

funding for diseases such as childhood cancer, ALS, Alzheimer's, dementia, and so many more.

I don't know young DJ or his family, but I can just imagine what they went through when they were told their son had brain cancer. Who can imagine, as a parent, what that must have been like. And I bet you one of their first questions to the doctor was basic: Is there a cure? Is there treatment? Is there something we can do? Thankfully, the answer was "yes" because of medical research.

You know, all the miracle drugs you see on TV, a constant deluge of ads about new drugs—99 percent of drugs approved in the last 10 years benefited from NIH research. NIH funding is why kids like DJ are beating cancer, why babies are being spared from preventive illness, why HIV is no longer a death sentence, why progress is being made on ALS and so many neurological diseases.

Since the start of this administration, we have seen the White House unleash a lawless, chaotic attack on everything from our Federal Aviation Administration to biomedical research.

First, President Trump and Elon Musk ordered a freeze on most Federal grant funding, including medical research funding. You see, after extensive review of grant applications, the NIH awards approximately \$38 billion a year in funding to the best and brightest medical researchers and universities in all 50 States, Illinois included.

But Trump and Musk inexplicably view this as wasteful and needless. While this freeze was found illegal by a Federal judge, the administration has continued to defy court order. To this day, we are taking actions to prevent medical research funding from going out to scientists in labs with breakthrough ideas. As a result, NIH has delayed awarding approximately \$1 billion in grant funding to institutions nationwide. What alarms me is that NIH funding has not historically been a partisan issue. This used to be the most bipartisan thing in the Senate.

Over the past decade, bipartisan members of Congress—Roy Blunt, Republican Senator from Missouri; Lamar Alexander, Republican Senator from Tennessee; and PATTY MURRAY, Democrat from Washington—joined with me in an effort to increase funding for the NIH. This bipartisan team, which I was proud to be part of, increased NIH funding over the last 10 years by 60 percent.

We did this because we know sickness does not respect partisan lines. We need cures on a bipartisan basis, and NIH funding leads to new breakthroughs for all patients in need, supports good-paying jobs in red and blue States, and cements our global leadership.

Illinois universities and hospitals receive approximately \$1.3 billion in NIH funding every year that support 16,000 researchers in our State and \$3.6 billion in economic activity. Our State is the rule, not the exception in this regard.

But Trump and Musk aren't finished here. Next, they tried to indiscriminately slash how NIH pays for indirect costs. What is an indirect cost? It helps medical researchers operate their laboratories, it pays for new computers, microscopes, and the handling of hazardous materials.

They are negotiated on a case-by-case basis between the Federal Government and each hospital and university. Look, I am open to discussion about reforms to how indirect costs are calculated, but just arbitrarily and illegally slashing all indirect cost allotments will stop medical research in its tracks and many laboratories.

Thankfully, Illinois' attorney general and 21 others sued and secured temporary relief for universities and researchers. Now Trump and Elon Musk have focused their efforts on firing the medical researchers themselves. Reports indicate that 1,200 NIH employees have been fired so far, experienced vaccine researchers, the next generation of scientists and the acting director of the NIH's Alzheimer's and dementia program.

Further, Trump and Musk have ended a popular trainee program that brought 1,600 young scientists out of colleges to the NIH world-renowned campus in Maryland. NIH research leads to new cures and treatments that extend, improve, and save lives. That is why I am once again trying to pass a resolution pledging just basic bipartisan support for NIH.

This resolution is simple. It says the work of NIH should not be subject to interruption, delay, or funding disruptions in violation of the law, and it reaffirms the workforce of the NIH is essential to sustaining medical progress.

For kids like DJ, for people like my friend Brian Wallach who is fighting ALS, for every family out there dealing with a life-threatening diagnosis, we cannot—we must not—stay silent in the face of Donald Trump and Elon Musk's assault on medical research.

I will never stop fighting to protect NIH and the medical research it supports. I hope it once again will become a bipartisan effort.

As if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be discharged from further consideration and the Senate now proceed to S. Res. 93; further, that the resolution be agreed to; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. MULLIN. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, at this point, I hope I can appeal to my friend from Oklahoma. It is important to every single State, but it is certainly important to my State of Illinois where we have thousands of researchers and millions of dollars being spent.

But it is also important to his State. Oklahoma has very valuable laboratories and hospitals that do research as well.

I would like to just give you some examples. Each year, Oklahoma receives \$160 million in NIH funding. This money supports 2,500 jobs in the State of Oklahoma and \$450 million in economic activity. The top NIH funding research in Oklahoma is the University of Oklahoma. It receives \$80 million a year.

With this funding, researchers in Oklahoma recently conducted research on slowing kidney disease progression, improving brain function after strokes, and how changes in cell activity can slow the progression of Alzheimer's.

Senator MULLIN, I know, is a graduate—a proud graduate, I am sure—of Oklahoma State University, which receives \$50 million in NIH funding. Mr. President, I hope I can appeal to my colleague and others to take a close look at their own home States on this medical research. It makes a difference in their States, and it makes a valuable difference in the quality of life for Americans across the board.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

#### TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, we are 50 days into Donald Trump's second term, and the American economy is already in free fall; prices are soaring, stocks are plummeting, and people are panicking about a recession. None of this was inevitable. All of this is Trump's own making.

This week after Trump couldn't categorically rule out that his policies would lead to a recession, Nasdaq had its worst day in years while the Dow Jones dropped a whopping 1,300 points. But it is not just the stock market that is taking a hit; it is regular people everywhere.

Consumer confidence is down by 7 points—7 points in 50 days—since Trump took office, and spending has dropped for the first time in 2 years. The dollar is weaker, hiring is slowing, interest rates are unlikely to come down, and the GDP is expected to shrink this quarter for the first time in 3 years.

You know, usually Presidents get too much blame or too much credit for the state of the economy but not this time. Trump is going out of his way to plunge the economy into chaos and make life harder for everyone. Whether you are buying groceries or trading stocks or hoping to retire next month, you are getting hit.

When the Commerce Secretary was asked yesterday about a potential recession, he said: "It's worth it."

"It's worth it."

They actually think a recession would be worth it. And if the economic numbers coming in are bad, if they show that the economy is shrinking or the costs are rising, their solution is to cook the books to make them seem

better because when the data is bad, change it. Everybody knows that.

Instead of getting to work on lowering prices on day one, like he said he would, the President has spent his days plotting the rebirth of a gilded age with tariffs and tax cuts. That was a time when the rich got richer while everyone else got screwed.

Trump tells a different story.

We were at our richest from 1870 to 1913. That's when we were a tariff country. . . . We were a very wealthy country, and we're going to be [that way again].

So I just want to make clear, yes, I am a partisan. Yes, I think Donald Trump is screwing up the economy. But it is really important for us to understand they actually do have a theory of the case, and that is the golden age from 1870 to 1913. I didn't say that; the President said that. I didn't say "Hey, these guys think a recession is worth it." They said a recession is worth it.

It is true that in the gilded age, some people were very wealthy then. Robber barons and business tycoons built enormous empires on the backs of working people, who had little to show for it. Profits boomed. Billionaires emerged. Regular people suffered in tenements and on factory floors, and poverty was everywhere. But the gilded age is exactly what the President is trying to recreate.

Whether it is tariffs on our largest trading partners that will jack up the price of our food or our homes or our cars or mass layoffs of the people who inspect our food or keep the skies safe or care for our veterans or the tax cuts for the richest people to ever exist, funded by slashing regular people's healthcare and hard-earned retirement savings, all of this is about taking money from people who don't have enough and handing it over to people who already have more than anyone has ever had.

Whether you voted for Trump or not, whether you believed he would be good on the economy or not, whatever sort of side of the political, tribal, ideological, partisan, algorithmic divide that we are all experiencing in our little filter bubbles on Instagram and TikTok and Twitter and wherever else we get our disaggregated information, this economy sucks. People are paying too much.

It is the intentional policy of the President's economic team to recreate a time when—until just about 50 days ago, everybody agreed we should never go back to that time. Kids working on factory floors, people working 70 hours and not able to feed their family, unprecedented disparity between the extremely wealthy and everybody else—that is what they are explicitly going for.

This is not me putting spin on the ball. That is what they are saying. That is what the Commerce Secretary is saying. That is what the Treasury Secretary is saying. That is what the President of the United States is say-

ing. This is their plan, and it is going according to plan.

These people have the ability to short things and ride the volatility and monetize all of the craziness and make side deals and do crypto and park their assets here and there. They make money no matter what. But if you are retiring next month with a 401(k) or an IRA or a 403(b), you just got screwed. Trillions of dollars of wealth were eliminated.

And the President sprang into action. Why? For what purpose? To help his buddy sell cars on the White House lawn. I don't have a preference for electric cars or nonelectric cars. I don't care. That is fine. But what a weird thing to spring into action about when everybody is getting kicked in the face economically except his buddies.

#### FOREIGN AID

Mr. President, it wasn't so long ago that a Senator stood on this floor and said the following:

Foreign aid as a part of our overall budget is less than 1 percent of the total amount the US Government spends. I promise you it is going to be a lot harder to recruit someone to anti-Americanism and anti-American terrorism if the United States of America is the reason one is even alive today.

The person who said that was not me. It wasn't another Democrat. It was then-Senator, now-Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

As a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Marco Rubio was one of the strongest supporters of foreign aid and specifically the U.S. Agency for International Development or USAID. He introduced bills to leverage USAID, to fight human trafficking, advance women's economic empowerment, and reduce violence globally. He called on the Agency to, among other things, provide humanitarian relief to Colombia, support free and fair elections in Burma, promote internet freedom in Cuba, and advance democratic values in the Indo-Pacific.

Speaking in 2018, he said:

Anybody who tells you that we can slash foreign aid and that will bring us to balance is lying to you. It's just not true.

So to witness the evisceration of USAID and foreign aid more broadly under his leadership as Secretary of State—Secretary of State and Acting Administrator of USAID—has been honestly shocking. This is someone who 2 months ago was confirmed by the Senate 99 to 0. He is someone who throughout his time in the Senate believed in the power and jurisdiction of this institution; someone who, while we disagreed on policy a lot, consistently showed moral clarity on the basic belief that America ought to be on the side of the good guys, on the side of democracy and freedom. But he has sidestepped Congress at every turn on this issue.

As lead Democrat on the Senate Appropriations subcommittee overseeing funding for foreign and national security policy, I have been working with my colleagues to press Secretary Rubio

publicly and privately for answers. We have sent numerous letters with dozens of questions, virtually all of which have gone unanswered.

These aren't out of the ordinary, partisan, gotcha questions; they are the normal things that your clerk from the Appropriations subcommittee would say "Hey, can you tell us what this is?" and "Please inform us per the law." This is like normal, mundane, workaday correspondence—nothing.

We are supposed to get notifications about changes, and we have gotten nothing.

Then, on Monday, 5 a.m. eastern time, there is a tweet from him saying that the review of foreign aid that was supposed to take 90 days is now complete and that 5,200 contracts are gone—83 percent of the whole enterprise—and they will consult with Congress about what remains. But the last part is not true. There has been no consultation with Congress at all during this process.

There has to be as a matter of law, and the Secretary ought to come to Congress and explain to us—not Pete Marocco, whom we didn't confirm, who most people in the public have never heard of, who is widely viewed as a controversial figure. He came in, closed-door briefing, 1 hour, and you know what—he had a hard stop, had to go at 11.

Do you know what he did at 11? He went with Federal marshals to another Federal Agency and barged in the door, and that was found to be illegal. That was his hard stop. He only had an hour to talk to members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee because he had to get on to commandeering a building with Federal marshals.

As of today, we still have no idea which programs were cut and which still remain. They gave us a stack of programs, but it was like we were in a classified session, right? When you are in a classified session, they might give you a paper, and then there is staff that politely but firmly take the paper back so you don't accidentally take a bunch of classified stuff out of the building. They acted like the stuff they are doing on appropriations is somehow top secret. It is not top secret; they just don't want anyone to know.

We don't know how or even whether Secretary Rubio intends to reprogram the funds for the programs that were eliminated, and we are still waiting to hear how he intends to operate the remaining programs going forward. Weeks and months have passed, and we still don't even have the most basic information.

Here is what we do know. I am going to try to calm down here. Here is what we do know. Multiple laws are being violated at once—the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998, which established USAID as an independent Agency; the Impoundment Control Act, which says the President can't delay or refuse to spend the funds Congress appropriates just because they have a different policy view.