We are keeping that promise. We are hitting the ground running, and we are not turning back.

Most importantly for our successes, it has been because Republicans have remained united. As a result, we have a list of accomplishments as opposed to what we just heard the minority leader talk about.

First, the Senate has now confirmed all 21 members of President Trump's Cabinet, and we did it at a record pace—a faster pace than the Democrats were able to do for Obama in 2009 and faster than they were able to do it for President Biden in 2021. The pace with which Republicans have confirmed President Trump's nominees to the Cabinet—as POLITICO pointed out today—all completed before the Senate has taken a break. That is where we are today. Historic speed.

With his team in place early, President Trump is able to execute effectively and efficiently the popular agenda for which he was elected. The Senate has prioritized confirming the President's national security team. We saw the horrific attack in New Orleans on New Year's. We continue to see chaos around the world. We need a national security team in place, we have prioritized that, and we have done it.

The Senate also passed the Laken Riley Act. It is now law, signed by the President. It is the first significant piece of immigration enforcement law signed in decades and just in the first number of weeks. It is actually the first bill that President Trump signed into law as the 47th President of the United States. It is going to save lives. It is going to prevent human tragedy like we saw happen in Georgia to that young nursing student.

I am very grateful to Senator KATIE BRITT of Alabama and Senator TED BUDD of North Carolina for their leadership in finding a bipartisan way to get this bill passed.

We have also focused on our shared agenda with the House and with the President to move quickly to pass a budget that is focused on border security, energy security for our Nation, as well as America's peace through strength. The Budget Committee—LINDSEY GRAHAM, who is chairman of the committee, and the members of the committee did groundbreaking work, all focused on making America stronger, better, more secure.

Senate Republicans are working with the House on a path forward now and working closely with Senator MIKE CRAPO of the Finance Committee, who is leading the charge to make sure we are not facing a \$4 trillion tax increase, which is what the Democrats want. They want Americans to suffer the pain of \$4 trillion in additional taxes. This is very important work to keep taxes low for hard-working families and continue to stimulate the economy.

I heard a lot from the minority leader about 5 minutes ago. He was talking about the future of Medicaid and of Medicare. I am a doctor and work closely with patients on all of those programs. But what I heard Senator SCHUMER do as he stood right there—it sounded to me like he is threatening to shut down the government. He sounds like somebody who is going to tell his Members: Vote against keeping the government open. We are so distraught about the fact that President Trump has been elected, so mad at the voters because they elected a Republican House and a Republican Senate, as well as sent President Trump back to the White House, that we just want to say: The heck with you; we are going to shut down the government.

It costs money to shut down the government. It costs money to reopen the government. It impacts services for the American people.

Democrats are so mad—you saw it last week when the President made his speech to Congress, to the joint session, his address to the Nation, the way they acted during that statement by the Commander in Chief—those are people that are just mad at the voters.

The American public liked what the President had to say that night. Overwhelmingly, those who saw the speech saw it as very positive, are happy with the direction of the country, happy with the leadership of the President. He is focused. He is forceful. He is effective, energetic, getting the job done.

That is not what I heard from the Senate minority leader just a few minutes ago. He sounded like somebody who is going to command the troops: Hey, shut down the government because we are mad, and we are going to take it out on the American people.

Let me set the record straight, because Republicans support Medicaid, and Republicans support Medicare. Just the other night, we passed Senator DAN SULLIVAN's amendment to protect and preserve Medicaid and Medicare. Not a single Democrat joined us.

These programs are in trouble today. Why? Because of the previous administration. Joe Biden weakened them by making them available for scammers, and that is what has happened. People are sucking money out of these programs who don't deserve to be doing it and are taking the care needed from hard-working American families.

Republicans want to protect and preserve and strengthen Medicare and Medicaid. We want to do it for the people these vital programs were originally intended for—not for the scammers. Stopping scamming is a big part of this.

Additionally, when I take a look at some of the things we have done over the last several weeks, one is that we have reaffirmed our friendship with Israel. Intelligence Committee Chairman TOM COTTON of Arkansas and Foreign Relations Committee Chairman

JIM RISCH of Idaho introduced bipartisan legislation to impose severe sanctions on something called the International Criminal Court.

It is an illegitimate kangaroo court that targets Israel and does the bidding of Iran. Sanctioning the ICC would have sent a very strong message to the world—the message, of course, being “America stands with Israel.” Senate Democrats filibustered it; 45 Democrat Senators chose to abandon our closest ally.

Senate Republicans also successfully blocked destructive Democrat legislation attacking American energy production. Democrats actually tried to reverse President Trump’s national energy emergency. America clearly faces an energy emergency. Energy prices went up 31 percent during the last 4 years under the Democrats’ administration of punishing American energy. Well, led by Chairman MIKE LEE of Utah, Republicans are taking the handcuffs off American energy. Look, we know unleashing American energy will help kick-start our economy.

Senate Republicans also voted to protect girls and women in sports. Senator Coach TOMMY TUBERVILLE of Alabama has been a champion of women’s sports in the Senate. His legislation was common sense to over 80 percent of Americans. It said: Biological men should not be allowed to compete in women’s sports against our daughters, our sisters—simple as that. Democrats filibustered it. They are completely out of touch with the American people, the Democrats are. And they are putting our female athletes in harm’s way.

Senate Republicans also have erased some burdensome Biden regulations. We are cutting through the redtape, cutting redtape most significantly on American energy production. At the same time, we are also protecting America’s financial freedom.

Senator JOHN KENNEDY of Louisiana led efforts to end a Biden regulation on energy production on the Gulf of America. Senator JOHN HOEVEN of North Dakota led efforts to cut \$7 billion in natural gas taxes on our energy producers. Senator PETE RICKETTS of Nebraska led the efforts to rein in unaccountable bureaucrats from snooping in your digital wallet. Democrats wanted to spy on everything you buy or do on Apple Pay, on Venmo, Zelle, with other apps. Senator TED CRUZ of Texas led efforts to push back against IRS attacks on crypto currency.

Each of these resolutions passed the Senate, in spite of Democrat opposition. By reversing these heavyhanded rules, Republicans are making life more affordable for American families.

And this week, the Senate is moving to pass lifesaving legislation that is called the HALT Fentanyl Act. Approximately 70,000 Americans are poisoned or killed by illicit fentanyl each year in the United States. It is the No. 1 killer of Americans between the ages of 18 and 45.

The HALT Fentanyl Act will aid efforts to crack down on drug dealers and

criminal cartels that smuggle the poison into our country and into our communities. I am grateful that Leader THUNE is putting this bipartisan legislation up for a vote.

You can sum up these early weeks in the Republican-led Senate in three words: fast, forceful, and effective. We aren’t wasting time. We are not wasting time. We are just getting started.

Working together, Republicans are going to deliver for the American people.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

JUDICIAL REVIEW

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, today stands out as a critical moment for the country, the Supreme Court, and the Constitution.

In recent weeks, Trump administration officials and allies have made statements and engaged in troubling conduct that threatened judicial independence and our very system of government.

Elon Musk, a senior adviser to President Trump, has repeatedly called for the impeachment of Federal judges whose decisions he disagrees with, and he has questioned the lifetime appointment of Federal judges that is enshrined in article III of our Constitution.

In a social media post, Vice President JD VANCE falsely asserted that:

Judges aren’t allowed to control the executive’s legitimate power.

This is merely the latest in a long line of claims by the Vice President that a President of the United States can defy the orders of the court. In 2021, Mr. VANCE went so far as to say he would suggest to President Trump that “when the court stops you, stand before the country like Andrew Jackson did and say, ‘The chief justice has made his ruling. Now let him enforce it.’” This was an obvious reference to the apocryphal story about President Andrew Jackson suggesting he would defy the Supreme Court ruling.

And President Donald Trump himself recently posted:

He who saves his Country does not violate any Law.

Let me repeat that post, personal post, by the President:

He who saves his Country does not violate any Law.

Those 10 words are a rationale for tyranny and are an assault on our Constitution.

This disregard for judicial review has not been limited to words alone. In multiple cases, administration officials have dragged their feet or failed to comply with Federal court orders.

The administration has also nominated individuals to senior positions at the Department of Justice who seem to have little regard for separation of powers.

One Trump nominee recently testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee and said:

There is no hard and fast rule about whether, in every instance, a public official is bound by a court decision.

Fortunately, my colleague, Republican Senator JOHN KENNEDY of Louisiana, admonished this nominee, and he said:

Don’t ever, ever take the position that you’re not going to follow the order of a federal court. Ever. Now, you can disagree with it. Within the bounds of legal ethics, you can criticize it. You can appeal it, or you can resign.

And it isn’t only the executive branch that is threatening the independence of the judiciary. In the past month, three members of the House of Representatives have introduced articles of impeachment against Federal judges for no reason other than they ruled against this administration.

These actions and comments constitute a clear and present danger to the separation of powers and our Constitution. Instead of favorably quoting the apocryphal words of Andrew Jackson, our political leaders and their allies should reference the words of Chief Justice Marshall in *Marbury v. Madison*, an 1803 decision. As we all learned in law school, Judge Marshall said:

It is emphatically the province and duty of the judicial department to say what the law is.

There has been a broad, bipartisan consensus on that point for more than two centuries. When it comes to interpreting and applying the law, the judiciary has the final word.

Last week, on this floor, I tried to pass an S. Res. simply affirming the rule of law and finality of judicial review. I thought and hoped every Senator would support it. Regrettably, a Republican Senator objected, and the Senate missed an opportunity to say with one voice that we support the Constitution and judicial branch.

Thankfully, the judicial branch has demonstrated its independence, even without the support of the other branches of government. Judges have carefully considered the cases before them and, in some cases, provided a check on the administration when it overstepped. For that, I commend the judiciary.

Alexander Hamilton called the article III judiciary, the courts, “the least dangerous branch” because it has neither soldiers nor money to enforce its decrees. That is why the courts’ legitimacy in the eyes of the American people is so critical to its continued vitality, and that is why I continue to support an enforceable code of conduct for the Supreme Court.

Recent efforts by the Trump administration and its allies to intimidate and impeach Federal judges have been based on those judges’ decisions and the President who appointed them. In contrast, an enforceable code of conduct would apply to all Justices equally, no matter who appointed them and no matter how they rule on a particular matter.

I first proposed that the Court adopt an enforceable code of conduct 13 years