

This number is so high and we are paying so much in interest that the debt accrues at \$10 billion a day—not million—\$10 billion a day; \$417 million it goes up an hour; \$6.9 million—let's call it \$7 million a minute. How long have I been talking, 3 minutes? The debt just increased \$21 million. And we have got to pay that money back. This is not funny money.

We are talking about how to start paying it back by reducing our spending. But there is another way; it is to generate income through our 620 million acres of land.

Take our national parks, for example. The first thing we want to do to our national parks is preserve them. I mean, they are beautiful. That is why they are national parks. We want to preserve them and respect them and protect them environmentally and otherwise. We also want to allow people to enjoy them.

We do that by telling folks: Come on in. You have to pay an entrance fee—but it is reasonable—if you want to come in and camp or just walk around and enjoy the scenery, go on a hike. That generates some money. You don't want the entrance fee to be too high, but you want it to be reasonable.

Some of our national parks actually allow mining, oil and gas production, and timber production, so that increases income as well.

I have seen an estimate from the private sector—there are several of these—that our public land, our 620 million acres, if we managed that land properly, could generate \$90 million in revenue. So \$90 million could be generated by our public land. How? Through a mineral harvesting, natural gas production, oil drilling, grazing for agriculture, hunting licenses, fishing licenses, and camping permits.

Do you know what? Our Federal lands actually generate money. We know the potential: \$90 billion a year. That would help us pay down this debt.

In 2023, our Federal lands actually lost money. They lost \$13 billion. We went from a potential of \$90 billion—according to land-use experts, that is what they ought to be generating—to a loss of \$13 billion. It is embarrassing.

I don't want to blame all of it on the past administration. It wasn't all President Biden's fault, but some of it was. Under President Biden—not him, but his people; he appointed them—they banned offshore drilling for most of America's coastlines. They prohibited mining on over a million acres of lands. They canceled leases for oil and natural gas production. They paused all new permits for LNG, which Europe is hungry for. They restricted hunting. They restricted fishing. They restricted hiking. And they buried our Federal lands in redtape. That is why we lost \$13 billion instead of gaining \$90 billion a year.

It doesn't have to be this way. All you have to do is look at the States. The States have State land. They don't have 620 million acres like the Federal

Government does, but they have got a lot of land. The States have worked very hard to increase the revenue on their State lands while preserving them.

Arizona, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico—all we have to do is copy them. Their activities, their preservation of their property, but their monetizing of their State lands has produced, over the past few years, an average return of \$14.51 for every \$1 those States have invested. So the States spend \$1 on their State land, they get back 15 bucks—pretty good return. They haven't sacrificed air quality. They protected their lakes and rivers, and they have preserved their State land.

The Federal Government, for every \$1 we spend on our public land, we get back 73 cents. So we put out a buck, and we get back 73 cents. You don't have to be Euclid to see that we are going backward here. We need to do better.

I know that the focus right now is on spending—it should be—and it is on designing a Tax Code that looks like somebody designed it on purpose—and it should be. All those things are important. But at some point, we need to recognize the enormous amount of assets that the American people own through their Federal Government and the fact that we are actually losing money by the way we are managing them instead of generating money.

Once again, you don't have to be an astrophysicist to figure this out. All we have to do is call Arizona, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, and probably West Virginia and just say: Would you all come up to Washington? We will buy you a soda and give you a nice hat if you will come on up here and tell us how you are doing it. And just copy what they are doing.

WOMEN'S SPORTS

Madam President, the second thing I want to talk about is less pleasant. But I don't mean it to be divisive. I don't.

There is a lady by the name of Laurel Libby—Laurel Libby. She happens to be from Maine. I love Maine—beautiful, beautiful State. She is in the State legislature. By all accounts, Ms. Libby is a very talented, accomplished legislator. She has beliefs, as we all do. One of her beliefs is that it is unfair to allow transgender women to play women's sports. In other words, Ms. Libby—I don't speak for her, but I have read her interviews—she believes it is unfair—fundamentally unfair, that it will destroy women's sports if transgender women—biologically males who identify as transgender women—are allowed to play women's sports. And she has said so.

In fact, she put up a Facebook post. The Facebook post highlighted a transgender athlete who 1 year placed fifth, I think, in the pole vault and then transitioned into—he placed fifth as a male athlete but then transitioned into a transgender woman and competed at the State level and came in first. She came in first. So when this

individual was a biological male and competing, the biological male came in fifth in the State competition. The biological male transitioned into a transgender female and participated—was allowed to participate by the officials in Maine—in the pole vault in the women's sports and came in first.

Ms. Libby thought that was really unfair, so she posted a picture of the athlete—the transgender athlete—when she was a biological male and currently when she has now become a transgender woman. She posted the picture. She didn't put any phone numbers, any addresses, or any of that. She posted the picture of the athlete side by side, before transitioning and after.

Here is what she said:

We have learned that just ONE year ago John—

The transgender athlete when she was a biological male—

was competing in boys' pole vault . . . that is when he had his 5th place finish.

Then she went on to say:

So all of this transpired in the last year, with the full blessing of the Maine Principals' Association.

Two years ago, John tied for 5th place in boys' pole vault. Tonight—

John, now Katie, because John has transitioned into a transgender woman—

Tonight, "Katie" won 1st place in the girls' Maine State Class B Championship.

Miss Libby thought that was unfair and so do many Americans. So do I, frankly.

Ms. Libby is in the State legislature, and her colleagues—Democrats, who are entitled to their opinion as much as Ms. Libby, who is a Republican, is entitled to hers—they got very angry. They wanted to throw her out. They wanted to throw Ms. Libby out of the Maine Legislature. They wanted to expel her, but they couldn't do it because that takes a two-thirds vote. They said: We are not going to expel her; we are going to censure her. That only takes a majority vote. But in censuring her, which they only needed Democratic votes to do, they added conditions that Ms. Libby could no longer vote and could no longer participate in any legislative committees. I guess she just has to sit there.

Well, that disenfranchises the constituents that Ms. Libby represents. And, frankly, they kind of went through the back door when they should have gone through the front door in a transparent way.

I am not here to try to meddle in the Maine State Legislature. Let me say it again, I love Maine. I think it is one of the most beautiful places in the world. And the way they handle their local politics is none of my business. That is not why I am here.

But I am here to say what Ms. Libby did—let me put it another way. Ms. Libby's belief about the fairness of transgender women participating in women's sports is based on science. It is. You may disagree with the science,

and you may disagree with her. If you do, you are entitled to do that. But Ms. Libby didn't just pluck this point of view out of thin air. A lot of Americans agree with her.

I think most Americans think that when you are 18 years of age, you are an adult. This is America. You can do anything you want to do, as long as it is not illegal or it doesn't hurt somebody else. You can be whomever you want to be. You can dress however you want to dress. You can't run around naked, but in terms of your dress, you can express yourself however you want if you are 18. I think most Americans don't have a problem with that. So long as it is perfectly legal, I don't. But when you are under 18, you are a minor. Adults get to make decisions because you are a minor, duh.

I also think that the American people have worked very hard through their elected representatives to try to lift up women's sports in America. We have worked very hard. We spent a lot of y'all's money lifting up women's sports so that women can be treated equally with men.

I also think, through no one's fault—I started to say only through God's fault, but I am not going to criticize God's decisions. Through nobody's fault—if you believe in God, it was a decision by God; if you just believe in nature, it was a decision by nature—men and women are different, and men have a physical advantage over women. And if you allow a male—no matter how the male identifies—to compete with a woman in women's sports, particularly when you are under 18, the male is going to win every single time. That is not just speculation, that is not just common sense, that is science.

The ACLU, which believes that transgender women—biological males who transition into transgender women—they say it is a fact that trans girls are girls.

And the ACLU and other activists have also said that it is a myth—they call it a myth—that transgender female athletes like Katie, formerly John—they say it is a myth that transgender female athletes have a physical advantage over girls. They are wrong. They are just wrong. You don't need a graduate degree in anatomy to know that. I mean, those claims are specious. Medical science and athletic data both demonstrate that the difference is obvious and that males, no matter how they identify, have a significant advantage over females in girls sports.

Even before birth, when the baby is in a mother's womb—this is a scientific fact—baby boys begin developing different hormones and skeletal structures than baby girls that help them outperform girls when they are older. That is just a fact. We can say we wish it weren't.

I am fine with it. Some people say: Oh, that is bad. Well, take it up with nature. Take it up with God. But it is a natural fact.

When that baby is in the womb, testosterone exposure for that baby boy alters his brain development. That improves that baby boy's motor skills and increases that baby boy's aggression vis-a-vis a baby girl. Both motor skills and aggression give that baby boy, when that baby boy grows up, an advantage over a girl in women's sports.

Boys, the science also shows, go through what is called a minipuberty. Still a baby boy in the mother's womb, the baby boy experiences a minipuberty—is what the scientists call it—right before birth that helps a baby boy, once that baby boy is born, to gain weight faster than if he were a baby girl. That ultimately is why boys tend to be taller than girls once they are born, on average, later in life.

Now, the differences between boys and girls—again, this is a law of nature or a law of God, depending on what you believe. The differences between boys and girls explode during puberty. I mean, I have a single child. He is a grown man now. But I remember puberty. I learned during puberty that there is nothing wrong with teenagers that reasoning with them will not aggravate. That is just also a law of nature, I think.

But boys and girls—the differences between them explode during puberty. Boys develop 14 percent larger hearts when they go through puberty and 12 percent larger lungs. So boy versus girl—the boy's heart is going to be 14 percent bigger and the lungs 12 percent larger, an obvious advantage in sports. That helps boys take in oxygen and pump blood more efficiently than girls can. That is just a fact. That gives them a clear edge in endurance sports: running, cycling, rowing, basketball.

Girls also, during puberty and afterwards, develop a wider pelvis. This decreases the amount of force their legs exert when they are lifting or when a girl is kicking or a girl is peddling, which also puts a girl, as an act of nature, at a relative disadvantage when you compare female athletes to male athletes.

Boys, during puberty and after puberty, on the other hand, develop broader shoulders than girls. I think we know that. When they develop those broader shoulders, that makes space for upper body muscle mass. It is hard to think of a sport in which a higher muscle-to-fat ratio—and boys have a higher muscle-to-fat ratio; it is just a scientific fact. It is hard to think of a sport in which a higher muscle-to-fat ratio is not helpful.

The average boy will also grow—again, scientific fact—5 inches taller than the average girl. Even when men and women are the same height, men have higher levels of bone density, which helps them move more forcefully and escape more injuries.

Again, boys just have a physical advantage over girls, and we see it in everyday life.

Top-ranked—let me put it another way. In 2016, there was an American

sprinter. She was a great athlete—is a great athlete. Her name is Allyson Felix. She won an Olympic Gold Medal in the women's 400-meter race. Ran a hell of a race. She came in first. A year later, 285 teenage boys in America beat her time. She was the best in her class—in the world—as a female, but 285 guys in high school beat her time. Don't take my word for it; that was a study that was done by Duke University. The year she won the gold medal, there were 4,300 male athletes in America who clocked faster times in the 400 meters than she did.

I don't want to belabor this, but I think you can see why Ms. Libby feels that it is unfair—unfair to women—to allow biological males who have transitioned into a woman to compete in women's sports. It is not only unfair; it is dangerous. Again, I don't speak for Ms. Libby, but this is what I think she had on her mind when she exercised her First Amendment rights.

I will give you some examples. In May, a couple of years ago, a high school volleyball player in North Carolina—a female—sued her State high school athletics association. Why? Because they allowed a transgender player to play against her, and the transgender female—biological male, transgender female—spiked the ball in her face, gave her a concussion. Long-term physical injuries, long-term mental injuries.

Last October, a high school senior in California suffered a season-ending concussion after a transgender volleyball player spiked the ball, hit her in the face during the game, and it ended her final season of high school volleyball.

Last February, a girls basketball team in Massachusetts forfeited a game after a transgender athlete injured three female players in a single game. The biological male, who had transitioned into a transgender woman, was allowed to play in the basketball game and took three of the female players out. So the rest of the team said “no mas,” and the coach said: Nope. I am not going to let my players get hurt. They forfeited the game.

I raise this, Madam President, not to denigrate anyone. I am going to say it again. When you are an adult in America, you can be whomever you want to be. And about 90 percent of my personal philosophy is, don't hurt someone unless you have to defend yourself, don't take other people's stuff, and leave me alone because that is my right as an American. And I sort of feel that way about everybody.

But we are not talking about freedom here. We are talking about nature, and we are talking about fairness in women's sports, and we are talking about women getting hurt. And that is why I think Ms. Libby is right. It is fundamentally unfair because, if for no other reason—acts of God or nature or whatever you want to call it—boys are different from girls when it comes to

athletics, and there is nothing we can do about it. There is nothing I want to do about it, but some people do.

Ms. Libby has sued in Maine and said that her constitutional rights are being violated. I think she is right. I am not going to try to advise her judge how to rule. So I can't say whether her constitutional rights are being violated or not, but I can tell you this: Common sense and the laws of nature—or the laws of God, if you please—are certainly being violated because female young women are fundamentally different from male young boys, and that is just a natural fact.

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.

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

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 35.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Stephen Feinberg, of New York, to be Deputy Secretary of Defense.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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. 35, Stephen Feinberg, of New York, to be Deputy Secretary of Defense.

John Thune, Tim Sheehy, Cynthia M. Lummis, Rick Scott of Florida, Kevin Cramer, Ted Budd, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Lindsey Graham, Markwayne Mullin, Marsha Blackburn, Thom Tillis, Tommy Tuberville, John R. Curtis, Chuck Grassley, James Lankford, John Barrasso, Todd Young.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

FULL-YEAR CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS AND EXTENSIONS ACT, 2025—Motion to Proceed

Mr. THUNE. What is the pending business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 26, H.R. 1968, a bill making further continuing appropriations and other extensions for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2025, and for other purposes.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk for the motion to proceed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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 motion to proceed to Calendar No. 26, H.R. 1968, a bill making further continuing appropriations and other extensions for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2025, and for other purposes.

John Thune, Tim Sheehy, Cynthia M. Lummis, Rick Scott of Florida, Kevin Cramer, Ted Budd, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Lindsey Graham, Markwayne Mullin, Marsha Blackburn, Thom Tillis, Tommy Tuberville, John R. Curtis, Chuck Grassley, James Lankford, John Barrasso, Todd Young.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 36.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of John Phelan, of Florida, to be Secretary of the Navy.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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. 36, John

Phelan, of Florida, to be Secretary of the Navy.

John Thune, Tim Sheehy, Cynthia M. Lummis, Rick Scott of Florida, Kevin Cramer, Ted Budd, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Lindsey Graham, Markwayne Mullin, Marsha Blackburn, Thom Tillis, Tommy Tuberville, John R. Curtis, Chuck Grassley, James Lankford, John Barrasso, Todd Young.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

SUNSHINE WEEK

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, every year, Sunshine Week is held around March 16, the birthday of James Madison, who not only is a former President, but the acclaimed "Father of the Constitution."

On its 20th anniversary, Sunshine Week continues to be a crucial reminder of the need for transparency and open government. To control a government as big as ours, it takes a lot of very bright light shining on every Agency. As Justice Brandeis wrote in 1913, "Sunlight is said to be the best of disinfectants."

Transparency brings accountability and the public's business ought to be public. That attitude and approach is an important check on the Federal Government. It reminds bureaucrats that they ultimately work for and answer to "We the People."

One transparency tool I value is the Freedom of Information Act. This law, first enacted in 1966, requires our government to proactively make material public and to respond to requests for documents, reports, and many other types of information. The presumption under this law is that government actions, rules, and work is public property. Putting this information in public hands helps us hold our government accountable. The Freedom of Information Act is one of the strongest tools we have to ensure that our government is doing what it should be doing and in ways that are best for us.

And speaking of records, a large part of my oversight work includes publicly releasing documents to hold current and former government officials accountable. To accomplish that, I often work with whistleblowers to get the information the government likes to hide. Whistleblowers are patriots and our most powerful tool in rooting out waste, fraud, abuse, and misconduct, including the weaponization of our government.

They are often targeted for retaliation and harassment. That must stop.