

And at full capacity, given how much natural gas we have on the North Slope, the estimates are that this will reduce our trade deficit by \$10 billion a year.

So we are very focused on this. It is a new day in Alaska with regard to our economy and energy. And the new day is because Republicans are back in the White House. Republicans are back in control of the Senate, and Republicans are still in charge of the House. That is how we need to unleash our economy.

One day, I am going to be able to convince some of my Democratic colleagues: Let us do this. We don't come attacking your States. We don't write letters to all banks and all the insurance companies saying: Let's shut down Arizona.

We should all be trying to lift each other up. Someday, my Democratic colleagues will do that. But until now, with Republicans in charge, we got huge opportunities in my great State, and I am very, very thankful for that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

#### MEDICAID

Mr. KELLY. Mr. President, with all of the chaos in Washington right now, it can feel like it is tough to keep up. In the middle of bombshell revelations, new Executive orders that threaten the safety of Americans, and the administration's plans to give rich people trillions of dollars of tax cuts, what is often lost is how this all impacts the people we represent. The best way to find out, though, is to get out of Washington, DC, and talk to the families and the seniors and the kids who are going to be directly impacted.

Let me tell you: These folks are paying attention, and they aren't happy about it. I know some of my Republican colleagues in Congress are trying to tune out the thousands of phone calls and the emails and have been avoiding townhalls.

But last week, I held a couple of townhalls in Arizona. We focused on Medicaid and brought together healthcare providers and families who rely on it to talk about what Republicans are planning to do and what that would mean for them.

Republicans are working on a plan that could absolutely gut healthcare in our country by slashing Medicaid. There is a number of ways they could do this, but we know it is the plan. The way Republicans talk about it is about dollars saved and pay-fors for those tax cuts for the wealthiest.

When it is framed as a line item instead of what it actually is, which is healthcare that tens of millions of Americans rely on to survive, it is easy to lose track of who will bear the consequences of these decisions: hard-working families, kids, and seniors in Arizona and across the entire country.

My State has one of the largest Medicaid populations. The Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System—or AHCCCS, as Arizona's Medicaid pro-

gram is called—has been expanded under Republican Governors to be the backbone of healthcare for more than 2 million people.

We are talking about kids. We are talking about seniors. We are talking about pregnant women and people with disabilities. And I heard from them last week. I promised them that I would bring their stories back to DC and share them. Now, I don't think I have enough time here to talk about all of them today, but I am going to share a few.

This is story No. 1. In Scottsdale, along with Senator RUBEN GALLEGOS, I heard from a woman named Quianna Brown. Quianna is the mother of a 10-year-old girl that she and her husband adopted from foster care, and she has special needs, and she has a rare form of diabetes. Her daughter was diagnosed and treated, thanks to Medicaid.

Now, along with her husband, who served in the U.S. Navy for 23 years, Quianna works every day to provide for her family, and she is afraid that her daughter is going to lose her healthcare. She finished her remarks at this townhall by comparing Medicaid to a house that Republicans are planning to burn down. She said—and this is a quote, Mr. President. She said:

Would you mind telling your colleagues in Washington that when they're burning down this house, there are people still inside? My kid is inside.

When she said this to me in front of this room of over 100 people, sharing her most personal story, the room went silent. Everyone turned and listened because it was a mother pleading for us to help protect her child in the most straightforward terms. And I told her I would bring this back and share it with all of you.

So, again, let me repeat:

When they're burning down this house, there are people still inside. My kid is inside.

These words from Quianna Brown, a mother and a hard-working Arizonan, should resonate loud and clear on this floor.

Samia from Sierra Vista—this is story No. 2—is the mother of two children, a 15-year-old daughter and a 12-year-old son. Her son only has one kidney and severe scoliosis. Both of them, both of the kids, are autistic and were diagnosed with a rare tumor disorder which cripples their bodies' capacity to stop the growth of tumors. The result is that their chance of getting cancer is 85 to 95 percent. She knows that the best chance her kids have of beating cancer and surviving is to find it early. And Medicaid has allowed her to get the frequent screenings that her children need.

She shared that both her children meet the burden of placing them in a long-term care facility, but thanks to Arizona's Medicaid paid caregiver program, she can care for them at home. That is a success.

Medicaid is a literal lifeline for her kids. I think about her knowing exactly what she needs to do for her kids

to keep them healthy and the worry that she faces if she thinks about what would happen to them without it.

Story No. 3 is about Tiffany Leslie Pasillas from Marana. Also she cares for her 6-year-old daughter Aiyana at home. Aiyana is immunocompromised. She is nonverbal. She can't walk, and she requires care 24-7. Tiffany shared that without Medicaid, she would be forced to limit care and evaluate whether she could continue to care for her at home—or would she have to place her daughter in a specialized facility for her severe needs?

In Tucson, AZ, I heard from Chad Durns, who is living with multiple sclerosis and is unable to work. He relies on Medicaid to afford his MRIs and his infusion treatments.

When he spoke at the townhall, he talked about the potential costs of his healthcare if he lost his Medicaid coverage. Through tears, he said:

The level of cost of those things would be devastating for a guy like me.

"A guy like me." What are folks on the other side of the aisle talking about doing? They are talking about hurting Chad and guys like him. For what? To give more tax giveaways to rich people, to billionaires.

Here is story No. 5. And this is about Amalia, who is the daughter of Crissy McGann. Amalia is a 5-year-old kid who uses Medicaid to receive care for a rare genetic disorder. She said that she is terrified—so the mom is terrified—that the services her daughter depends on and allow her to thrive would be cut or reduced and called the proposed cuts disastrous for the disability community.

Disastrous, devastating, burning down a house with kids inside—that is what Arizonans had to say about these plans to gut Medicaid.

And these stories exist in every single State, in every single district, red or blue, all of them. But here is the thing: Only some of us seem to care to listen.

Now, I invite all of my colleagues, especially my Republican colleagues negotiating this plan, to listen to the people they represent. Listen to their concerns. They are real concerns that are affecting real people, people that cannot afford to pay for expensive healthcare.

So that instead of pay-fors or line items, maybe you will think about Quianna and her kid or Chad who has MS or the countless other folks whose lives will be flipped upside down if they lost Medicaid.

We are representatives of the people. We are here to make people's lives better, not to ruin them. So to my colleagues, I urge you: Stop trying to burn down the house. Your constituents are inside.

I yield the floor.

Mr. WYDEN. The Senator from Mississippi.

#### UKRAINE

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I rise this afternoon to offer some remarks

on the situation in Europe and the prospects for peace in Ukraine.

We should start with recent positive developments. President Trump and President Zelenskyy have demonstrated remarkable resolve and remarkable wherewithal. Just this week, we heard news from the peace talks in Saudi Arabia. Ukraine publicly expressed openness to prisoner exchanges, a welcome development. Notably, Russia did not express such willingness. We should applaud Ukraine's overtures. An agreement is in reach that reflects the common cause of the United States and Ukraine.

Separately, much ink has been spilled on the economic investment deal. Less has been said about why the United States is interested in an investment deal with Ukraine. President Trump recognizes that America is better off when Ukraine is free, strong, and industrious. The economic investment deal shows that our President wants peace and that he wants an honorable peace, one that ensures the prosperity and protection of Ukraine and the United States.

This peace will require that Russia put down its weapons in an enduring and verifiable way. It is clear that Vladimir Putin does not share President Trump's desire for peace. As Putin's representatives prepare to sit down with American diplomats, President Putin has ordered salvo after salvo of missiles and drones to strike Ukrainian apartments, killing non-combatant women and children. These are not the gestures of a statesman who wants to negotiate peace. We are dealing with a tyrant who speaks the language of war and terror. We have to deal with him, but that is who he is.

In recent decades, several successive U.S. Presidents have extended the hand of peace to Mr. Putin. Each one of them had different tactics, but none of them achieved the outcome they desire. In this series of failed diplomacy, the common denominator was not the American Presidents, regardless of party. The common denominator was and is Russia's dictator, Vladimir Putin, a war criminal. So we need to remind the American people exactly what kind of strongman we are dealing with here, the kind of strongman we are trying to negotiate with, the kind of strongman we are forced to negotiate with.

Vladimir Putin, regrettably, is not interested in peace. He is interested in a phony deal. He has shown this with his words, his acts of violence, and the peace agreements he has shredded.

Dictators frequently tell us who they really are. In 2007, Putin stood before the Munich Security Conference, and he rejected a world in which nations cooperate. In his other writings, he has publicly mourned the collapse of the Soviet empire, and he dreams of its resurrection.

In 2021, President Putin wrote an essay laying the groundwork for his invasion of Ukraine. This was a year be-

fore the recent invasion. In it, he rejected the very right of the Ukrainian people to exist as a distinct and self-governing nation. In writing, the essay is full of lies. It would have made Adolf Hitler proud. But it shows one thing is true: Mr. Putin is a Russian imperialist to the core. Here is a man who believes the greatest historical tragedy of the last 40 years was the collapse of the Soviet power and influence over Eastern Europe.

Putin publicly proclaims his delusions of grandeur but has not stopped at words and speeches. He has used any means necessary to continue his decades-long political warfare against NATO, and he has ruthlessly worked to achieve the empire he craves.

In the year after his Munich speech, Vladimir Putin and his army invaded their neighbor, the Republic of Georgia. In the year after his essay about Ukraine, he invaded Ukraine. Mr. Putin no longer technically works for the KGB but still thinks like a KGB agent—the kind who uses chemical weapons to poison people in Russia and all over the world, exacting revenge on his critics without regard for international borders.

He jails reporters and activists. Why does he do this? Because dictators actually live in fear of their own people. Putin has imprisoned scores of Americans in Russian gulags. He has killed and kidnapped American citizens across the globe. His commandos have targeted our soldiers in Afghanistan. He has no respect for our country or for human life in his country or any other country.

And he has the weaponry to back up his threats. Mr. Putin sits atop the world's largest and most diverse nuclear arsenal. And I might add that this arsenal is postured specifically at us to destroy the United States.

In another perverse action—I have to say this—Mr. Putin has tried to co-opt Christianity, if you can believe that. He has twisted a religion of repentance into a propaganda machine. Patriarch Kirill of Moscow professes to lead the Russian Orthodox Church. In reality, Kirill is a puppet of Vladimir Putin. His father baptized Vladimir Putin. And now Kirill follows his father's footsteps by sanctifying the dictator's crimes.

Kirill has blessed the 2022 invasion of Ukraine, absurdly claiming that the Russians are fighting against evil. As patriarch, he blessed the invasion. As Russia bombs Ukrainian women and children, Kirill invokes God's name to justify Putin's butchery. Kirill is the very definition of the Prophet Isaiah's portrait of corruption. Isaiah condemned men like him, those who "call evil good and good evil."

Shame on this phony patriarch.

President Putin has publicly shared his imperialistic dreams. He violently pursued those goals even in God's name. Along the way, he has torn to shreds every cease-fire deal he has ever signed. Before World War I, the Kai-

ser's regime in Germany called a treaty "a mere scrap of paper." Well, Vladimir Putin feels the same. He has no regard for the Budapest Memorandum. He has no regard for the INF Treaty. He has no regard for the Minsk agreement. In each case, Putin has lied, stolen, and misdirected to further his empire-building ambitions. And that is what he is trying to do with negotiations today.

President Trump is interested in peace. President Zelenskyy is interested in peace. Putin values peace as little as any piece of shredded paper he would deceitfully sign.

Many people do not realize that Ukrainians have been valiantly and steadily weakening Putin's forces. Half a million Russian soldiers—half a million souls—have either been killed or injured so severely that they cannot return to the battlefield. That is half a million Russian moms without sons, wives without husbands. That total is steep, and the blame rests upon one person, the man who ordered the invasion: Vladimir Putin and his imperialistic vision.

Russia is barely managing to sustain this war. And I think the American people do not know this, but Russia is barely hanging on. They are struggling from heavy battlefield costs and economic sanctions. We should not support a peace deal that could let Russia up off the mat and reconstitute its army.

Both the previous and the current Secretaries General of NATO expect that Russia will not be ready to threaten NATO conventionally for 5 to 7 years. The wrong deal with Russia could allow them to be off to the races sooner. And Russia wants just that, as we have seen this week. Putin is trying to work the peace process deceptively to skew it in his favor.

This week, his office has pushed out messages from the peace talks in Riyadh. Putin's officials maintain that the United States is prepared to lift a number of sanctions, sanctions the West imposed after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. I certainly hope that is not true.

These Kremlin officials claim that we will soon readmit Russia to SWIFT. SWIFT, of course, is the global financial system that Russia depends on for global trade. Putin relies on trade to finance his war machine. Russians also think we are prepared to grant sanctions relief for any company that ships goods on vessels flying the Russian flag or they could claim any ties to food production, shipping, and securities. Such a deal would be full of loopholes. Such a deal would be designed to let Russia, which is on the ropes, off the mat.

Mr. Putin's men asked for all of this. Yet they offer little in return. They won't even talk about prisoner exchanges. That is breathtaking, especially when Ukraine has publicly expressed openness to a cease-fire. They are the ones that have publicly said

they will agree to a cease-fire. Mr. Putin and his negotiators have never proclaimed that. The Ukrainians, who have been ruthlessly attacked, have extended the hand of peace. Russia still has not even though it demands so much. Putin says he is willing to work toward peace, but his demands show that he is lying. His demands make it clear he intends to use the sanctions relief to rearm.

It would be a mistake to grant sanctions relief to Russia without reciprocal support for Ukraine. Doing so would devastate the prospect of a lasting peace. Let me repeat. Mr. Putin has never agreed to a cease-fire, to a treaty that resulted in a lasting peace. As we negotiate in Saudi Arabia, the United States must remember that Russia is barely managing to sustain this war.

The economic and battlefield price is very costly for Mr. Putin. Undoing these sanctions would instantly lower Putin's cost. It would evaporate the leverage his financial penalties have given to the United States and the free world.

As I close, let me reiterate, many have tried to negotiate with Vladimir Putin on his terms. I think President Trump is beginning to understand that peace comes through American and Ukrainian strength; that dictators respond to power because it is the only thing they respect. We need to see this Russian dictator and war criminal for what he is: a murderous dictator who hopes he can back us into a corner during the peace process and thus pursue another invasion.

If Vladimir Putin lives up to a cease-fire or peace treaty with Ukraine, it will be the first time ever. Vladimir Putin has a long track record, and it is filled with lies, violence, and treachery. That is whom we are dealing with. We have to deal with him, but that is whom we are dealing with. Getting a deal with him will be a challenge. We must bear history in mind if we are to reach a settlement that benefits the free countries of the world.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HUSTED). The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, before I go to my remarks, I wanted to thank the Senator from Mississippi for that fabulous statement. I really do appreciate his leadership.

I am pretty sure your father served in World War II, as did my father. I think that we continue to echo the lessons that we learned from that conflict.

I thank you for that tremendous statement in support of Ukraine.

TARIFFS

Mr. President, I come to speak about the Trump tariffs and today's announcement about auto tariffs, but before I get to that point, I just want to say I have been visited by many farmers this week, many businesses who feel like they are impacted.

I think we are on day 67 of the Trump administration, in which we thought

the focus was going to be on lowering inflation and lowering costs—day one. And now, we are seeing that not only is that not happening, that these proposals are actually increasing costs.

Now, I hope this administration will go focus on cost issues like more affordable housing. I am a big advocate for building housing, and it is probably one of the biggest inflationary costs that we haven't addressed, so we could be working on housing. We could be working on cutting prices on pharmaceuticals, and I hope our colleagues will do something to help us.

My colleague Senator GRASSLEY, on PBMs, and I have legislation that are trying to crack down on the middlemen who are pocketing huge profits—it is literally costing us pharmacies. I mean, we are having pharmacy deserts in the State because these people claw back so much of the money, the pharmacist can't even exist. So this is not good, and I hope that our colleagues will join us.

But today, on April 2, the President is saying he will levy a 25 percent tax on imported sedans, SUV crossovers, minivans, cargo vans, and light trucks, and that it will hit some auto parts, too—is going to cost the American people. Now, this is not something that I believe that we can afford, these tariff costs that are somewhere between \$5,000 and \$15,000 to the American consumer. That is thousands of dollars that basically, all of a sudden, is getting added to the cost of an automobile.

We saw during COVID that the lack of supply chains, the lack of product, cost even a used car \$2,000 more, and we saw how much that did to families that were at a point where they really just needed to buy a car to get to work, to travel, to do the things that helped grow the economic opportunities for their family. And that was horrific just during COVID.

So now, we see the same kind of thing, a supply chain of product that we already know is cross-border with the United States and Canada, and we also know is already a big issue, that we are going to see the price of cars go up, and the fact that the American public can't afford grocery costs, healthcare costs, or housing costs—we certainly don't need to add in auto costs.

Americans are already facing these skyrocketing prices and the President's economic policies, particularly here, with tariffs, I think are going to drive up more costs. What American consumers want—and businesses—is more predictability. They want rules-based trade. They do not want trade chaos.

If rules are not working, you build consensus and you work together to make sure that those alliances are formed and that we get fairer trade. We build more in our trade infrastructure, as I have tried to do through various bills that we have passed through the Finance Committee and through the

Senate, to make sure that we are and have the capacity to fight unfair trade practices in other countries.

Because 95 percent of consumers live outside the United States, the big economic opportunities are going to be outside the United States. So yes, you should have more lawyers at USTR to go fight trade violations and correct the violations of those countries. I actually got that passed and got that into law to have more capacity.

But it only makes sense, the United States of America is not just going to sell product to the United States of America. We are going to sell it to 95 percent of consumers who live outside the United States. And innovation is going to matter more than these tariffs. The United States being able to innovate faster and continue to be successful with our strategy is going to matter more. And guess what matters even more than just the innovation? Guess what matters more? The supply chains. The supply chains because, if you have the supply chains in the United States of America, chances are that ecosystem that is so unique to your country and the innovation that goes with it is going to make you successful.

Well, now, we have supply chains that exist within the Midwest region and across the border with Canada that we are throwing caution into the wind and, now, we are going to say we are going to make it all 25 percent more expensive. I am pretty sure it is a good deal for Elon Musk and Tesla. Don't know that it is such a good deal for everybody else.

Consumer confidence is now at its lowest point in 12 years, and there is talk of a recession, or stagflation—persistent inflation—and we have countries that are allies in helping to fight China, countries like Canada and Japan and Europe, who are already making plans to retaliate against us. So the trade wars are going to make it more expensive for U.S. manufacturers, it is going to disrupt supply chains, and it is going to make it more expensive on consumers. Almost half of U.S. imports are inputs and supplies for the U.S. manufacturing supply chain, so driving up those input costs, driving up the manufacturing costs. And driving up those costs is a challenge. It makes the supply line costly to operate.

And the trade wars limit our ability then to get our exports into those markets. Now, maybe automobiles are a little bit different than apples or lentils or some of the other products that we sell. But I can tell you this, if you lose the shelf space and they give it to other countries, you don't readily get that back when the trade war is over. And the trade war doesn't just last a few days or even a year. Some of the Trump administration tariffs are still in place and still affecting much of my State when it comes to getting access to important markets. The thing that has changed, though, is the rate of innovation, the rate of information, the