

clean and solving that problem is not necessarily easy or comfortable, but it is long overdue and absolutely necessary. With the national debt at \$36.2 trillion and counting, we have to start somewhere, and little things add up. What better place to start than the waste, fraud, and abuse that DOGE is identifying?

This has long been a bipartisan issue—I can think of everything dating back to the Grace Commission, where waste, fraud, and abuse was a bipartisan target—but apparently not with President Trump in the office and not with Elon Musk in charge of the effort to identify the spending.

If you take a look at most things that the Federal Government is cutting at the recommendation of DOGE, it becomes harder and harder to become a DOGE skeptic unless you are just blind to what they are doing.

Last week, I mentioned the waste that DOGE had identified with subscriptions and software licenses. People may think, well, that is no big deal, but there is no reason taxpayers should be footing the bill for expensive subscriptions that go unused.

DOGE uncovered the potential for massive fraud with an audit they conducted of government credit cards. At the beginning of the audit, there were 4.6 million active government credit cards—4.6 million. After 2 weeks, DOGE identified nearly 150,000 credit cards that were thankfully unused or unneeded and closed both down. I am sure there is more to be done with 4.6 million active credit cards.

There is no reason for so many government employees to have direct access to spending taxpayer money at the click of a button or the swipe of a credit card. This is basic and would never happen in the private sector or in our individual lives, but in the Federal Government, before this administration and before DOGE, this was commonplace and has been overlooked for way too long.

There are some instances of fraud that we have known about for some time, but it has taken the Trump administration and DOGE to identify and fix them. For example, the Government Accountability Office submitted a report to Congress last April estimating that the Federal Government loses between \$223 billion and \$521 billion every year as a result of improper payments. The Federal Government is making improper payments and spending potentially up to half a trillion dollars. Naturally, this was an opportunity for DOGE to identify this waste of taxpayer dollars.

DOGE found payments to illegal immigrants using multiple Social Security numbers to submit Medicare claims, something for which they are not legally entitled.

They found \$57,000 in Medicare payments in 2020 for a patient who actually was recorded to have died 14 years earlier. It is amazing you can continue to charge for Medicare payments 14 years after your death.

In one particularly egregious instance, an illegal immigrant with a warrant out for her arrest was receiving more than \$100,000 in loans from the Small Business Administration, but the waste and abuse of tax dollars goes beyond mere inefficiencies.

Some of the other line items on the DOGE cutting floor are so patently absurd it would make your blood boil. For example, last week, the National Institutes of Health canceled more than a half billion dollars in grants for transgender experiments on mice. You can't make this stuff up. It is stranger than fiction.

In a similar vein, NIH also canceled millions in woke grants ranging from promoting healthy relationships among transgender youth to delivering transgender services via telehealth. I think if you ask most taxpayers how they would like their money to be spent, these programs would not make the cut, but that is not all.

NIH is also canceling research grants that were going to universities in China. They canceled a grant for \$1.7 million going to the Peking University in Beijing for the "China Health and Retirement Longitudinal Study."

Once again, I think American taxpayers would prefer to focus on the things here at home, including their own retirement savings rather than sending millions of dollars to China to study health and retirement security in a country which is our chief geopolitical rival, but that is not all.

The list goes on. A group called the Inter-American Foundation has been significantly reduced after DOGE found egregious misuse of tax dollars, including over \$900,000 going toward alpaca farming in Peru. That is on top of \$800,000 for vegetable gardens in El Salvador and more than \$700,000 to improve the marketability of mushrooms and peas in Guatemala.

I know that children frequently squirm at the dinner table when they are told they have to eat their vegetables, but I don't think this is an area where most people think our tax dollars should be spent. Unfortunately, this waste doesn't stop at the vegetable aisle.

This foundation also spent more than \$600,000 to expand the sales of fruit and jam in Honduras as well as nearly half a million dollars on improving the production of artisanal salt in Ecuador—artisanal salt in Ecuador.

Well, thank goodness the Department of Government Efficiency and Mr. Musk were key to identifying these egregious abuses of the taxpayer, but they have been going on for a long time until the Trump administration came along. So I am grateful that now some of these outrageous expenditures of tax dollars are being exposed and dealt with.

As I said earlier, Washington, DC, has a spending problem. And like any addiction, it is hard to kick the habit, especially after you become adjusted to it, but it is time for a little cold turkey

when it comes to this addiction. Many people who benefit from this gravy train don't want it to end.

So, naturally, many of our colleagues on the other side are concerned about DOGE, and they want to suggest that everything the Federal Government does is absolutely perfect. They wouldn't change a thing. But they don't really have any real substantive response to these outrageous examples that I am mentioning here. They wouldn't change a thing.

They see these stats, and they tell you don't believe your lying eyes. But those of us who have looked into it, who have taken the time to study what has been exposed, know otherwise: The government is not infallible.

We have an unsustainable level of Federal debt that threatens our economy and our national security, and the truth is, the Trump administration and Republicans are hard at work trying to address it to make the government more efficient and more affordable for American families.

So, once again, I would like to do something that you don't hear very often here in DC these days and thank Elon Musk for his service to our country in performing this essential and long overdue role.

#### WAIVING QUORUM CALL

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum call with respect to the Bradbury nomination.

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

#### CLOTURE MOTION

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

The legislative 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. 26, Steven Bradbury, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of Transportation.

John Thune, Jim Justice, Bill Cassidy, Mike Rounds, Ted Budd, Tom Cotton, Jon Husted, Tim Sheehy, Deb Fischer, Ron Johnson, John Kennedy, Markwayne Mullin, Steve Daines, Ashley Moody, Ted Cruz, Tim Scott of South Carolina, Eric Schmitt.

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 Steven Bradbury, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of Transportation, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. JUSTICE).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Illinois (Mrs.

DUCKWORTH) and the Senator from Michigan (Ms. SLOTKIN) are necessarily absent.

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

[Rollcall Vote No. 112 Ex.]

YEAS—51

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

NAYS—46

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

NOT VOTING—3

Duckworth Justice Slotkin

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CURTIS). On this vote, the yeas are 51, the nays are 46.

The motion is agreed to.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:51 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. BRITT).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

VOTE ON BRADBURY NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Bradbury nomination?

Mr. TILLIS. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. JUSTICE).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) and the Senator from Michigan (Ms. SLOTKIN) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 113 Ex.]

YEAS—51

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

NAYS—46

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

NOT VOTING—3

Duckworth Justice Slotkin

The nomination was confirmed. The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BANKS). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The Senator from Wyoming.

WAIVING QUORUM CALL

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum call with respect to the Slater nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The senior assistant legislative 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. 28, Abigail Slater, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Attorney General.

John Thune, Jim Justice, Bill Cassidy, Mike Rounds, Ted Budd, Tom Cotton, Jon Husted, Tim Sheehy, Deb Fischer, Ron Johnson, John Kennedy, Markwayne Mullin, Steve Daines, Ashley Moody, Ted Cruz, Tim Scott of South Carolina, Eric Schmitt.

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 Abigail Slater, of the District of Co-

lumbia, to be an Assistant 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 Missouri (Mr. HAWLEY) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. JUSTICE).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) and the Senator from Michigan (Ms. SLOTKIN) are necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 77, nays 19, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 114 Ex.]

YEAS—77

Alsobrooks Gallego Murkowski
Baldwin Graham Padilla
Banks Grassley Peters
Barrasso Hagerty Ricketts
Bennet Hassan Risch
Blackburn Hickenlooper Rosen
Booker Hoeven Rounds
Boozman Husted Schiff
Britt Hyde-Smith Schmitt
Budd Johnson Scott (FL)
Cantwell Kaine Scott (SC)
Capito Kelly Shaheen
Cassidy Kennedy Sheehy
Collins Kim Smith
Coons King Sullivan
Cornyn Klobuchar Thune
Cortez Masto Lankford Tillis
Cotton Lee Tuberville
Cramer Lummis Marshall Warnock
Crapo Marshall Warren
Cruz McConnell Welch
Curtis McCormick Whitehouse
Daines Moody Wicker
Durbin Moran Wyden
Ernst Moreno Young
Fischer Mullin

NAYS—19

Blumenthal Markey Sanders
Blum Rochester Merkley Schatz
Fetterman Murphy Schumer
Gillibrand Murray Van Hollen
Heinrich Ossoff Warner
Hirono Paul
Lujan Reed

NOT VOTING—4

Duckworth Justice
Hawley Slotkin

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 77, the nays are 19.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Abigail Slater, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Attorney General.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, if House Republicans don't think they need us when writing a bill, why should they expect us to support that bill, especially when it comes to taking funding away from our families who depend on it and hurting our communities and giving away Congress's power over key funding decisions?

Instead of working with Democrats to invest in working people all across our country and make sure our constituents have their voices heard in