

In addition to desalination, we had a great discussion about the importance of the Port of Corpus Christi and the product that passes through that port that helps America's energy independence and helps our friends and allies around the world.

I heard firsthand of the benefits that have come to the Coastal Bend from the Corpus Christi Ship Channel Improvement Project. Because of these ultralarge oil tankers, they are able to carry up to 30 percent more oil in these tankers to our friends and allies around the world than our existing ships, but the problem is, they need to deepen and widen the port, which is why the Corpus Christi Ship Channel Improvement Project is so important. This will dramatically increase the capacity for crude oil to our friends and allies and will save the port up to \$150 million every year. In 2015, Congress approved the lifting of the ban on crude oil exports, which has allowed the Port of Corpus Christi to become the third largest port for oil exports in the world.

America is one of the most significant energy producers, and in large part, it is because of what happens in the Lone Star State. The ship channel project will make the Port of Corpus Christi one of the deepest and widest in the Gulf of America. When America has the capacity, I believe, under the current administration, to drill and export more oil and gas, it means the rest of the world becomes more reliant on America and less reliant on our adversaries, like Russia. I have been a long-time advocate for the Corpus Christi Ship Channel Improvement Project, and after decades of hard work by so many, it is exciting to see this project move forward and come to completion here in the next few weeks.

But increasing energy production wasn't the only one of President Trump's agenda items we discussed when I was back home. Another important opportunity I had during the State work period was to meet with my constituents to talk about the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act and how it has helped their small businesses and their employees thrive.

I remember 2017, during President Trump's first term, when we passed the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. Democrat colleagues at the time said: Well, this is only going to help the rich. Well, it didn't just help the rich. It literally helped everybody in every tax bracket. So I thought it was important to go back and talk to my constituents and say: OK. What was your experience, and how important is it to you that we continue by renewing the expiring provisions of that legislation—some of which expire in 2025.

Well, not surprisingly, the folks back home disagreed with those who are reading from the talking points from the Democratic National Committee. For example, I met with the good folks at Southland Hardware in Houston, TX. Now, this is one of the original

hardware stores that you don't find very much anymore, where you can literally buy almost everything that you can imagine. We also had representatives from Empire Tools and Sylvia's Enchilada Kitchen and Tejas Office Products—all thriving small business owners who shared their support for the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act and explained why it needed to be extended.

I heard the same thing from business owners all across the State, including Austin, where I live. We went to Wally's Burger—even in Austin—right at the start. I went there in 2018, and I went back. Robert Mayfield, who employs a single franchise there in Austin, 7 years later, reported that the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act had been very, very helpful, allowing him to provide better benefits and bonuses to his employees whom he considers to be part of his family.

So I would encourage the naysayers of our Democratic colleagues to actually talk to real people about what their experiences have been. I would bet what I learned was not isolated. I am sure it is common throughout the country. I am sure they would find that the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act did not, contrary to our Democratic colleagues, just help a bunch of rich people. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act has, in fact, allowed people in communities from Austin to Houston and everywhere across the country to provide more of what they have earned to their families; to provide employment opportunities for their neighbors, and contribute to their communities, which is just another way of saying: Help them to help contribute to the American dream.

So that is why we have no option but to extend the expiring provisions of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. Many are already benefiting—ordinary working families and small business owners—as I said, but if Congress fails to extend these expiring provisions, these same people who have sacrificed so much will no longer be able to offer the same benefits to their workers, making it harder for them to attract the talent they need and making it harder for them to literally keep their doors open.

If we fail to extend the tax cuts, 62 percent of American taxpayers will see a tax increase in 2026, including people like the ones I mentioned back home in Texas—small business owners, in particular, because they pay a business income, typically, on an individual tax return—their so-called passthrough organizations, not corporations. They will be particularly hard-hit. They would see their Federal tax rates increase nearly 50 percent. Working parents would see the child tax credit cut in half, and Texans, whom I represent, would see their taxes increase on an average of \$3,000 next year.

I would be happy to introduce our Democratic colleagues to these folks, and they can learn what I learned if they are willing to listen. Hope springs eternal. I am sure these same folks would be happy to give them an earful

about why their view of the tax cuts only benefiting millionaires and billionaires is dead wrong.

So I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues here in the Senate and our House colleagues to pass a budget resolution, then to get the necessary reconciliation instructions in order to make this happen. There is so much more we have to do. We have to get our country back on a sane fiscal path. We are now at, roughly, \$36.4 trillion in debt. In other words, the current generations and previous generations have racked up debt that our kids and grandkids and great-grandkids are going to be responsible for paying, which strikes me as profoundly immoral.

We know how to fix this. We should, and we can now thanks to President Trump's election and his commitment not only to reducing waste and inefficiency in the government, as identified by the Department of Government Efficiency, but also to looking at programs that we haven't revisited in decades: to look at whether they still make sense, whether there need to be some reasonable work requirements for able-bodied adults for means-tested programs. All of these things are on the table, and we need to roll up our sleeves and get to work here in the coming weeks so we can get this done without delay.

So I was delighted to be home, but now we are back at work. We need to roll up our sleeves and get the job done because failure is not an option.

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.

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

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

REMEMBERING MIA LOVE

Mr. LEE. Madam President, the State of Utah, last night, lost a dedicated public servant, a loving mother, and a trailblazing leader, as well as a friend to many: Mia Love returned home to her Heavenly Father at the age of 49 after a courageous battle with glioblastoma, leaving behind a legacy of faith, service, and an unshakable belief in the American dream.

Mia was a woman of many firsts. She was the first Haitian American elected to Congress. She was also the first Black Republican woman elected to Congress; a first generation American whose parents immigrated to this country with just \$10 in their pockets but with the firm belief that America was and still is a land of opportunity.

She was never one to follow a script, at least not one written by someone else. Mia spoke her mind and never allowed others to define her. Mia knew that this country wasn't defined by where you start but by the opportunities you seize and the work you put in.

Her parents Marie and Jean Maxime Bourdeau fled the brutal dictatorship

of Francois Duvalier and came to the United States in search of freedom.

Born in Brooklyn on December 6, 1975, Mia grew up watching her parents' sacrifices and learning the value of hard work:

[T]he America I came to know growing up was filled with all the excitement found in living the American dream, she once wrote.

Her family moved to Connecticut in 1981, and later, while she was attending the University of Hartford, Mia's life would drastically change in two ways: She became a convert to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and met Jason, then a young missionary for that church.

After Jason had completed his mission, the two would later reconnect, marry, and move to Utah, building a life together and raising three wonderful children: Alessa, Abigaile, and Peyton.

Utah quickly realized the natural-born leader in Mia. She cited that one of the driving factors in her decision to run for Congress was an episode in which the Supreme Court was considering a case to remove the words "under God" from the Pledge of Allegiance. She believed that words mattered, and those words mattered in particular so much so that she got into the business of politics.

Her convictions carried her through her time on the Saratoga Springs City Council, throughout her tenure as mayor, and later in her historic election and service to Congress.

It quickly became apparent to everyone watching that Mia Love was a rising star in politics, not just throughout the State of Utah but throughout America, and we saw the beginning stages of that when Mia made the decision to run against a then-Democratic incumbent Congressman, Representative Jim Matheson, who is a member of one of Utah's most prominent political families.

The GOP field that year was crowded in the race to replace the Democrat, Matheson, with a Republican, but Mia Love delivered many powerful speeches that election season, including on the day of the Republican Convention, in 2012. Those speeches would make her an icon on the national Republican stage.

Her narrow loss in that race in 2012 would not deter her. If anything, her loss that year spurred her to action, returning her to the field with a reinvigorated sense of enthusiasm for pursuing office.

She ran for Congress again and was elected in 2014, defeating Democratic incumbent Doug Owens in one of the most competitive districts in the country. She would go on to defeat Owens a second time to win reelection in 2016.

Mia Love never backed down from a challenge, whether it was breaking barriers, standing up for constituents, or taking on difficult fights, like her relentless efforts to bring Josh Holt home after 2 years of unjust imprisonment in Venezuela.

When Josh Holt finally stepped off the plane in Salt Lake City, Mia was there to welcome him home. But that, of course, was the end and not the beginning of that process. She had actually been there the day before, when she met Josh in person for the first time. You see, Mia fought for 2 years to get this man out of a Venezuelan prison—a man she had never met, but she recognized him as a Utahn overseas in need of help.

I discovered that day, at the White House, while visiting with President Trump and Mia Love and a few others that were gathered there, that Mia had taken on this challenge and had been in constant contact with Josh Holt's family the entire time he was in prison. She would not let go until he was home, and she got him home.

Even when faced with her greatest personal challenge, she leaned on the same principles that guided her throughout her entire life: her faith, her optimism, and her refusal to give up.

"Don't underestimate the power of a positive attitude," she told CNN's Jake Tapper after her diagnosis, and she never, ever did give up.

Mia knew she had a role to play in our Nation's future. She was a fighter, a leader, and, above all, a woman of deep conviction who lived her life in service to her faith, to her family, and to her country.

I hope the Nation will join me in praying for Mia Love's family and remembering her as the friend, the mother, the trailblazer, and the patriot we all knew.

One of my favorite characteristics of Mia Love—one that surfaced in my every interaction with her—was her defiant positivity. No matter how hard things were in Washington at any given time, every single time I saw Mia, she had a smile on her face, and she had words of encouragement for me and for everyone around her.

Whether they agreed with her on a particular issue or not, she was there offering encouragement and a way forward. That is the kind of leader we all benefit from knowing and the kind of friend that I feel very blessed to have made.

May Mia Love rest in peace, and may the great things that she worked for in this life inspire the people of Utah—and all Americans, for that matter—to better serve each other, our families, and our country.

I yield the floor.
The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that the vote start immediately.

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

VOTE ON PHELAN NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Phelan nomination?

Mr. DURBIN. 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 legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER), and the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. RICKETTS).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN), the Senator from Washington (Mr. MURRAY), the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. WELCH), are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 62, nays 30, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 136 Ex.]

YEAS—62

| | | |
|--------------|--------------|------------|
| Banks | Hagerty | Moreno |
| Barrasso | Hassan | Mullin |
| Blackburn | Hawley | Murkowski |
| Boozman | Hickenlooper | Paul |
| Britt | Hoeven | Reed |
| Budd | Husted | Risch |
| Capito | Hyde-Smith | Rosen |
| Collins | Johnson | Rounds |
| Coons | Justice | Schmitt |
| Cornyn | Kaine | Scott (FL) |
| Cortez Masto | Kelly | Scott (SC) |
| Cotton | Kennedy | Shaheen |
| Cramer | King | Sheehy |
| Crapo | Lankford | Sullivan |
| Cruz | Lee | Thune |
| Curtis | Lummi | Tillis |
| Daines | Marshall | Tuberville |
| Ernst | McConnell | Warner |
| Gallego | McCormick | Wicker |
| Graham | Moody | Young |
| Grassley | Moran | |

NAYS—30

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| Alsobrooks | Heinrich | Schatz |
| Baldwin | Hirono | Schiff |
| Bennet | Kim | Schumer |
| Blumenthal | Klobuchar | Slotkin |
| Blunt Rochester | Lujan | Smith |
| Booker | Markey | Van Hollen |
| Cantwell | Merkley | Warnock |
| Duckworth | Murphy | Warren |
| Durbin | Ossoff | Whitehouse |
| Gillibrand | Peters | Wyden |

NOT VOTING—8

| | | |
|-----------|----------|---------|
| Cassidy | Murray | Sanders |
| Fetterman | Padilla | Welch |
| Fischer | Ricketts | |

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHMITT). 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.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Christopher Landau, of Maryland, to be Deputy Secretary of State.

VOTE ON LANDAU NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Landau nomination?

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