

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 HOVEN 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

majority and prior to many of its controversial decisions.

The fact that many sitting Justices have publicly endorsed an enforceable code of conduct underscores that it does not pose a threat to the independence of the judicial branch. An enforceable code of conduct would bolster public confidence in the judicial branch.

And by ensuring the judiciary is held to high regard, we can assure that so-called least dangerous branch of government maintains a position of strength now and in the future.

I yield the floor.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### NOMINATION OF ABIGAIL SLATER

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, soon, we will vote on the nomination of Gail Slater to serve as Assistant Attorney General for the Antitrust Division. I support her nomination, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Antitrust is as important to me as it is to most Senators. I have long been concerned about market concentration and anticompetitive practices in industries that impact Iowans whether it is agriculture or healthcare or technology. These issues don't get the most attention around the U.S. Senate, but they still impact millions of Americans. Family farmers and independent producers deserve fair prices for their products. Seniors deserve affordable prescription drugs. Children deserve to be safe from predatory behavior on dominant tech platforms. All of these are antitrust issues.

Attorney General Bondi told me during her confirmation process that she shares my interest in these issues and that she would work with me and the Antitrust Division to address these issues. There is no better person to help her in this project than Gail Slater. Ms. Slater has the right qualifications for this job.

She spent several years practicing antitrust law in private practice before spending a decade at the Federal Trade Commission, handling antitrust investigations and litigation. In these roles, she learned the nuts and bolts of antitrust enforcement.

Ms. Slater also understands antitrust and economics from a policy perspective. She served in President Trump's first administration on the National Economic Council, and she served now-Vice President VANCE as his economic policy adviser and as a member of his Senate staff. So Ms. Slater has numerous accomplishments in the antitrust space.

I am not the only one who thinks Ms. Slater is the right person for the job. She has received letters of support

from nine previous heads of the Justice Department's Antitrust Division. These men and women were appointed by Presidents of both political parties.

They wrote:

Ms. Slater has the experience, intelligence, judgment, and leadership skills necessary to serve as an excellent Assistant Attorney General for the Antitrust Division.

Another bipartisan coalition letter commands her "unique ability to collaborate on a bipartisan basis with stakeholders across the political spectrum, building coalitions toward common goals."

And it might surprise you that the International Brotherhood of Teamsters announced that they support her nomination.

In a rare sign of unity on the Judiciary Committee I share, where we don't get a lot of unity, Ms. Slater was advanced out of committee by 20 yes votes to 2 negative votes. I hope for a similarly strong bipartisan vote here on the floor.

The Antitrust Division will flourish under Ms. Slater's strong leadership, and I am proud to support her. She is ready to serve our country, and we need to get her confirmed quickly.

I yield the floor.

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.

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.

#### GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, Donald Trump and "Copresident" Elon Musk are shutting down the Federal Government one piece at a time: shutting down the Agency that stops banks and payday lenders from cheating working people; shutting down children's cancer research; shutting down key parts of the Department of Transportation, the Agency responsible for keeping people safe when they are flying airplanes; even shutting down parts of the Social Security Administration.

Now Republicans in Congress are laying out their blueprint to shut down the entire Federal Government. A budget is a reflection of our values, and this proposal makes clear where the Republicans' values lie. After months of bipartisan talks, they are walking away from the negotiating table and offering a nonstarter House bill that forces us to the brink of a full government shutdown. Who would be hurt the most? Working people. Billionaires win; families lose. Republicans' values are clear.

Their shutdown bill does two terrible things. First, it wipes out the guardrails that Congress wrote for how to spend taxpayer money. That means that "Copresidents" Trump and Musk can hold everyone under their magic spell. They can spend taxpayer money or they can shut off taxpayer money

exactly how they want. Perhaps Trump and Musk want to shovel \$75 million of ALS treatment funding to anti-vaccine research instead. That would be OK under the Republican deal—or maybe they want to shift \$300 million or more from the FAA's telecommunications funding bucket toward contracts to Elon Musk's Starlink. The budget the Republicans have sent over would permit that as well. And if Trump and Musk decide to fire another 25,000 Americans or kick a million old people out of nursing homes, this package from House Republicans would say: Sure.

In addition to giving "Copresidents" Trump and Musk the power to spend taxpayer money wherever they want, House Republicans also propose general cuts—cuts from programs that help families put food on the table, afford childcare, and keep our communities safe; cuts from local communities for projects like improving hospitals, teaching facilities, and childcare centers—dollars that the House and the Senate had already agreed to.

But the House Republican package isn't just about cutting out veterans and old people. No. It is also about spending more money. Republican House Members want to pour an extra \$6 billion over the next 6 months—yes, that is \$1 billion a month—directly to the Pentagon, with no explanation and no justification of why this money is needed. Nope. There are cuts everywhere else in government, but there is a funding increase for the one government Agency that has never, never passed an audit. That Agency, the Department of Defense, gets \$1 billion a month.

House Republicans want to give 6 billion more dollars to make sure that defense contractors continue to get their fat paychecks.

Look, Republicans in Congress don't care whether the government shuts down because they don't care about hurting working families. All they care about is getting back to jamming through their true agenda—\$4.6 trillion worth of tax handouts for millionaires, billionaires, and giant corporations, paid for by gutting healthcare for millions of people.

Donald Trump looked Americans in the eye and said he would "lower costs on day one." Those were his words. And now we are 7 weeks in, and he has done the exact opposite. He is raising costs for families. More people are losing their jobs—sky-high childcare, housing, and food costs. And it is open season right now for banks and credit card companies and shady student loan outfits to scam the American people.

The Republican shutdown playbook is dangerous, and it will hurt working families. Democrats are right to oppose the House bill, and people all across this country are right to expect us to stand up and fight back.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.