

The majority of drug overdoses in this country are from fentanyl, and a lot of illegal fentanyl comes across our southern border in the form of fentanyl analogs, which are versions of fentanyl created with slight chemical variations in an attempt to dodge law enforcement. So getting this crisis under control requires targeting that flow of drugs.

That starts, of course, with securing our southern border so the cartels can't hide behind a flood of illegal immigration and so that the Border Patrol is free to focus on cross-border crime.

In just a few short weeks, President Trump has made major progress on this front, dramatically slowing illegal crossings and taking significant steps to halt the flow of fentanyl across our borders.

Now it is Congress's turn. The bill before us today, the HALT Fentanyl Act, would permanently classify fentanyl analogs—the fentanyl that cartels are making—as schedule I substances. In other words, fentanyl analogs would be permanently listed as the deadliest type of drug, and that would ensure that law enforcement agencies have the greatest flexibility to combat the scourge of fentanyl and hold accountable those who trade in destroying lives.

During his first term, President Trump temporarily classified fentanyl analogs as schedule I substances. And because it is so important, Congress has extended that classification several times. Now, it is time to make it permanent.

I was very pleased that we had a robust bipartisan vote, last week, on moving to this bill, and I hope that same bipartisanship is reflected in the final vote. There could hardly be a more commonsense piece of legislation, and every Member of this body should be able to agree that fentanyl analogs, which have been responsible for so many overdose deaths, should be classified as schedule I drugs.

The fentanyl crisis affects every corner of society and every State in the Union, and my State of South Dakota is no exception. Last year, in Sioux Falls, police seized enough fentanyl to kill 2.5 million people—2.5 million—and that was in just one South Dakota city.

I am grateful to Senators CASSIDY, GRASSLEY, and HEINRICH for introducing this legislation and to other Senators, like Senator JOHNSON and Senator GRAHAM, whose work has drawn attention to the fentanyl crisis. I hope that, in the next few days, Senators of both parties will unite to pass the HALT Fentanyl Act and ensure that law enforcement has critical tools to combat this crisis, protect our citizens, and protect our children.

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 minority leader is recognized.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, Donald Trump and Republicans have wanted to take away Americans' hard-earned entitlement benefits for a very long time.

This week, Elon Musk said the quiet part out loud, and every single American should be alarmed. He said:

Most of the Federal spending is entitlements. So that is the big one to eliminate.

Of course, he is referring to Social Security.

Elon Musk is saying it plainly: Republicans' big goal is to eliminate—his words—Social Security and Medicare benefits.

The American people deserve to know where Senators stand on protecting Social Security. The American people deserve to know that. Are Senate Republicans fine with the terrible things Elon Musk and DOGE are doing to Social Security? Do they agree with Mr. Musk that it is one giant scam? We have seen the Social Security offices slashed so that people get less services. Is that the first step to eliminate Social Security? It seems to be.

Donald Trump ridiculed Social Security by just lying about people who have been on the books 200 years and making people think they got benefits, which, of course, they didn't. It seems he is in on the plan. It is not just Musk; it is Trump, too.

Well, all of these are simple questions, and Americans deserve to know the truth. If Republicans truly support Social Security, they need to break their silence and condemn Musk's attacks. DOGE has already—already—taken over the Social Security Administration and accessed the private data and benefits of tens of millions of Americans. Why are they after that? Why are they after that data? My guess is so they can hurt the program, close the program, eliminate the program.

Republicans and Trump and DOGE are gutting the Agency. They are firing thousands of staff, leading to office closures, longer wait times, and deteriorating service. In my State, they have already announced a few offices being closed. I am sure that is true in every other State.

If Mr. Musk and DOGE are allowed to keep going, at the moment, seniors will have to wait longer for their benefits, but in the future, they may not get them. People with disabilities will wait longer times for their claims to be processed, but they may not get them. Americans will spend more time waiting to talk to someone on the phone to get help with their benefits. But it seems, where they are headed, there will be no one on the phone to talk to and no benefits to be received.

Social Security is one of the most popular programs. Why the heck would any President—any erstwhile Vice President—Musk—maybe he is President—why would any party want to eliminate Social Security? Why would they want to cut Social Security, one of the most popular Federal programs we have? I will tell you why. They are frenetic on tax breaks for the billionaires, and they are taking away things from Americans. This is not what the American people want. This is not efficiency.

For Elon Musk, the richest man in the world, to not understand how a senior citizen depends on the \$1,100 a month to buy food, to purchase vitally needed medicines—what arrogance. What arrogance to not even deign to understand it.

We will cut the government.

Social Security is not the government; it is people. It is the money they put in. It is the money they now get back. It helps them live a decent life.

If Donald Trump, Elon Musk, and Republicans continue to go after benefits like Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid—I have no reason to think they won't—Democrats will fight it, but most importantly, the American people will not stand for it.

ECONOMY

Mr. President, now on the economy, Donald Trump's erratic decisions—yes; no; maybe; this country; that country—are creating havoc in the economy, and we are starting to see dark clouds hanging over our economy because of Donald Trump and his whole team's erratic performance when it comes to the economy.

Listen to this: For the first time, CNN's polling shows that a clear majority—56 percent of the people—disapprove of Donald Trump's handling of the economy. Some of his pundits say he won the election because of his performance on the economy. Well, if now 56 percent of people disapprove, he is not in very good electoral shape now or in the future.

This week, forecasters say that thanks to Donald Trump's chaos and tariffs, the odds of a dreaded recession have started to crawl up. One J.P. Morgan report puts it, alarmingly, at 40 percent—40 percent chance of recession already. Trump is in office 2, 3 months. There was no chance—little chance of a recession the day he took office, and now it is up to 40 percent according to J.P. Morgan.

Household debt is also growing. The average household credit card debt surpassed \$10,000 for the first time since 2009. People are starting to fall behind on their car payments at the highest rate in decades.

Donald Trump promised an economic boom during the campaign, but 2 months into his Presidency, Trump is already backtracking and telling Americans they should be OK with "pain" and "disturbance" with the economy.

Donald Trump tells Americans: You should be OK with pain and disturbance with the economy. That is pretty rich coming from a billionaire who said he would bring cost down on day one and doesn't have to suffer when prices go up, wages stay flat, or be fired and not have any income.

Donald Trump knows his policies could wreck the economy, but he is doing it anyway. Why? Same thing as Social Security. Why are they doing all these crazy things that Americans don't like? One reason—one reason alone: tax breaks for billionaires, the North Star of the Republican Party's goals.

TESLA AND THE WHITE HOUSE

Mr. President, now on Tesla and the White House, Donald Trump yesterday did an unseemly, self-serving—it just turns your stomach, what they do to help one another. He did an unseemly, self-serving business advertisement for his No. 1 political patron on the White House lawn, Elon Musk. What do you think Americans think of that when they see Trump pushing Elon Musk—the richest man in the world's—Teslas? A man born with a limousine, who for the rest of his life will be driven by Secret Service, was supposedly buying a new car and checking out his EV options. What a joke.

This was a grossly transparent attempt to get Donald Trump's MAGA supporters to purchase Teslas after sales have slumped. That has driven the company's stock price into a wall. We all know what Donald Trump thinks about stock prices—it is the end-all and be-all.

But for any of the new MAGA converts who are now joining the EV revolution even though they have said they have hated it—MAGA said they hated it—let me just say to these MAGA converts who might buy an EV to bail out their buddy Elon: If you are below the income limit, you can thank Democrats for your \$7,500 EV tax credit.

I yield the floor.

Mr. President, 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. 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 Republican whip.

INFLATION

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor having just heard my colleague, the Democrat leader, senior Senator from New York. Formerly, he had been the majority leader; now the minority leader because of an election we just had. I heard him talk about the fact that household debt is up.

Every American who has lived through the last 4 years knows that household debt is up, and they know why household debt is up. It is up because we have been living through 4

years of a previous administration, which was an administration of high prices and open borders, and people have been paying the price; and the debt of the American families is much higher than it was when they took over.

That is why President Trump and Republicans in the Senate and the House are now in a situation where we are trying to get America back on track. So to hear the minority leader talk about household debt being up, there is a reason, and they are the cause of that. And so I am delighted by seeing the headlines that just came out this morning in terms of the economy under President Trump.

New York Times, "U.S. Inflation Shows Improvement." We need a lot of improvement there. Happy to see it is showing improvement; we have a long way to go.

Wall Street Journal, "Inflation . . . Lower Than Expected."

Republicans knew that we would be able to deliver for the American people. We are doing just that. Now, I am from an energy State. The Presiding Officer is from an energy State. We produce a lot of American energy. I am from Wyoming, America's energy breadbasket, a powerhouse of energy. What do we see about energy prices?

The average price of gasoline in the U.S.—

The headline is—

dropped for the third straight week.

That is what happens when you have an American energy policy—a policy that puts American energy first. Affordable, available, reliable energy. Not what we lived with through the last 4 years where they wanted to prioritize—believe it or not—the climate over energy for American families that was affordable, available, and reliable.

So there you have it.

The average price of gasoline in the United States dropped for the third straight week.

Additionally, the national average is now just a little over \$3 a gallon, the lowest March price in 4 years.

HALT FENTANYL ACT

Mr. President, I come to the floor today, however, to talk about the bill that is currently before us on the floor of the U.S. Senate. And it is a bill relating to the fentanyl crisis in our country. We are seeing it in every State in the country, including the Presiding Officer's home State of Montana and my home State of Wyoming. And so in many ways every State has been impacted by the crisis of fentanyl.

Look, I practiced medicine in Wyoming for 24 years. Illicit fentanyl is poisoning and killing Americans every day. More than 74,000 Americans died last year as a result of this poison.

Every State is impacted to the point that it is the No. 1 cause of death now for Americans between the ages of 18 and 45. When you take a look at the number of people that are being killed, this has actually resulted in lowering the life expectancy of the American

people. Every American in one way or another is a victim of fentanyl because everyone knows someone who has lost a loved one to illicit fentanyl. No community has been spared.

We are losing our sons and our daughters, our brothers and our sisters, friends and neighbors, our fellow citizens.

Congress needs to treat illicit fentanyl like the crisis it truly is, and we are going to do that today in the U.S. Senate. Look, our law enforcement officers are working to stop this flow of illicit fentanyl into this country. They are doing a great job now cracking down on drug dealers.

But what they need and they asked for and have come to us with is a desire for certainty within the law. Right now, law enforcement officers are fighting against these merchants of death, and they seem to be doing it, but they have one hand tied behind their back.

The Senate has an opportunity today to change that. We have legislation to the floor that is going to save lives. It is called the HALT Fentanyl Act. This bipartisan legislation permanently schedules deadly illicit fentanyl as a schedule I drug.

That is the way things are scheduled under the Controlled Substances Act. This is the reason it is an important change, because it means tough penalties for fentanyl traffickers.

It means certainty for law enforcement. Now, that is going to be a law enforcement tool that they have been asking for in our effort to get fentanyl off our streets. This is why Senators, just on Monday evening, unanimously agreed to debate the legislation. We now, after working and working on this, now have strong bipartisan support.

In 2018, the Drug Enforcement Agency temporarily scheduled illicit fentanyl on a short-term basis under this schedule I. They found it started to make a difference. Congress voted a number of times to extend this classification—bipartisan votes.

Republicans have pushed for years to make this change permanent. The Democrat Leader said, "No, no," when he was the leader of the majority. He wouldn't bring the permanent solution to the floor of the U.S. Senate. He would not allow us to have votes on the HALT Fentanyl Act. Why? Because he bowed to the soft-on-crime Democrats, the left wing of his leftist party. They didn't want tougher penalties on drug traffickers. That was the clear message behind the Democrats' blockade.

What Americans need, we want safety, we want security, we want it for our families, we want it for our communities, and the status quo of fentanyl is not an option. The border crisis of the last 4 years is what fueled the fentanyl crisis. An open border meant more illegal drugs flowing across our southern border.

Most of the fentanyl in the United States actually comes from Mexico. It