

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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

## NOMINATION OF STEVEN BRADBURY

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I come to the floor this morning to speak in opposition to the nomination of Steven Bradbury. He is nominated to be the Deputy Secretary of Transportation.

When it comes to transportation safety, we don't measure success in dollars saved. We measure success in lives protected and tragedies prevented.

Last week, I met with the parents of Sam Lilley, the first officer of the American Airlines plane that fatally collided with a U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopter at DCA Airport. Sam's father happens to be a commercial pilot now, and before that, he flew Black Hawk helicopters in the military. He expressed his concern about reports that the Black Hawks are regularly being operated in this busy airspace without the Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast, commonly known as ADS-B, turned on.

We know that the Black Hawk in the January 29 collision wasn't transmitting. We hope that we will find out later today in the NTSB report what we need to do to fix this problem.

We know that during Mr. Bradbury's first tenure at DOT, he let the FAA create exemptions to permit military aircraft to operate without this key safety technology transmitting. And guess what? The military knew that they had been granted a loophole, but they said it would not be used all the time—only to find out later that the military said they were using the exemption 100 percent of the time.

My heart goes out to the Lilley family and to all the families of the victims of this tragic accident. It didn't need to happen. That is why, last week, I wrote Secretary Hegseth to ask about the Army's letter from 2023 stating that 100 percent of its helicopters fly in the DC area with this ADS-B technology not activated.

We can't afford another light-touch approach at the Department of Transportation when it comes to safety. We cannot. It simply does not matter if you are saving dollars if you are not saving lives. Unfortunately, I believe the President's nominee to be Deputy Secretary of the Department of Transportation, Steven Bradbury, has shown more interest in a light-touch approach that benefits industry, than being a champion for safety.

During his nomination hearing, I questioned Mr. Bradbury about his record as previous general counsel for the Department of Transportation during the first Trump administration. In this capacity, Mr. Bradbury played a key role in orchestrating the rollback of multiple, multiple safety requirements under the guise of advancing a reform agenda.

For example, under his watch, he prevented requirements for truck drivers. There was a fatigue prevention requirement for truck drivers, which he loosened. Vehicle safety recall investiga-

tions reached an alltime low, and meanwhile, road fatalities increased.

Under his watch, there were a number of rail safety requirements that were also waived. The Department of Transportation withdrew its two-person crew rule. This was a rule that people had recommended after derailments in the United States and in Canada, including a runaway oil train in Quebec in 2013 that derailed and killed 47 people. And during this same time period, the main line derailment rate increased, all during Mr. Bradbury's tenure.

Perhaps, though, the most troubling of all, is Mr. Bradbury's watch during the rulemaking on what is called a safety management system for aviation manufacturers like Boeing. Just 9 days after the first 737 MAX crash in 2018, which resulted in 189 deaths, there was a rule that said—being proposed—that the safety management system should be a mandatory requirement—not voluntary. Don't tell an industry that has to manufacture planes, "It's okay, you can voluntarily comply with some of these rules." No, no, we need requirements that manufacturers must meet.

As my colleagues on the Commerce Committee know, a safety management system rule for aviation manufacturers would have instituted a comprehensive process for analyzing, predicting, and ultimately mitigating risk. The safety management system is considered the gold standard now around the world. If you want to have safety, you have a safety management system. It is a more robust process.

And I question how Mr. Bradbury, at DOT, after the Indonesian 737 MAX crash, didn't see or understand the need for critical information and analysis that a safety management system would have put in place, particularly because the FAA continued to let the MAX plane fly, and part of the process in question is whether they considered the critical analysis that Boeing had done to allow the plane to fly and what the FAA's role was.

So following the tragedies of both 737 MAX crashes, the Commerce Committee, led by then-Chairman WICKER, launched an investigation into the crashes to find solutions and prevent the disaster from happening again. But what did Mr. Bradbury do? Did he work with the committee to improve safety for the flying public? No. No, he did not.

He basically thwarted Senator WICKER and the committee's efforts to get the information about what the FAA had done. Make this clear here today: Our colleagues need to hold the FAA accountable. If you don't hold the FAA accountable as the oversight body, fat chance the FAA is going to continue to do its job as aggressively as it needs to.

So Senator WICKER's office said, "Mr. Bradbury intentionally withheld relevant information requested by the committee." He made our investiga-

tion very hard. In fact, Senator WICKER later said, "He deliberately attempted to keep us in the dark. And by that I mean our investigations, our staff, our committee, and me."

Now, I have great respect for my colleague Senator WICKER, but the Bradbury findings, in stymieing us as a committee to do our oversight job, gives me serious questions about his level of transparency.

The families of the 737 MAX crashes wrote to Chairman CRUZ last month to express their concerns about Mr. Bradbury's role in obstructing the committee's investigation into the crashes that took their loved ones' lives. They also voiced concern about Mr. Bradbury's role that led to the delays in holding Boeing accountable to implementing a true mandatory safety management system.

Now, during his hearing, Mr. Bradbury suggested that the rule ready to be proposed by the previous Trump administration that made it mandatory for manufacturers to have a safety management system was held up because some small businesses didn't want to meet that requirement.

Do we not believe that businesses are going to object to some rules? They do. They do all the time. But that doesn't mean scrapping the rule altogether, which is exactly what happened as far as the mandatory requirement.

Well, lucky for the consumer, our committee, in the aftermath of these two crashes, got legislation passed that said, "Yes, you have to have a mandatory safety management system, and you have to, FAA, put that rule out."

Now, Mr. Bradbury was still serving as general counsel and acting Deputy Secretary of the Department. You would have thought now that he has gotten a directive by Congress to put out this rule, he would have said, "Hey, we have one. We have been debating it for a while, but now we have had two crashes. It is really clear that the safety culture needs to be upgraded. Everybody agrees, all experts, this is the great system. Let's implement it."

But he didn't. He didn't move forward, even after Congress mandated it. And after Mr. Bradbury's confirmation hearing in front of the Commerce Committee last month, the families of the 737 MAX crashes released a statement saying his testimony purporting to prioritize aviation safety, "Shows a complete disregard for the 84 people who died in plane crashes in the United States in the last month."

Mr. Bradbury's troubling record doesn't stop just with transportation. During his time at the Department of Justice during the Bush administration, Mr. Bradbury authored what we know now as the widely known torture memos, justifying the use of waterboarding and other torture techniques.

The Department of Justice's Office of Professional Responsibility reviewed these memos and raised doubts about "the objectivity and reasonableness" of