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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Monday, April 7, 2025, at 12 p.m.

Senate

FRIDAY, APRIL 4, 2025

The Senate met at 8:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable MIKE ROUNDS, a Senator from the State of South Dakota.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

High and holy God, we praise Your Name. Bless Your work in all the places of this world. Touch the lives of third-world victims of disease, violence, and destruction, of poverty and pathology, of tyranny and neglect. Lord, remember our own land. Quicken the hearts of our lawmakers that they may be forces for good.

Guide the efforts of those who work in our government's executive and judicial branches, providing wisdom for the challenges they face. Deliver us all from timidity as You build into us a holy reverence for others and a desire to pursue Your purposes.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication

to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, April 4, 2025.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable MIKE ROUNDS, a Senator from the State of South Dakota, to perform the duties of the Chair.

CHUCK GRASSLEY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. ROUNDS thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

ESTABLISHING THE CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET FOR THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 AND SETTING FORTH THE APPROPRIATE BUDGETARY LEVELS FOR FISCAL YEARS 2026 THROUGH 2034—
Resumed

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the

Senate will resume consideration of H. Con Res. 14, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (H. Con Res. 14) establishing the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034.

Pending:

Graham amendment No. 1717, in the nature of a substitute.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

H. CON. RES. 14

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, the Republican bill that now sits before the Senate is poison. Last night, Senate Republicans began the process to pass legislation eviscerating Medicaid, crushing the healthcare of the young and old alike, and squandering their future and our future.

First thing this morning, we will talk about why they are doing this, so they can achieve tax cuts for the ultrarich. Slashing Medicaid so cruelly and callously would be bad enough, but as Americans learn that Republicans are doing it simply to give tax cuts to the ultrarich, an electric shock is going to go through the American people, and they will cry out: What the hell is going on? Donald Trump is betraying us.

This is the Republican agenda, plain and simple: Billionaires win, American families lose. Republicans have failed to be honest with the country about the true nature of their cuts. Today,

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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this morning, Senate Democrats will come to the floor to put the Republican agenda on trial before the court of public opinion. Democrats will expose the dark corners of the Republicans' plan.

We will explain the devastating consequences and highlight the many injustices that the Republicans will inflict on people's health, on their financial security, on their children's future, and, in fact, on their very dream, the very future of the American dream itself.

I spoke—many of us spoke—on the issue of Medicaid last night. And I thank my colleagues who did the same: Senators MERKLEY and DURBIN, BALDWIN, HASSAN, KIM, REED, CORTEZ MASTO, SLOTKIN, KLOBUCHAR, WELCH, WARNOCK, and BENNET. We will continue today, this morning, exposing Republicans' morally bankrupt tax breaks on billionaires, and then Donald Trump's dumb and costly tariffs.

They have tried to hide Medicaid cuts. They have tried to hide their billionaire tax giveaways. If Republicans won't be straight with the American people about their agenda, Democrats are glad to do it for them.

Today, Senate Democrats will come to the floor to put the Republican agenda on trial before the court of public opinion, as I said before.

So we continue today; first, by exposing the Republicans' morally bankrupt tax breaks for billionaires and then Donald Trump's dumb, costly tariffs. We will proceed to then talk about the need to stand up for our veterans and national security. Donald Trump has made even the more conservative Republican veterans organizations angry.

We will then talk about the unprecedented corruption and self-dealing that Donald Trump has unleashed in our government. He and Musk seem to want to make themselves richer using their government position, and their families as well, to gain even more wealth, and, finally, on the existential fight to protect Social Security from the chain saw of Elon Musk. We will speak on all of these issues as the day goes on.

Democrats will expose the dark corners of the Republican plan. We will explain the devastating consequences and highlight the many injustices the Republicans will inflict on people's healthcare and financial security and on their children's future.

This is a fight the American people need to see because people's lives and livelihood are at stake. The healthcare that protects our kids is in danger, the benefits that keep our seniors whole are at risk, the investments that unlock America's future are hanging by a thread, and Republicans are about to cut it. Why? Why do they do all of this? What is the purpose of all this nastiness?

It cannot be said enough: Republicans are trying to give the ultrarich another tax break—another tax break. They have got plenty of money. Taking away someone's Social Security, cut-

ting their Medicaid, telling veterans they don't get healthcare, all to give tax cuts for the wealthy, what an awful scheme.

Why are they doing this? Frankly, they are in a billionaires' bubble. It is a small group of billionaires that run the whole Republican Party. A lot of them have been plotting to do this for over a decade with their think tanks and their rightwing media voices and their taking over other media and social media. But they have been trying to do it for a long time, these superrich, supergreedy billionaires. And with Donald Trump, they have succeeded. These billionaires are running the show, plain and simple.

These billionaires who don't have any understanding of what the average family goes through when they sit at the dinner table and say: How are we going to buy the new car? How are we going to go on that little vacation to visit grandma? How are we going to give our kids the best school supplies and education they need?

They have no understanding of this; exemplified in Howard Lutnick, one of these billionaires. When told his mother might not get another Social Security payment, he said, "She doesn't need it."

Well, of course, if your son-in-law is a billionaire, Mr. Lutnick, yeah, it is easy. What about everybody else? These billionaires are so limited. They only talk to each other. They don't even think of the harm they are doing to average people or they don't want to know about it.

So they listen to one another and refuse to understand working people, and that is sickening.

When Democrats expose all these cuts to healthcare and veterans and nutrition, the American people will think it is sickening too. That is the fight we Democrats will have on the Senate floor.

Today, tonight, tomorrow, next week, next month, next year, Democrats will fight every which way against this vicious attack on American families where billionaires win and families lose.

We will fight this awful bill and shine a light on these terrible cuts for all the American people to see. And when the American people see it, they won't like it; they will despise it. Senate Republicans, your embrace of the billionaires' agenda puts you on a path of despair and defeat—despair among the millions of Americans you cruelly flay and defeat for you and your agenda.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to use a visual aid.

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

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, families lose, billionaires win. That is the Republican plan. The Republican plan slashes \$2 trillion for the programs families depend on to thrive in order to

give more tax giveaways to the very richest Americans.

Families lose—\$2 trillion in core programs slashed—to deliver another \$2 trillion to the richest Americans. That is a terrible plan. How about families thrive? How about billionaires pay their fair share? Now, there is a good plan we ought to be all able to get behind. But there is even more that is wrong with this Republican plan.

We found out yesterday a new estimate of the cost of their plan in new debt over the next 10 years: \$7 trillion—that is trillion with a "t," trillion dollars—of unpaid-for tax cuts with most of it going to the richest Americans.

But there is even more bad news because they want to extend that deficit, debt-creating machine into the future, and CBO tells us that that will cost \$37 trillion, at a minimum, in new debt—\$37 trillion. Well, that is awfully hard to get your hands around, \$37 trillion in new debt.

But there is even more bad news. They want to tell the American public their plan produces no new debt. They have this new version of the world in which they simply wave away the debt and say, "pretend it didn't exist."

It is called magic math. And it works like this: You sign a lease for a house. You are going to rent a house for a year. It costs \$2,000 a month. It costs \$24,000 a year. And at the end of the lease, you decide to renew it, but you tell your spouse: Hey, honey, it doesn't cost an additional dime.

Well, that is what my Republican colleagues are doing. They are establishing, not just new tax giveaways, but they are extending, creating law that renews the lease on old giveaways, which will cost that additional \$37 trillion, and then saying: Don't worry, honey, it won't cost a dime.

Are the American people so out of touch that they can't detect the lie in that? I don't think so.

And are my Republican colleagues so out of touch that they really want to try to deceive the American people in this manner? I don't think so.

So colleagues across the aisle, let's have integrity in what this plan will do and at least be honest about what we tell the American people. The American people don't want the smoke and mirrors. They don't want the magic math gimmick. They want honesty about what this bill will do and what it will cost—what it will cost in terms of programs, what it will cost in terms of changes in tax law.

You know, folks back home, they say: Billionaires? They can take care of themselves. Just what they earn on their existing investments is enough to float a family on the yacht for the rest of eternity. Why are we doing a bill that takes away from core healthcare, housing, and education programs for families to add more wealth to the billionaires?

With this one bill alone, Republicans are giving 22 trillion to the wealthiest

10 percent of Americans, while the bottom 10 percent get enough to buy a cup of coffee.

Here is a cup of coffee. Well, there is no coffee in it. But think of this as a cup of coffee.

Now, does the Republican plan for that bottom 40 percent—does it pay for a cup of coffee a day? No. A cup of coffee a week? No. A cup of coffee a month? No. You get one cup of coffee for the entire year—\$6. That is the estimate of what the bottom 40 percent get with the Republican plan—one cup of coffee for the entire year.

So to the 40 percent of Americans who are striving to get on their feet, this is what the Republican proposal is for you. While they are giving the top 0.1 percent over \$300,000 a year a person, they are giving you one cup of coffee. Don't drink it all in one place. Take a little sip each day of the year because that is all you get.

Our plan is different. Democrats are fighting for families. We are fighting for healthcare, for Medicaid. We are fighting for healthcare because it is a foundation on which families thrive. We are fighting for education because it is a foundation on which families thrive. We are fighting for housing—affordable housing—because it is a foundation for families to thrive.

That is the plan: Families thrive, and billionaires pay their fair share in taxes.

How did we get to this point?

Let's turn the clock back to 1974. Let's go through a little time machine, back to 1974. At that point, Democrats and Republicans came together and established a new budget process, called the Budget and Impoundment Control Act, because they were so concerned about deficits and concerned about President Nixon impounding funds. So they said: We have to rectify these soaring deficits.

And so they said, three things—three pillars: Well, first we will create a fast track—a fast track—a filibuster-free pathway to reduced deficits. And even Robert Byrd of West Virginia, the national defender of the filibuster, agreed. All 100 Senators voted for this bill—one purpose, decrease deficits. And that plan had these three pillars:

First, deficit reduction in the first 10 years—that was the core vote.

Second of all, no increase—no provision can create an increase in a deficit in any given year after the first 10 years.

And, third, we are going to use honest numbers—no more smoke and mirrors, no more gimmicks, no more trying to deceive the public, saying we have a responsible plan when it is creating massive additional debt.

Well, that plan—that 1974 plan—worked for 22 years. And along comes 1996. And in 1996, my Republican colleagues wanted to do a tax plan that involved huge giveaways to the wealthiest Americans, and they said: But we can't get 60 votes. We need Democratic help. We can't get that to the floor.

And they said: OK, let's do a nuclear option. Let's reinterpret that first pillar—must reduce deficits in the first 10 years—and say it can increase deficits.

In this very Chamber right here, it happened. The former Republican leader, Robert Dole, appointed his staff member Robert Dove to be Parliamentarian, and they reversed the plain language of the law in order to blow up deficits with tax giveaways to the wealthy.

Now, it turned out, that year, they didn't end up using that nuclear provision because they struck a different deal with President Clinton. But they did use it in 2001 and 2003. They did use it in 2017—all for massive tax cuts, the majority going to the richest Americans.

So this plan—this Republican plan—it isn't new. This plan has been the core strategy since 1996: Run up debt and give massive amounts of money to the richest Americans.

It is very disturbing to me—very disturbing to every American who sees that all we are doing under the Republican vision is increasing wealth inequality, undermining the programs for families to stand on to thrive, and proceeding to enrich the richest people in our Nation.

You know, back in 1974, when Democrats and Republicans together crafted this plan, the debt-to-GDP ratio was 23 percent. Today, it is 100 percent. Our national debt is equal or slightly above our national gross domestic product.

In 1974, the annual deficit was \$6 billion. Today, it is about \$2 trillion. In 1974, the total national debt was \$475 billion. It seemed like a lot at the time. Now it is \$37 trillion or just shy of \$37 trillion.

But while running on fiscal responsibility since 1996, the Republican Party has been the party of fiscal irresponsibility, changing the Senate rules to run up deficits and debt, giving away the Treasury to the richest Americans, and imposing that massive debt on the families in the future.

It is hard to get your hands around what their \$37 trillion debt plan means, but think about it like this: Since Independence Day, July 4, 1776, we have run up less than \$37 trillion in debt, and they want to add \$37 trillion or more in debt with this single bill.

Wow, that is something.

You know, Candidate Trump said he would be a champion for families, but President Trump is a champion for billionaires. This is the great betrayal.

In February, Democrats voted for amendment after amendment to help families, and my colleagues across the aisle voted, almost in every case unanimously, against those amendments to help families.

Democrats voted for an amendment to make sure Medicaid was protected; Republicans voted against it. Democrats voted for an amendment to lower the cost of groceries; Republicans voted against it. Democrats voted to lower the cost of housing, and Repub-

licans voted against it. Democrats voted to lower the cost of prescription drugs; Republicans voted against it. Democrats voted to lower the cost of health insurance; Republicans voted against it. Democrats put forward amendments for families to thrive and for the rich to pay their fair share of taxes, and Republicans voted against them because that is not their plan. It hasn't been their plan since 1996. Their plan has been: Families lose, and billionaires win.

If this budget proposal—this vision for the reconciliation bill that will be subsequently crafted—doesn't help families, who does it help? Well, let's look at who was lined up behind Trump at his inaugural address just down the hall, done inside because the weather was so cold. Well, whom did we have? We had Mark Zuckerberg standing behind the President, the billionaire of Meta, who owns Facebook, who gave a million dollars to Trump's inauguration fund. We had Jeff Bezos, the billionaire of Amazon, who gave a million dollars to Trump's inauguration fund. We had Sundar Pichai, the billionaire of Alphabet, which owns Google, who gave a million dollars to Trump's inauguration funds.

Billionaires lined up behind him, but not just those three, also the richest man in the world, Elon Musk, the billionaire owner of Tesla and SpaceX and Starlink and now, infamously, the name behind DOGE, who spent more than a quarter billion dollars to elect Trump and my Republican colleagues.

And those are just the contributions we know about. We don't know about all the dark money they may have spent.

Slashing programs families rely on to give trillions of dollars to the richest Americans, that is the Republican plan—billionaires who don't care if we slash Medicaid. They don't care if grocery prices go up. They don't care about the cost of housing or prescription drug prices or health insurance because they are billionaires. What costs to us a month's salary for them is a 1-second blip in their financial landscape.

You know, Donald Trump said about the 25 percent tariffs on cars:

I couldn't care less.

I couldn't care less if [automakers] raise their prices.

Well, you know who does care? American families. American families care because a car is a significant part of their budget. And they do care about the health insurance. They care about the groceries. They care about the rent or the interest rate that drives their mortgage.

You know, there aren't so many billionaires in America. What is the point to help a very small group of the richest get even richer? Well, that is a longer story about how money pollutes our political process.

But here on the floor, where we can argue the pros and cons of policies, let's at least use honest numbers, not

replace the CBO numbers with some fake numbers, not use magic math.

We are here, Democrats on the floor, to expose this fraud. We are here to stop this fraud. We are here to fight for America's families. We are here to stop this budget resolution and this subsequent reconciliation bill in which families lose and billionaires win because we want families to thrive and billionaires to pay their fair share.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARSHALL). The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I want to say thank you to the Senator from Oregon. I am grateful for your leadership in making sure that America understands exactly what the Republicans are up to and how they have just got one central mission; and that is, cut services for everybody else, cut all the things that ordinary folks depend on, so that they can deliver tax cuts for a handful of billionaires. It is obscene, and I appreciate how you point it out.

I am here because "co-Presidents" Donald Trump and Elon Musk are taking a chain saw to our Federal Government, hurting families in Massachusetts and all across the country. You know, it is almost like they drew up a list of every program that families rely on, everything that is valuable to families, and then went through the list and said: Let's cut that. Let's cut that. Let's cut that.

And why? To pay for tax cuts for billionaires.

Thanks to Donald Trump and Elon Musk, Grandma will have to drive hours if she has a problem with her Social Security check and needs someone to help her straighten it out. Why? Because Trump and Musk are closing the Social Security office in her neighborhood, and while they are at it, make it even harder by shutting down the phone lines.

Thanks to Trump and Musk, the afterschool program that gives kids a safe place to be after classes are over and before mom and dad get home from work, they want to cut those programs—the same with the aides that sit in classrooms with kids who need a little extra help learning how to read.

Thanks to Trump and Musk, critical medical research came to a screeching halt—research that could help save lives and find cures for all diseases.

Musk and Trump say that these cuts are about "efficiency." That is a lie. Let's be clear. Trump and Musk are creating this sandstorm of chaos while they make these cuts because they want to distract us from what is really going on. They want to grease the skids for giant tax giveaways for their billionaire buddies and pay for it on the backs of working people.

Now, today, Republicans in Congress are putting forward a proposal to deliver these tax cuts for the wealthy and well-connected, and they are asking us to vote on it tonight.

This bill—and Trump and Musk's cruel agenda—isn't good for Massachusetts, and it isn't good for our country. I am hearing from families at home in Massachusetts who are feeling the pain right now.

Start with medical research. Medical research powers our economy in Massachusetts, and it is the reason we have had incredible breakthroughs like vaccines and cancer drugs that save lives. So how did Donald Trump and Elon Musk thank the doctors and the researchers who are doing this work? By canceling tens of millions of dollars in Federal funds that support medical research at Massachusetts hospitals, universities, and healthcare providers on everything from clinical trials to pandemic readiness. And they did it just weeks after Trump tried to cut the funding that keeps the lights on at our community health centers.

So to anyone—anyone—who believes in science and believes in investing in cures for horrible diseases, now is the time to fight back. That is why I am filing amendments to the Republican bill to keep Federal support for Massachusetts medical research institutions and healthcare providers, including our community health centers. It is why I am filing another amendment to fight back against Trump and Musk's National Institutes of Health funding cuts, because we are a country that believes that we should invest in finding a cure for Alzheimer's, for diabetes, for cancer, and for other diseases.

On education. Education levels the playing field. It gives every kid a fighting chance. It doesn't matter to Trump and Musk. Just this week, they slashed millions of dollars in funding for K-through-12 education in our Commonwealth, shut down a regional office in Boston that helps administer Head Start, and canceled millions of dollars in funding that was helping pay for kids' school lunches. To them, that was the cherry on top of Trump's Executive order to "abolish" the entire Department of Education—throwing schools all across this country into chaos.

So to students, to parents, to teachers: Now is the time to fight back. We are fighting for an America where it is not just the kids of billionaires who get a good education but every kid in every community all across our Commonwealth.

It is why I have an amendment to the Republican bill to protect education funding in Massachusetts and to protect services like Head Start that lift up our kids and make sure we are not leaving families hanging out to dry.

I am fighting for our workers. Last week, Donald Trump signed an illegal Executive order attacking Federal unions and stripping workers of their rights. It is the definition of union-busting, and it is an attack on the workers who make sure that our food is safe to eat, who make sure that it is safe for us to fly in airplanes, who make sure that we take care of our veterans, who try to help us and protect

us from viruses and diseases and so much more.

So to workers in Massachusetts and all across America: Now is the time to fight back. We need to amend this Republican tax cut bill to affirm Federal workers' right to unionize and to collectively bargain because the labor movement is bigger than Donald Trump and his unelected billionaire "co-President." We believe that every worker deserves the freedom to join a union and to negotiate for a fair contract.

Donald Trump and Elon Musk are sawing through the programs that help working families breathe a little easier every day. They are doing it so that their billionaire buddies and giant corporations get trillions of dollars in tax giveaways, paid for on the backs of everyone else.

So here is the big question: Are we going to hand our country over to "co-Presidents" Donald Trump and Elon Musk and a handful of other billionaires and make everyone else pay for it or are we going to be a country that says: No. We want to make these investments so that everyone in this country gets an opportunity, so that everybody at least has a chance to build something for themselves.

That is the fight in front of us, and that is the fight I am fighting every single day for people in Massachusetts and all across this country.

Our public schools are the foundation of our future, but Donald Trump and Elon Musk are trying to end public education as we know it. Trump fired one out of every two Federal education workers, and then the next day, the application for Federal financial aid for millions of students went down. Then he signed an Executive order to abolish the Department of Education. So he fires the workers at the Department of Education, the Federal financial aid for millions of students goes down, and then he just tries to end the entire Department of Education.

States are already ringing the alarm bell that funding for little kids' school lunches is at risk. Kids with disabilities could lose their classroom aide. High schoolers who are already panicked enough about college are now even less sure about what their future looks like.

My very first job was as a public school teacher for kids with special needs. I have seen with my own eyes what the Department of Education does for families. So this week, I launched a campaign to save our schools and to bring everyone into the fight for our public schools.

One of the best ways to fight back on behalf of our schools is to share stories about what matters to us in this country. We know the power of telling stories and the power of organizing people and bringing them into this fight. So I asked people all across this country to share a story about a public school teacher who made a real difference in their lives. In the first 24 hours after I

put out that call, we got a flood of messages from people in communities all across this country who just wanted a chance to tell a story about a teacher who made a difference in their lives. I want to read some of those into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD here.

I'm visually impaired. My high school teacher consultant defended my rights in the classroom. I was able to graduate and now am on my way to a Master of Public Policy at Georgetown because of him.

That is how teachers make a difference.

Another:

Mrs. Butler, 4th grade, Bourne, Massachusetts. 1996. Had us bring in newspaper stories, taught us chess. She spoke to us like we were little adults and treated us with respect.

Someone who remembers that many, many years later.

Ms. J! I went to high school in Wisconsin and she was my AP Psychology teacher. She made me feel special and I found out later that I wasn't the only one. I bumped into her years later and she inspired me to go on to grad school. I didn't even know a masters in Higher Ed was a thing without her.

Teachers making a difference not just in the classroom but years and years later.

School was better than home. A teacher made sure I applied for college. I went. Graduated.

Again, changing lives.

My daughter was born with disabilities. She was told she was powerful. She has an MBA.

Pretty impressive.

I was a struggling student. One teacher always paid attention and helped me after school.

My high school culinary arts teacher played a pivotal part in my life, which has led to a lucrative career.

My son's music teacher went out of her way to create a spot in the school band for him to play his electric guitar. Now he is an accomplished musician who LOVES to play music.

The ways in which teachers change our lives.

My 5th grade teacher taught us to knit which allowed us kids with different learning needs to thrive!

Someone who is grateful to this day.

My husband works for a high school in Alabama and teaches teens coping skills. It has prevented suicides.

Truly, truly the importance of what our teachers do.

I was raised by a single parent who didn't go to college and with the expectation that due to cost, college would not be possible for me. One of my teachers repeatedly told me I was smart and capable and that I should go to college and then helped me apply. Now I have a PhD in Materials Chemistry and work at a defense lab.

A reminder that teachers don't just contribute to the lives of their students, they contribute to the growth in the future of our entire Nation.

My high school Spanish teacher inspired me to be brave and explore the world outside my small, rural town.

Good for you.

Here is one:

I was bullied a lot as a kid. My 6th grade teacher finally got my bullies to leave me alone.

There is something life-changing for a sixth grader.

My 8th grade social studies teacher, Mrs. Gifford! Made me want to be a Social Studies teacher too!

I was a struggling student. One teacher always paid attention and helped me after school.

Had the public school system not worked for my child, she wouldn't be where she is today.

My American Studies teacher's enthusiasm inspired my love of politics and history!

Here is one from a teacher:

I am a public school teacher for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students. I became one because I had an [Individualized Education Program, or an] IEP. I continue to be inspired by Mrs. Baumler who showed me what project-based learning and collaborative education can be.

My daughter's Kindergarten teacher seeks grants on her own time to help kids adjust.

Mrs. Snyder is the only person who told me I could have a career in the arts.

Mrs. Tollel, my sewing teacher. She was very kind to me at a moment in my life.

We remember those moments.

Both my kids have been in special education. One has a PhD. [The] other is in law school.

I have my own story. Nobody in my family went to college. It was a second-grade teacher, Mrs. Lee, who scooped me up and whispered in my ear that I was special and that I could be a public school teacher. At that moment, my entire life changed. For all the rest of my growing-up years, whenever someone asked me anything about my future or what I was interested in, I would stand a little taller and say, "I'm going to be a teacher." It guided my entire life.

I am grateful to have an opportunity to say thank you to Mrs. Lee.

The Federal Government has invested in our public schools and keeping class sizes smaller and making sure there are teacher aides for the kids who need extra help and in after-school programs so that working parents can know that their kids are in a safe place where they can do their homework or have some fun. Taking that away from our kids so that a handful of billionaires can scoop up some tax giveaways and be even richer is just plain ugly, and I will fight it with everything I have got.

Next, I want to talk for a minute about Social Security.

Right now, Donald Trump and his unelected, billionaire, "co-President" Elon Musk, are trying to rip away Social Security benefits from millions of Americans. You know, two people who do not have a clue about how important Social Security checks are and what they mean to families—two people who just don't understand that at all—are Elon Musk and Donald Trump. That is why they are willing to attack Social Security—so that they can pay for tax cuts for a handful of billionaires.

Now, let's be clear: Social Security is not charity. It is not some giveaway. It

is not something by which a few rich people hand out coins to old folks. Social Security is a program that people pay for all of their working lives. There are 73 million Americans who depend on Social Security, and they pay for those Social Security benefits. Out of every paycheck, they were putting money into the Social Security system on the sacred promise that, when the time came that they were no longer working, they would be able to count on Social Security for food, for a roof over their heads, and for some real financial security. Elon Musk and Donald Trump are breaking that sacred promise, and they are breaking it so that billionaires can get a tax break.

Now, here is the thing: Elon Musk and Donald Trump know that they can't just go in and reduce Social Security benefits. They would like to. Remember, Elon Musk is the guy who called Social Security a Ponzi scheme. He is the guy who has said: Look, you know, we are going to get this done. We need to cut Social Security.

The problem is, Elon Musk didn't establish Social Security. The problem is, Donald Trump didn't establish Social Security. No. It was Congress that passed the laws that created Social Security, and it is Congress and only Congress that can cut those Social Security benefits. So you would think Elon Musk and Donald Trump—I mean, shoot. Republicans are in the majority right here in the Senate and over in the House of Representatives. If they really want to cut Social Security, then do it out in the open and introduce a bill. Have your Republican buddies introduce a bill to cut Social Security benefits, and let's see where that goes. But, no, they know that cuts to Social Security are deeply unpopular, deeply unpopular. They know that people who answer to the voters are very hesitant to do that.

So what have they figured out? A backdoor way to come in and cut Social Security. And how do they do that? They just make it harder and harder and harder to get the Social Security benefits that people have paid for year after year after year; make it harder to correct an error; make it harder to apply; make it harder to get any help if your check doesn't arrive. All of that has the effect, just a little over time, of cutting more and more people out of the system, fewer and fewer people who will get what they paid for.

How do they do that? Well, they shut down the phone system. So, if you have got a problem and you try to call to get it straightened out, no. Donald Trump and Elon Musk want to just shut that down so that that is not available. They are closing Social Security offices. So, instead of being able to go to the office near your home, you may have to drive an hour or 2 hours or 3 hours to get to a Social Security office.

What if, in your sixties, in your seventies, in your eighties, in your nineties, you are not able to drive, and you

can't get to that office? Well, you either give up or you find somebody who will be able to take you there. But even after you get there, you can't get the problem solved because there aren't enough people. We are already hearing about lines that are 50 people long and that it takes 4 and 5 hours to make your way through a line, which is a pretty tough burden on many of our seniors. If the Social Security office closes before you can actually get to the front of the line, too bad. See if you can get a ride and come back another day.

So what will that mean? Some people won't start their benefits when they are legally entitled to do it. Some people won't get problems corrected. Some will just give up without getting what they are legally entitled to, which is another way to cut Social Security benefits and cut them and cut them.

Again, why do that? Why impose that kind of misery on people around this country? Only so that Elon Musk and Donald Trump can pay for tax giveaways to a handful of billionaires and billionaire corporations.

This is fundamentally wrong. We need to get our priorities straight. We need to honor our sacred promises under Social Security, and we need to tell those billionaires and billionaire corporations they can pay their fair share to make this country work. That is the fight that we are having on the floor of the Senate today, and that is the fight between Republicans and Democrats right now in Washington. I know which side I stand on, and I see which side the Republicans stand on.

This is, ultimately, what our entire debate is about right now, and that is, Who does this government work for? Donald Trump, Elon Musk, and their Republican enablers here in the U.S. Senate are making that clear through their budget. If you want to understand somebody's values, take a look at their budget, and that is true for the budget of the United States of America. Because Republicans are in the majority, they are the ones who put the budget forward, and that is what we are debating today.

It is a budget that is about tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans, and the pricetag for these tax cuts keeps going up because instead of being embarrassed about the cuts to Social Security, instead of being embarrassed about the cuts to medical research, instead of being embarrassed about the cuts to public education, Republicans are in the business now of doubling down and doubling down again.

The first version of this budget that they put out would have given away about \$4.7 trillion—an amazing amount of money that would have been soaked up mostly by millionaires, billionaires, and giant corporations. Then, next round, the price went to \$5 trillion. As of this morning, the best independent estimates of the costs of the Republican plan are \$7 trillion in giveaways, paid for by our public school kids, paid

for by our seniors who need healthcare, paid for by people who rely on Social Security, paid for by cutting medical research, paid for by our Veterans Health Administration, paid for off the backs of the work that is done for families all across this country.

This is a moment in American history when it is put in front of us in the starkest terms: Who do you think government should work for? The Republicans, with their budget, have made clear: They think government should work even better for a handful of billionaires and billionaire corporations. When they worry about the costs, they say: We know how we can fix the cost problem. We will just cut the funding that goes to public education. We will just cut the funding that goes to medical research. We will just cut the funding that goes to the Veterans Health Administration, which helps our vets. We will cut the funding that Americans rely on all across this country. That is where we are right now, and Democrats are fighting back.

Look, we don't have the votes. I get that. Democrats only have 47 in the Senate—Democrats plus Independents. Republicans have the majority of votes. But what we have are people across this country who are saying: That is not what I want. That is not what I voted for. I don't want to see our country do giant tax giveaways for billionaires. I want to see our country continue to support public education. I want to see our country continue to invest in medical research. In fact, a lot of people around this country think we ought to be doing more of that. Let's put more investments in for Alzheimer's, for example. We are getting closer and closer to a cure or at least to a treatment. If we don't find that treatment, we are going to be spending billions more down the line to take care of people who have fallen prey to the ravages of Alzheimer's. Let's invest in research now. It saves a lot of families a lot of heartache. Frankly, it saves us a lot of money—but not Donald Trump and Elon Musk and the Republicans.

They say: No. Let's just cut those research dollars in half.

If that means ending clinical trial programs, they don't care. It is not their problem. They are doing just fine. Cut those programs.

It is bad for our families, and it is bad for our economy, but Trump, Musk, and the Republicans basically just don't care.

It is the same kind of problem with public education. You know, I love Save Our Schools, which we launched just a little over a day ago. The stories have flooded in from people of all ages, people from all different parts of the country, people with all different kinds of jobs right now, who say: Oh, yes, I remember that teacher. I remember my second grade teacher who changed my life. I remember that sixth grade teacher who taught me how to deal with the bullies. I remember the high school

teacher who told me I really could do something more and encouraged me along. Parents who wrote in said they had children with real challenges, and it was a public school teacher who stepped up and helped move them forward.

We focus on the teachers here, but it is those in the whole group that have committed their lives to our public education system. It is the busdriver. It is the folks who work in the cafeteria. It is the people who order the supplies to keep it all going, and they all do it because they believe in investing in our future. They believe in an America that we build, an America that gives every kid a fighting chance.

Now, I started out as a public school teacher with kids who had special needs. I really saw firsthand what it means to believe in the worth of every child and to invest in those children so that every child can do his or her best so that children have an opportunity to grow, to learn, to live independently.

All of that is the commitment of our public schools and our public school educators. Everybody is a part of that team because they believe in our kids and believe that this is how we build a future. No nation builds a great future by shortchanging its children. That has been a core part of our American values for a long, long time. Now Donald Trump and Elon Musk come along with a chain saw and say: We are just going to lop those programs off. We are just going to cut them off.

They already tried to fire half of all the people who work at the Department of Education and then decided that wasn't enough, so they turned around and said: Let's just shut the whole Department of Education down.

It is already having an impact on people, and the schools are scrambling to figure out what their budgets will look like. Whom are they going to lay off? Class sizes are likely to get bigger. That hurts every one of our kids. As to the kids with special needs who need aides sitting beside them, they are likely to have to go away. They can't do that work anymore.

It is the whole notion as a nation that we care more about a handful of billionaires getting—listen to those numbers again—\$7 trillion in tax giveaways from the Republicans while we just starve or completely eliminate the programs to support public schools all across this country. Budgets are our values, and the values of Donald Trump and Elon Musk and the Republicans that are reflected in this budget—billionaires over our kids—are the wrong values. Those are not America's values, and now is the time to fight back.

It is a hard time right now. I understand that it feels like we are in a sandstorm, that there is something every single day. We have new tariffs announced yesterday that make no sense at all; the stock market is plunging; renaming the Gulf of Mexico; invading Greenland. There is so, so much going on.

But understand this: There really is direction here, and that is what is happening right now between Elon Musk, Donald Trump, and Republicans in the U.S. Senate. That is why all this noise and swirl and speculation are going on very quietly—try to tiptoe into the U.S. Senate and offer \$7 trillion in tax giveaways, mostly to folks like Elon Musk and his fellow billionaires; offer them all the money and then tell our schoolkids, tell our seniors, tell everyone else in America: You have to pay for it because the billionaires are the special people in this country. They are the ones who are catered to here in the U.S. Senate.

Well, I get it. That is what Trump wants. That is what Musk wants. That is evidently what the Republicans in the Senate want. It is not what Democrats want.

We are fighting back. We believe that billionaires and billionaire corporations ought to pay their fair share. They ought to pay taxes. And we ought to use some of that money to invest in medical research, to invest in our public schools, to invest in expanding Social Security, to invest in the Department of Veterans Affairs so that we are honoring our promises to our vets. This is about who the government works for.

Trump, Musk, and the Republicans want a government that works even better for billionaires. Democrats are fighting for a government that works better for everyone else.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. KELLY. Mr. President, across Arizona, I am hearing from families who are doing everything right. They are working longer hours—sometimes two or three jobs—budgeting carefully, trying to save for their families and their children's futures. But they are still paying more at the grocery store and more for rent and barely making it from one paycheck to the next. One emergency, whether it is a car repair or a medical bill, could throw the entire monthly budget out of whack. That is what people are living every single day.

So when they hear that Congress is once again debating another tax cut—but not for them, for billionaires and giant corporations—they wonder: Who in Washington really cares about me? Who is Washington working for?

This is a handout to a tiny fraction of some of the wealthiest people in the world, people who already have more money than they could spend in a lifetime. If you raise taxes on the billionaires and multimillionaires, which is what we should be doing, they would still be billionaires and multimillionaires.

But, once again, Republicans want to instead cut their taxes, and working families are going to be the ones left holding the bill because this debate is not about numbers on a spreadsheet. This budget is about what gets cut to

pay for those tax breaks. It is about which kid doesn't get a meal at school, which family loses their home to cover medical care for their kid or their parent, which patient skips the medical care they need because Congress decided that billionaires needed a bigger tax break.

We don't need to guess what that looks like. Arizonans are already telling me.

Angela from Phoenix works in school nutrition. She called my office to speak out against these budget cuts, and I am going to quote her directly. This is a quote from Angela:

I work in school nutrition, and I see how many students benefit from the school breakfast and national school lunch program. The national school lunch program is actually the second largest food nutrition assistance program behind SNAP. And when students participate in these school meal programs, their families benefit and the community benefits.

This is still Angela here:

If we keep making these cuts, we're going to harm people that are already hurting. People are already struggling out there—we're already struggling. We need these programs invested in, not divested from. And for what? To give cuts to rich people, to billionaires, while all of us suffer? It's not right.

Mr. President, Angela is absolutely right.

And Desiree from Phoenix wrote to me. She said:

I am a hardworking Arizonan who is watching my family and community struggle while the wealthiest Americans get even richer. I have family members who are disabled and rely on government assistance—programs like SNAP and Social Security Disability Insurance. These aren't luxuries.

She said:

These are lifelines. And yet, their benefits are being cut while billionaires and massive corporations get even more tax breaks.

This is still a quote from Desiree:

Every time a tax policy favors the ultra-wealthy, it takes food off the tables of families who are barely getting by. It forces people with disabilities to make impossible choices between rent, medication, and groceries. This is not the Arizona I believe in.

She said:

This is not the America I want to see. We need leaders who fight for us—the working people, the families who are doing everything right and still falling behind. We need tax policies that are fair, that hold the wealthiest accountable, and that protect the programs that keep our most vulnerable from being pushed even further into poverty.

This is story No. 3, from Nicholas. Now, Nicholas is a medical student from Arizona, and he wrote to me about what these cuts would mean for him and his partner, who are both about to graduate with hundreds of thousands of dollars in student debt.

Nicholas said:

Congress must pass a budget that benefits Americans instead of slashing funds to essential life-saving programs like Medicaid to finance tax breaks for the wealthy.

He said:

I would not have been able to afford healthcare during medical school without Medicaid. My partner is in the same posi-

tion. Please consider people like us who rely on these programs so we can stay healthy and continue serving our communities as future physicians.

And Lexxie from Phoenix, who has had nine open-heart surgeries—she is now in heart failure, and she is disabled. Medicaid and SNAP are the only way that she can access the care, medications, and the food she needs to stay alive.

Lexxie said, in her letter:

Removing programs such as Medicaid and SNAP would be terribly detrimental to people like myself, with disabilities.

And she said:

I myself, along with other patients with Congenital Heart Disease, whether they be adults . . . or young children looking to stand a chance in the world, would pass away.

She said she and others will die.

She went on:

In a way, I feel as this letter will be pushed aside and ignored. However, I am hopeful that this letter will actually hold to something, for the members of the 119th Congress, to actually take a stand against Mr. Trump and his administration, and their life-threatening agendas.

Mr. President, every single one of these stories is a reminder of what is at stake here. These are the voices we should be listening to, not billionaire donors, not corporate lobbyists.

And, by the way, Elon Musk shouldn't be rigging the Federal budget to give himself another tax break. Why is he allowed to do that?

I would rather listen to Nicholas and Desiree and Angela and Lexxie. These are the people we should be listening to, not an unelected billionaire working for another billionaire, trying to get billionaires more tax breaks.

Arizona families, they are paying attention. I am sure Kansas families are as well. And they are asking us to do the right thing. These are the people who will pay the price if Senate Republicans move forward with this plan, and it is a steep price.

And let's be clear. This is not the first time that we have seen this playbook. This is a rerun. In 2017, President Trump signed into law the so-called Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. That is what they called it. It slashed the tax rate for big corporations. It showered benefits on the top 1 percent and promised big things. It promised higher wages for workers. It promised a manufacturing boom and stronger economic growth.

Do you want to know what really happened?

Workers didn't get big raises. There was no manufacturing boom. Instead, corporations used the money to buy back stock and enrich their executives and their shareholders—big surprise.

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the top 5 percent of earners received nearly half of the tax benefits. Think about that. The top 5 percent, they got half. A family making \$30,000 a year, do you know how much they got? They got 130 bucks. But those in the top 0.1 percent, the

ones making more than \$5 million, they got a \$278,000 tax break. The rich got richer; everybody else got screwed.

And now some of my colleagues, they want to do it again. They want to extend those tax breaks permanently, and they are trying to hide the true cost of this using a gimmick called—get this—the current policy baseline. This is a pretend way to make these tax breaks look like they don't cost anything. But we know better, and I think the American people know better.

According to the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, extending these tax cuts, like they are planning to do, would add over \$4.5 trillion to the debt in the next 10 years, and that would add up to about, over the next 30 years, \$37 trillion. That means doubling our current national debt—doubling it—just to give a tax cut to rich people.

(Mr. MULLIN assumed the Chair.)

And the Congressional Budget Office, which is the gold standard for this stuff, says that would push our national debt to 214 percent of GDP by 2054—214 percent. That is an economic disaster for our country.

And all of this for what? So someone with more money than they can spend in a lifetime gets even more money.

Let me put this into perspective here. The median household income in this country is about \$80,000 per year. It would take 1,245 years, about 15 lifetimes, for someone making that much to earn \$100 million—over 1,200 years. And yet some of my colleagues think that those aren't the people who need a tax cut.

And this isn't just about tax policy. It is about the kind of country we want to be. Do we want to be a country that hands billionaires another break while a kid goes without lunch in school, where a retired veteran living on Social Security is told there is no money left for him, but there is plenty for the wealthiest Americans?

That is the choice in front of us because this budget doesn't just fail working families; it punishes them. It says: If you are doing everything right, if you are working hard, if you are raising your kids, if you are paying your taxes, you are on your own. That is not just bad policy; that is wrong.

And let's be clear. This Republican math is not fair, and Arizonans, my constituents, are seeing through this. I guess they probably are in Oklahoma as well.

Everyone in this Chamber should think about their priorities and the priorities of the people they came here to represent. So let's stop wrecking the finances of working families just to hand out more tax breaks for billionaires. Let's build an economy that actually works for the people who make the economy run instead of imposing tariffs that are actually just tax increases on everyday goods families depend on. Let's bring back manufacturing and support union jobs. That is what will make Americans better off.

And Arizonans didn't send me here to be a rubberstamp on a bad deal. They sent me here to fight for them and to stand up for them, and I am going to keep doing that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MULLIN). The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, before he leaves the floor, I want to thank my colleague from Arizona for his incredibly wise remarks this morning and for his indignation at the insanity of this so-called tax bill that we are considering on the floor.

What he was saying was about the benefits of this bill and how they are all going to go to the wealthiest people in America, and I sat here wondering: Why? Why? Why would we pass a bill like that on the floor of the Senate when the American people have so, so many needs? Why, when we have had an economy that for 50 years, because of the trickle-down economic policies that have been pursued by Republicans and sometimes Democrats in this Chamber, we see that the country has less economic mobility than it has had, which is a fancy way of describing a situation where people in America no longer feel that if they work hard, they are going to get ahead or that if they work hard, their kids are going to get ahead. That is the American dream, is to know your kids are going to do better than you did.

For the first time in American history, as I said last night on this floor, for the first time in American history, if you are 30 years old in this country, you have a 50-percent chance of earning a salary as good as the one your parents had. That has never been true before.

Incomes are down for young men in their twenties in this country by 40 percent since the mid-1970s, and we continue to see the distribution of wealth and the distribution of income make it harder and harder and harder for people to stay in the middle class, to afford the middle class, to be able to afford childcare, healthcare, higher education, a vacation for themselves and their families, to say nothing of the families that are living in poverty in America.

I used to be the superintendent of the Denver Public Schools before I came here. The parents and grandparents in my school district, which was mostly kids of color, mostly kids living in poverty, were very often working two and three jobs just to feed their families. No matter what they did, no matter how hard they worked, they couldn't get their kids out of poverty.

That economic dislocation, I think, is one of the reasons why the American people elected Donald Trump again, because they were so frustrated with an economy that seemed to have no benefit for them or their kids that they were willing to take the risk of chaos to try to have some sort of breakthrough.

While I wouldn't have wanted that chaos, I can understand the impulse

since neither party has done a very good job of delivering for working people in this country in a long time.

We are going to see how that chaos theory works itself out because the chaos is raining down on our country right now. The chaos is raining down on the American people right now.

One of the things that are really interesting to me about this tax bill is that I don't think there is any mayor in America who would propose what has been proposed here. I don't think there is any mayor in America that would say "My plan for my community is to borrow more money than we have ever borrowed in the history of our community." The debt adds up to another \$4.6 trillion—I guess it is \$5.5 trillion if you count interest. "I am going to borrow more money than I have ever borrowed, but we are not going to spend it on roads or bridges or parks, the desperate need for mental health treatment across our country, especially among kids but also among seniors as well and everybody else. I am not going to spend it on parks or schools. I am going to take that money, and I am going to give it to the richest neighborhood in town and hope that somehow it is going to trickle down to everybody else."

That economic theory, when you put it in the terms of any community in America, makes no sense at all. And America is a community.

It makes no sense for our Nation to go into debt, to force the children and grandchildren of our teachers and police officers and firefighters to pay back this debt, to pay back this interest. For what? To finance tax cuts for the wealthiest people in America when for the last 40 or 50 years, almost all of the benefit of the economy has accrued to the people at the top.

We need an economy in this country that when it grows, it grows for everybody, not just the people at the top. That is what we need to do to save our democracy. You can't run a democracy successfully if people feel like their kids aren't going to live a better life than they lived. You can't make a case that the rule of law is important or that our checks and balances are important or that our exercise in self-government is important if people feel like their kids aren't going to do better than they did.

Show me a time in history when that has been true—in human history when that has been true. It would be unreasonable to expect that that is going to be the case here, and you can feel the strains of that. You can feel the strains of that every day I go home to Colorado and I see people in every single county who are worried that their kids are not going to be able to afford to live in Colorado. They are worried that their kids are never going to be able to afford the housing that they have been able to afford.

I could imagine a set of tax policies that made a lot of sense to America. I have fought for years and years and

years to expand the child tax credit in this country. In fact, we did it during the Biden administration for 1 year. We were able to expand the child tax credit. Over 90 percent of families in Colorado benefited, and 90 percent of kids benefited. We cut the child poverty rate in America in half.

In the richest country in the world, we demonstrated that we did not have to accept the level of childhood poverty that we have as a permanent feature of our democracy or a permanent feature of our economy. We could fix it on this floor. We could pull a lever that actually mattered to the American people. And it did matter. That was a tough time during COVID. That was a tough time for families.

Not only that, we were able to take that tax credit and pay it out monthly. There were a lot of people in this city who said that would be impossible, that the IRS could never do that. Well, they did it, and families had a little bit of an extra benefit at the end of the month to pay for schoolbooks or after-school programs or clothes to go back to school at the beginning of the year. That is the time of year it was.

You could feel the compression literally lifting off the chests of working people that I represented who could for a moment feel like they could make the rent and also buy a few extra hours of childcare so they could stay at work, so they could make more money to support their children.

That is a glimmer of what it would look like to have an economy that, when it grew, it actually grew for everybody, not just the people at the very top; where people felt like they could work hard and get into the middle class, that they could work hard and get out of poverty—get their kids out of poverty, most importantly—and get into the middle class.

We could expand the earned income tax credit, which rewards working people, again. That also would be a tax cut for the middle class. In fact, if you take those two tax cuts together—which we did during the Biden administration, but now that has gone away—those were the largest tax cuts for middle-class people, for working people I think in the country's history, certainly in modern history. It was the biggest reduction in childhood poverty in modern American history and probably in American history.

I actually think we should end childhood poverty in this country. That is what I believe. I think the richest country in the world should see it being in our interest to end childhood poverty and reduce all of the ancillary problems that occur in our society because kids are living in poverty through no fault of their own. Everybody knows that. Better investment in early childhood education. Better investment in kids to get them out of poverty. Let's put them on the right path.

We are going to pay for it one way or another, and I would rather pay for it

with productive citizens as a benefit of a Tax Code that is actually investing in the American people. But here we are finding ourselves in a place where what we are being told is that we are going to pass a tax bill that blows a massive hole in our deficit that is about the size of all the money that we borrowed to get here to begin with. And for what? To give tax cuts to the wealthiest people in our country, to the wealthiest neighborhoods in America, and expect that somehow that is going to trickle down to everybody else.

Why? Why would we do something that irrational when the needs in America are so great, when we have the lack of economic mobility that I was talking about? I can think of a lot of reasons for it, but one of the ones that I keep coming back to is the campaign promises that some people seem to make around here as a result of the distorted campaign finance system we have.

Over the last couple weeks, there have been articles day after day after day and reports on television about the \$20 million that Elon Musk spent in Wisconsin to try to elect one supreme court justice there. He was unsuccessful. The people in Wisconsin rejected Elon Musk's three-ring circus that he brought to Wisconsin. They rejected his \$20 million.

But one thing that is so amazing to me is how cavalierly we accepted the idea that he was spending \$20 million to begin with. He is proud of that. He is proud of that.

He spent roughly \$290 million on Donald Trump's campaign. I think it is inarguable that he might have made the difference in Pennsylvania, for example, where he was practically handing money out. It is like it was a portrait of the Senate in the gilded age, where the Senate was dominated by special interests with cartoons of dollar bills falling out of their pockets.

He wandered around Pennsylvania with dollar bills falling out of his pockets—hundred-dollar bills, thousand-dollar bills. In Wisconsin, million-dollar bills he was giving away for the benefit of Donald Trump and to keep the tax system as distorted as it is, as unhelpful to the American people as it could be.

Now, here is the thing: He is so wealthy—I think he is worth something like \$378 billion, something like that. I will check that. But he is so wealthy that that \$20 million to him is such a small fraction of his wealth that it is like somebody in Colorado buying one hamburger from McDonald's.

Would somebody in Colorado spend the money on one hamburger at McDonald's if they thought they controlled the outcome of the election in Wisconsin?

That \$290 million that he spent in the last Trump campaign—a big part of that in Pennsylvania but other places as well—that sounds like a lot of money to anybody here. And \$290 mil-

lion—that is a lot of money. If you look at that in the context of, you know, a teacher in Colorado, it is about \$50. That is the cost of a steak dinner for a teacher in Colorado. That is not nothing. That is not nothing.

But if you knew you could control the outcome of America's future by spending the equivalent of what a steak dinner costs, even if you were a teacher in my old school district where I was the superintendent, you might do it, which is a reminder about why we have to change the campaign finance laws in this country. We cannot accept Citizens United as a permanent state of affairs, as a permanent feature of our democracy.

And sometimes people say: Well, what are you going to do about it? The Supreme Court made a constitutional ruling about it. There is nothing you can do to fix it.

There are plenty of generations of Americans that have confronted problems with a constitutional ruling like the Supreme Court, and they have done something about it. They have amended the Constitution in their time.

There are probably a number of things we should do to make our democracy work better, but one of those would be to make sure that the wealthiest people in the country can't buy elections and can't do it with dark money either. So we can understand what is actually going on here, and we can explain why we have got such a preposterous proposal in front of us right now. It cuts taxes for the wealthiest people and threatens healthcare for the most vulnerable people in our country.

I will close just by saying, there are some crazy things in our tax law. Crazy. Crazy. There is this thing called step-up basis, where people like Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg, the wealthiest people in our country—and I don't begrudge them their success, but the wealthiest people in our country are evading all taxes on the money that they have made because what they do is they hold their shares, the stock in their company. They never sell. They borrow against that, which allows them to finance their lifestyles.

But for their entire lifetime, no tax is ever paid on their stocks, on their shares. And then they die, and then those stocks go to their very, very, very fortunate "nepo" babies who get to inherit it at the original price that the stock was valued decades ago and pay no taxes as a result of that.

No one else in America gets that treatment. No one else in America gets that tax treatment—and in our country today because of that unbelievable concentration of wealth, in our country today because we have found ourselves, frankly, living in a new gilded age, which is reflected in the tax bill that is in front of us.

These guys are willing to spend a tiny fraction of their net worth to make sure that the Tax Code continues to serve them and not the rest of the

American people. That is why we have a tax bill, even putting aside stepped-up basis, where 50 percent of the benefit goes to the top 5 percent, and 10 percent of the benefit goes to the top 0.1 percent. That is when we live in a time in American history when the bottom 50 percent of Americans own 2 percent of the wealth of our country; at a time when young men in their twenties are seeing their pay cut by 40 percent since 1976; at a time when half the 30-year-olds in America are going to earn less money, for the first time in American history, than their parents did.

We have a job to do here. We have a job to do in this Nation. We have to create an economy that when it grows, it grows for everybody again—and not just on the coast but throughout the entire country. That is what we should be focused on today. That is what the American people need. They should have a tax bill that reflects the interests of their kids, a tax bill that reflects the interests of the American middle class, the most significant invention of our democracy in modern times. That needs to be reinforced. It needs to be strengthened.

We have got to drag our economy into the 21st century in a way that will produce those sorts of outcomes for everyone in our economy, not just the people at the top.

And we need a campaign finance system that reflects the values and the principles of a majority of Americans to make sure that our democracy can continue to function as well.

I see my friend from California. I will yield the floor, and I look forward to the opportunity of hearing his speech.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from the State of Colorado for yielding and staying for a few minutes because I know that he shares one of my key observations—I woke up this morning preparing for today's discussion, today's debate, and for today's series of votes—and that is the American people can be forgiven if they are tuning in today to this discussion and wondering, Haven't I seen this before? This sounds awfully familiar.

It was a little over 7 years ago, in December of 2017, that Republicans passed the single biggest priority of the first Trump administration. No, it wasn't record investment in our Nation's infrastructure that was promised almost on a weekly basis and never happened during the first Trump administration. Despite their best efforts, it was not repealing the Affordable Care Act as they pledged to do time and time again.

What it was, what Republicans were successful in doing was passing a historic tax break for the wealthiest Americans. It added nearly \$2 trillion to our Nation's debt—deficit hawks, are you listening?—two trillion dollars that could have gone to improve public schools; could have gone to address the

housing supply challenges in our Nation; could have gone to helping lift children and families out of poverty, but, no, a tax break for the wealthiest Americans and some of the largest corporations on the planet. Yes, in their actions in 2017, it included a permanent cut to the corporate tax rate by 14 percent.

So it begs the question, What was the impact of these tax breaks? It has been a pretty good few years for some people. Again, ask these large corporations and the wealthiest Americans, it has been a great economic ride for them but not for working families.

Most Americans have since increasingly struggled with the cost of groceries, the cost of putting gas in the car, struggling to pay the mortgage or the rent. And we can flash forward from 7 years ago to just this last November. We know the election results. I am not an election denier. I know who won. And I know one of the big takeaways that people on both sides of the aisle learned from the results was that Americans were voting for lower prices—or so they thought.

And so I want to ask a question and follow it up with an explanation to my Republican colleagues. When is enough enough?

Because since the day Donald Trump took office for a second term, we continue to see prices going up, not down. Yes, the President that promised to lower prices on day one through his statements, through his rhetoric, through his policies and actions, has led to price increases across the board.

The richest President in American history has appointed a Cabinet, but who does he have by his side day in and day out? It is the richest man in the world to help guide these decisions. Decisions like imposing universal tariffs, which actually raises the cost of goods that Americans buy, from clothes to groceries, to electronics and everything in-between.

It is a tax, folks. It may not be called a tax, but we know how it works, American companies have to pay more to import goods. They pass those increased costs on to the consumer, so consumers are paying more. It is like a tax increase.

Some argue that, well, by paying more it is more money into the U.S. Treasury. Well, where is that money going to go? Is it going to public education? Donald Trump and Republicans are trying to eliminate the Department of Education.

Is it going into infrastructure projects? No. The administration has been moving to freeze funding, lay off workers, clawback critical funding that Congress has previously approved, a lot of it in a bipartisan basis.

So where is the money going? This is the *deja vu* part; their efforts to once again cut taxes for large corporations and the wealthiest in America, the billionaire class, if you will.

I mean, kind of connect those dots together and what it is, is this admin-

istration, with Republicans in Congress, robbing working families to give to the rich.

So I ask the question again: When is enough enough? Over 70 million Americans rely on Medicaid, for example, one of the larger items in our Federal budget. That includes 15 million Californians; Californians like the families I met at Rady's Children Hospital in San Diego a couple weeks ago who were sharing their stories, and I will get to that in a minute here.

But one of the big takeaways I had from that discussion was both the experience of the families, their fear about not being able to afford the necessary healthcare that their children need but also important business and policy lessons from the hospital administrators. Their CEO explaining to the public and to the press that the programs that they offer, not just his hospital, but all hospitals, programs that they offer isn't just for Medicaid patients. A lot of their patients use Medicaid to help afford the cost of services, but the programs are there for everybody.

So if they are forced to cut the programs because of cuts to Medicaid, then those programs are gone for everybody, not just Medicaid patients, even patients and families that aren't on Medicaid. The program is gone. The service is gone. It is impacting people's health, these proposed cuts.

But Republicans say that, you know, we have got to balance the budget; we have got to reduce costs. When we bring up specific examples like Medicaid, Republicans will say: Oh, no, that is not on the chopping block. We heard it from the President himself; it is not on the chopping block. But they continue to pursue their agenda of relief, tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans because they need some extra spending money at the expense of the health of children and families?

When is enough enough?

Medicaid isn't the only area of the budget that we know is on the chopping block. Republicans are looking to take aim at nutrition assistance programs for seniors—Meals on Wheels, you have heard of it—and programs for low-income children.

So let me get this straight. In 2017, Republicans, through their actions, through their votes, through their words, said: Oh, we can afford hundreds of billions of dollars in permanent tax cuts for corporations.

But, today, we can't afford programs that keep kids and seniors from going hungry?

When is enough enough?

I just pray that when Americans look back on this moment in history, the distinction of who stood where is crystal clear in their minds. The facts will be clear.

Well, let's pray that the misinformation, disinformation machine on the other side doesn't cloud the truth, because, again, we know this administration is demanding cuts—cuts to public

education. To make their tax-break goals, there will be cuts to Social Security benefits, to veterans' benefits, to small business assistance, to healthcare, and to research that saves lives.

And on the proposals that keep coming from the White House, just like all the nominees that have been coming from the White House, Republicans in Congress—Republicans in this Senate—continue to rubberstamp them all. That is why, at least on the House side, when Members went back to their districts, those with the courage to face their constituents' questions at a townhall were sensing the anger that is out there.

Americans are angry. They have a right to be angry. In some cases, they are asking the question, which we should ask ourselves on a daily basis here in this Chamber: Why does each one of us run for office and come and serve in the Capitol? Is it to rig the system for the top 1 percent? That is not what I ran for. Is it to make life harder for working families? Is that what you ran for?

Now, as I am speaking, I reflect a lot on my upbringing. I have shared with a lot of you personally, privately, and I have shared publicly what life was like for me growing up in the working-class community of Pacoima, CA—a proud community. My dad, for 40 years, worked as a short-order cook. For the same 40 years, my mom used to work cleaning houses.

You can imagine we grew up in a very modest home, on modest incomes. On those modest incomes, my parents raised my sister, my brother, and me, and insisted that we get a good education. Our home was filled with a lot of love, a lot of discipline, a lot of sacrifice.

There were times when it was tough. There were times when money was more than just tight. So when I hear people talk about, "Oh, families that live paycheck to paycheck," I know what that means. I know what it means for so many families across the country, for whom just a couple hundred dollars' difference makes a huge difference. I know the stress, the anxiety of when the car unexpectedly breaks down, and you look at your saving account and, on the one hand, you may not have enough to pay for repairs, but you also know you can't afford to not get to work. So what do you do?

But it is the same spirit of families like mine and the communities like the one I grew up in that says: I am not interested in a handout. I just want a fair shot. I am willing to work hard to get ahead. I am willing to work hard to provide for my family. I am willing to work hard to make sure my kids have a better shot at the American dream than I do.

But that is not the spirit of the bill that we are going to be entertaining today. In fact, it is the opposite. This Republican tax/budget bill makes life

harder for working families, makes working families pay more to subsidize tax breaks for the rich.

And you know what? To add insult to injury, where they are seeking to cut to afford these tax breaks for the wealthy are the very benefits that hard-working families have paid into through their taxes. These are benefits that they have earned.

And so I ask again, colleagues: When is enough enough?

If you won't answer to me, let me ask on behalf of some constituents that have reached out to my office expressing their fear because of what these proposals would mean for them—people like Tina Ewing-Wilson from the Inland Empire, who experienced what it was like the last time Medi-Cal recipients saw their benefits cut.

See, Tina struggles with seizures and developmental disabilities and requires 24/7 care. But when the great recession hit a few years ago and Medicaid cuts followed, Tina knew she could only pay for her care by offering room and board to caregivers—caregivers who went on to abuse drugs and alcohol and take advantage of her financially.

She survived it. She is traumatized by it. And she is wondering what will happen if Republicans cut Medicaid again.

There is the story of Sasha Bittner, who was born with cerebral palsy and who lives as a quadriplegic with speech and vision challenges. But with the help of services through Medicaid, Sasha went on to graduate from the University of California, Berkeley—that is very impressive—and she serves on the California State Council on Developmental Disabilities.

She says Medicaid literally saved her life and that a Medicaid cap would be "an actual death sentence."

Now, think about a nursing aide from Orange County, CA, whom I met just a few weeks ago when she came to Washington to protest the proposed cuts to Medicaid, Josephine Rios. She is a proud healthcare worker, and she is a proud grandmother to a 7-year-old boy, Elijah. The medication alone to treat Elijah's cerebral palsy is normally about \$5,000 a month.

We will save the debate for the cost of these treatments for another day, but that is what they are. And that is before you add the cost of physical therapy, the equipment, and other costs that he needs to live a meaningful life.

But thanks to Medicaid, Elijah and his family can afford treatment. But they fear what would happen if these cuts go through.

I share this, colleagues, because we are all hearing from our constituents, all of us—blue States, red States, purple States. All of us are hearing these fears—real fears—these real-world impacts of these proposed cuts. A vote for this budget—there is no way to add it up differently. A vote for this budget resolution is a vote to cut Medicaid—no ifs, ands, or buts.

Republicans in the House have been clear, and it is the only way to read the bill before us today.

So to my colleagues, again, when is enough enough?

To folks watching at home, don't let anybody tell you otherwise.

And I guess, as I begin to close, I will suggest that how we vote on this budget resolution will also determine where each one of us chooses to stand. Is it with the billionaires and the big corporations or is it with working families?

And from here on out, for every round of tax breaks for billionaires that Republicans would ask us to consider and act on, we are all going to be on the record. Let the history show: Do you stand with the wealthy or do you stand with the working class? I choose to stand with the hard-working families across the country that work hard to make communities in our country thrive. It is a big question for all of us—a big, big question for our country and our future.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, for 4 years, America has watched as Joe Biden and the Democrats ran our country and our economy into the ground. That is what we have seen in the last 4 years. And every measure shows it: 10 million illegal immigrants, \$5 trillion in wasted Washington spending, the worst inflation in 40 years, energy prices rising over 30 percent, a weak and failed foreign policy. That is what the American people saw over the last 4 years.

In November, Americans chose a new path. Senate Republicans promised to get America back on track, and we are delivering.

I was at the Rose Garden on Wednesday and heard President Trump talk about our budget. He gave it his complete and total endorsement. So, today, the Senate budget is the building block for our bold Republican agenda. It fulfills our promises to secure the border, to rebuild our economy, and to restore peace through strength. Most importantly, it represents, in every way, a 180-degree turn from the deadly, destructive liberal failures of the past 4 years.

First, the Republican budget, what does it do? It gets rid of the waste that is out there—not Medicare, not Social Security, not Medicaid. We want to protect those vital programs. We want to preserve them. We need to preserve them for the people who they were intended to serve and who need them the most.

Seventy-two percent of Americans and even 55 percent of Democrats will say that they support cutting the waste and the fraud and the abuse because they have seen lists of dollars that have gone out from this last administration. They say: This seems like a waste. This seems like fraud.

This is an abuse of taxpayer dollars. We have a government that is too big, and it spends too much.

Yet, for some reason, Senate Democrats continue to come to the floor. They seem to be most upset that the waste that they support is being exposed—exposed for the massive amount of waste that it is.

The last time we voted on the budget, Senator SULLIVAN from Alaska offered an amendment to preserve and protect Medicaid and Medicare. Not a single Democrat voted to support that piece of legislation. The question now is, Will Democrats continue to protect the schemers and the scammers who continue to weaken these vital programs, because they are out there?

Second, the Republican budget moves toward locking down the border with \$175 billion in additional funding. It puts us on the path to finish the wall. It allows us to hire more Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers and Border Patrol agents, and it allows us to extend our detention capacity.

Look, illegal immigrants that are criminals are going to be deported from our country, not released into our communities. This is the opposite of what happened in the last 4 years, under the previous administration.

It is exactly what Americans need after 4 years of “wave them through”—Joe’s approach, which was an open border. Illegal crossings have dropped 94 percent since President Trump took office. Democrats said it couldn’t be done without a new law. No, we didn’t need a new law; we needed a new President, and the American people voted for that President.

Let’s take a look at March of 2024—that was last year, Joe Biden’s last year in the White House—compared to March of 2025, which was Donald Trump’s first year in the White House. In March of 2024, Joe Biden’s last year in the White House, there were 137,000 illegal crossings at our southern border—137,000. This March, under President Trump, there were 7,000. From 137,000 to 7,000. No new law; a new President.

Now we need to deport the illegal immigrants with criminal records, and there are hundreds of thousands of them. They are already in the country. This budget ensures law enforcement will get the resources they need to make our communities safer.

The third thing we want to do is we need to stop Democrats’ goal of raising taxes by \$4 trillion. Ninety percent of Americans got a tax cut from the Trump tax cuts in 2017. Our budget puts Congress on a path to make the tax cuts permanent. Permanency means certainty and stability for families and workers and, of course, for those who create jobs. Republicans want to ensure that Americans keep more of their hard-earned money—that is what people want—in their pocketbooks, in their wallets.

What is the tax-and-spend Democrats plan for all of this? Crushing 20 million

businesses and erasing 6 million jobs with the largest tax hike in history. That is what we are going to get if we get a \$4 trillion tax hike. For Republicans, a \$4 trillion tax increase is a nonstarter. For Democrats, it is their entire agenda.

Fourth, the Republican budget means American energy dominance. No more liberal handcuffs on American energy. We are going to go back to energy independence. Affordable, reliable, available American energy is the best way to grow the economy and to lower costs for people. With more energy production, Wyoming, my home State—American energy breadbasket, superpower of energy—we all win. America wins.

The Federal Government also wins if we do this. It is going to see, actually, a revenue increase as we produce more American energy. Because some of this is on Federal lands, the revenue comes to the government. And energy prices go down.

Finally, the Republican budget rebuilds the military. We do it with \$150 billion. We know weakness invites conflict. Strength is what deters wars. Today, there is a threat of terrorism all around the world. There is a threat from communist China. China is rapidly building up its military. There is a threat from Iran. Iran is racing towards a nuclear weapon. This budget will make America feared again. It will make our military more lethal, more intimidating.

I suspect that Democrats are going to fight these commonsense policies. Well, I have news for my colleagues. Democrats lost at the ballot box in November. Republicans won, and we are going to win now. We are going to continue to fight for the American people because the win isn’t about us as a party. The win is about our country. It is about the families all across the country.

The American people gave us a mission and a mandate: Secure the borders, lower taxes, affordable energy, peace through strength, and, of course, efficient, effective government. The Senate Republicans have a bold budget blueprint, and it is delivering for the American people. The Republican revolution of common sense is here.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, before I deliver the body of my remarks, I do want to respond briefly to my colleague, the Senator from Wyoming, on the question of national security because just last night, we learned that President Trump had fired the head of the National Security Agency right after his meeting with Laura Loomer, a rightwing activist. Not only was the head of NSA fired, but so were some other folks who worked at the National Security Council.

This is part of a pattern of President Trump firing people who have experience, people who know their subject

matter, and replacing them with political cronies. We already saw the results of that amateurism and amateur hour when it came to Signalgate, which is a big violation, of course, of classified information that very well could have put our troops at risk.

So I think when we talk about national security, it is important to recognize what is happening in this administration that is undermining our national security.

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Mr. President, I want to focus on the great betrayal. When he was a candidate going all over the country, Donald Trump said that he was going to look out for the forgotten Americans, that he was going to focus on kitchen-table issues. He was going to bring down prices on day one. On day one, he was going to bring down prices. Yet, what we are witnessing right now is just the opposite. We are witnessing the rigging of the American Government to gut services for working families. We all saw Elon Musk proudly brandishing a chain saw not that many weeks ago at a CPAC conference in the State of Maryland. Well, they are cutting away at services that benefit every American family. And for what purpose? To help the billionaires.

The centerpiece of the great betrayal is arriving on the Senate floor today. That will be the kickoff for the next phase of that great betrayal because Republicans are going to be taking the next step toward implementing a giant giveaway to the very, very wealthy, the already-powerful, and big corporations, and they are going to pay in part for it at the expense of the rest of America. But they are also not going to pay for a big part of it, and that will come at the expense of the rest of America when you blow up the deficits and debt and put upward pressure on interest rates.

Where they are talking about cutting are places like Medicaid. We will talk more about the very, very harmful impact that will have on the American people.

The President is talking about offsetting the costs of the tax cuts for the very rich with revenues from tariffs which amount to nothing more than a huge national sales tax. We will talk a little bit about that as well.

Then, of course, Elon Musk is claiming to find all these savings in the Federal Government. He is not making the government more efficient; he is actually rigging the government to help the very powerful, like trying to get rid of things like the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, which has returned billions of dollars to American consumers who were cheated by fraudsters. Some people don’t like that. CFPB made some powerful enemies, so they want to get rid of that. That is just one example of how this is not about efficiency but actually putting the government to work for billionaires and powerful people at the expense of the rest of the country.

Donald Trump has called this budget resolution that we are going to be debating on the floor as the first step to what is going to be the “big, beautiful bill.” Well, it is going to be a beautiful bill if you are a billionaire tech titan or if you are a billionaire in the Big Oil industry or in Big Pharma. It is going to be great news for all of you, but for the rest of America, it will be the great betrayal.

Mr. President, we know this because we have seen this movie before, although this time, we are going to see it on steroids. Back in 2017, during the first Trump tax cut for the wealthy, a lot of promises were made, and so we now have the reality of what happened to compare to the promises that were made at that time.

Let’s look at those promises. Donald Trump promised that giving tax cuts to wealthy people and big corporations would generate so much additional economic activity by trickling down to everybody else and somehow lifting everybody up. He claimed that would generate so much dynamic activity that it would generate additional revenue, and the additional revenue would be enough to offset the revenue lost because of tax cuts to rich people.

That is not even close to being true. In fact, what it did was it added \$2 trillion to the deficit. Just check with the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office. I actually asked this question in repeated hearings in the Senate Budget Committee. I serve on that committee. I asked it of Republican witnesses, Democratic witnesses, witnesses that are just called for their expertise. Not a single person has tried to claim that the tax cuts from 2017 actually paid for themselves—not even close. So that didn’t happen.

We also heard the claim from Donald Trump back then that corporations that got these tax cuts would use some of their additional revenue to quickly boost wages by \$4,000 on average to their workers, to their employees.

That didn’t happen either. What did happen was that some of those savings went to much bigger CEO bonuses. So that didn’t happen for regular workers. It was really good for the CEOs.

Another thing that Donald Trump and our Republican colleagues claimed back then was that when corporations got these big tax cuts, they would take those additional moneys and invest them in plant and equipment and therefore help the overall enterprise and grow it.

That didn’t happen either. What did the corporations use that extra savings for? Well, they used it for stock buybacks. They used it to jack up the price for the stockholders, but they did not use it to help expand plant equipment that helped the overall economy.

By the way, about 30 to 40 percent of those stockholders are actually foreigners. They don’t live in the United States. They are not Americans. So that big tax cut for the rich here, when it was used in the form of stock

buybacks, was a great bonanza for a lot of very wealthy people overseas.

Now we are back here on the eve of passing a Republican budget resolution. I hope we don’t pass it, but appears Republicans have the votes. And we are seeing this movie all over again. *Deja vu*. It is worth, therefore, again reminding us of what happened.

Senator WYDEN and I were on the floor the other day when he released a really blockbuster report about how major U.S. drug companies—Big Pharma—were able to exploit provisions of the 2017 Trump tax giveaway in a way that allowed them to dramatically lower their taxes. Pfizer’s tax returns, we showed, had 50 percent of their revenues coming from U.S. sales but only listed profits in the United States at zero. So Pfizer, when you look at their returns, acknowledge that 50 percent of their revenues came from American customers, but they booked zero profit on those revenues and sales in the United States.

How did they do that? They did it by essentially using overseas tax havens. It is called round-tripping. Essentially, they took profits here, funneled them through these schemes overseas, and as a result, they lowered their taxes by 40 percent. That is a pattern we have seen with other pharmaceutical companies as well.

Other Americans don’t have that ability, right? Those Americans who get their W-2 forms, you pay your taxes on those earnings. You don’t get to funnel them through overseas tax havens. Mom-and-pop shops, small businesses—they can’t make secret deals with foreign governments to hide their profits. So these schemes are designed to benefit one group and one group only, and that is very profitable corporations and very wealthy individuals.

The result is, when Pfizer does the kind of schemes—employs the kinds of schemes—that it has and they lower their effective tax rates, it means they are not paying their fair share here in the United States that we use to invest for the common good, whether it is infrastructure, whether it is our public schools—all things that, of course, Pfizer benefits from just as other major corporations do. So it is just a form of freeloading on the rest of the American people. That is what the Trump tax cuts for the wealthy are all about—big handouts for the very wealthy and freeloading on the rest of Americans.

If you look at the folks who were cheering on Donald Trump at the swearing-in, at the inaugural, they were the folks who were going to be benefitting the most. Elon Musk was right behind him. Of course, Elon Musk spent \$280 million to help elect Donald Trump. He is sort of getting more than his money’s worth these days. There were other billionaire tech titans and other billionaire members of the Trump Cabinet—the most billionaires, by far, of any Cabinet in American history. Those are the people who are

going to benefit from the tax giveaway to the very wealthy. Everybody else is going to pay for it in one way or another, and I want to talk about some of the ways they are going to pay for it, the rest of America.

One way is, it is going to send our deficits and debt skyrocketing again. As I said earlier, back in 2017, they claimed that no, no, no, no. It would all pay for itself. Well, it increased our deficits and debt by \$2 trillion. This time, it is an even bigger, whopping increase on the deficits and debt: \$6 trillion over 10 years and a \$37 trillion increase in the debt over the next 30 years according to the Congressional Budget Office. These are the non-partisan, green eyeshades guys—just the facts. That is the consequence of the Republican tax giveaway to the rich: huge deficits and debt. As I said, it will be three times higher than the last one, which was bad enough. And we are not incurring this additional debt because we are fighting a war. We are not incurring this debt to fight a pandemic or a recession. We are incurring all of this additional debt just to give the big corporations and the wealthy another round of tax cuts. So maybe it is not surprising that we are already seeing an effort to hide what is happening.

So how do you hide \$6 trillion in deficits and debt? Well, there are a lot of accounting gimmicks that are being employed. One of them is to say: Well, let’s just use the current policy baseline. Now, bear with me for a moment because this does get a little technical, but it is important, and it also reveals the scheme that is being employed by Republican Senators to try to cover up the costs of their tax cuts for the very wealthy.

You know, normally, we use what is called a current law baseline. In other words, the Congressional Budget Office tells us how much the deficits and debt will increase by the policy changes we are making to current law. That makes sense because current law is what exists until we change it. So current law tells us what our deficits would be now under the framework we currently have, but Republicans want to change this to a current policy baseline.

What they are saying is, Well, they gave tax cuts to the very rich and corporations for 10 years, and now we are going to do it for at least another 10 years. So let’s not count the additional costs of that when we compute the deficits and debt.

Well, it doesn’t really work that way in the real world. I mean, if you were, let’s say, a wealthy person and if you went through your family budget, and last year you bought 600 Rolexes, which put a lot of strain on the budget, and then you were sitting around the kitchen table this year to draw up the budget for the upcoming year and you said, “Well, you know, my dear, you know, it really won’t make our budget this year any worse if we buy another 600 Rolexes because we bought them

last year," now, that doesn't make any sense, and Americans know that, but that is exactly what Republican Senators are trying to do with their budget gimmicks. They are going to try to pretend away \$6 trillion in new debt.

Now, if you look at the budget resolution, it does anticipate that kind of addition to the deficit. They say: Well, we are also going to offset that by cutting \$2 trillion.

Now, when I do the math, if you claim you are cutting \$2 trillion—and we will talk a little bit about how they plan to do that—you are increasing the deficits and debt by \$6 trillion. Even if you cut the \$2 trillion, you are ending up with a whopping net deficit-debt increase. That is going to drive up interest rates for every American and make it harder for all other Americans to pay for things like cars and houses and mortgages and interest payments on cars—all this, again, in service of a tax cut for billionaires and big corporations.

Now, what is another way that President Trump says he is going to pay for this tax cut to the rich and big corporations?

Well, he says we are going to have all this additional revenue coming into the government through tariffs. He called it "Liberation Day." We saw how the country responded. We saw how the markets responded. They went way, way down. Economists of all political stripes are predicting a much higher risk of a recession. Some say it is much more likely than not at this point because of those tariffs. The President has unleashed a tariff war, and let's talk about what they are because, in effect, this is a national sales tax. This is pretty simple math.

When you put a tax on goods coming into the United States, it is the importer, the American importer, who pays that, and if you have to pay that extra amount and you have tight margins already, tight profit margins, you are going to have to pass that cost on to whom? The American consumers. That is why economists estimate that the Trump national sales tax is going to cost the average American household up to \$4,200 a year. That is what the President is doing. That will come in many forms.

The National Association of Home Builders predicts it will cost up to \$10,000 more to build a home because we import lumber and gypsum from other countries. We have lumber and gypsum here in the United States, but in order to accommodate the demand for new homes, we also import, and that will jack up the price, according to the National Association of Home Builders, up to \$10,000. Others are predicting even more.

A researcher at Cornell University estimates that new cars could cost as much as \$20,000 more because of how many times certain car parts cross boundaries and will face tariffs. You may send a part to the United States through some business in the United

States that works on enhancing that part. It goes back to another business overseas. They do something more. Then it comes back and is then used in an American car. If every time it crosses a border you are facing a big tariff, the costs of those cars are going to go up. In the case of the U.S.-Canada border, sometimes auto parts cross them as many as six times before the final assembly.

So whether it is buying a car or buying a house, these are things families work hard to purchase, to save up for. The Trump tariffs are going to put them farther out of reach. This is a Trump tax increase on the American dream. Again, for what purpose? All to provide tax cuts and a big tax windfall to the very wealthy and the biggest corporations.

But the harm from this national sales tax is not only the additional prices Americans will pay here at home; it is also the losses to businesses in the United States that produce products here and export them overseas because the rest of the world is not going to stand still and do nothing while Donald Trump slaps a big tax on the products they are sending to the United States. They are not going to do that. In fact, China has already responded. They just imposed a 34-percent tariff on American products. They have also taken other measures to make it harder for the American businesses that produce goods here to export those to China.

When China puts on a 34-percent tariff and when other countries around the world respond as they inevitably will, it means American companies here at home will not be able to sell as many of their goods around the world. That is pretty obvious. Again, that is pretty simple math. That means they will have to lay off people. That means less economic activity here at home. Again, all for what purpose? To say you are offsetting tax cuts for the very wealthy.

If anybody doubts this does not cost American producers and manufacturers, let's just look back to the first Trump administration, where there was a mini version of this tariff war, a much smaller one, and even that smaller one cost the American taxpayers dearly because what happened was, when President Trump in his first term imposed tariffs on Chinese products coming into the United States, China responded. They slapped on tariffs to American exports, especially American agricultural exports—wheat, soybeans. What did that mean? Again, it is simple math that those American producers sold fewer goods in China, and it cost them.

What did President Trump do then? He actually used a big taxpayer subsidy—it was around \$28 billion—to pay off American farmers who had been hurt by his mini trade war at that time. Well, the best way not to hurt American farmers is to not slap on these tariffs in the first place, which inevitably invites retaliation.

Why should the American taxpayer have to foot the bill for all this? The last time, this was a mini trade war. Now he has taken this worldwide. Imagine if you had to cover the costs for the losses of every American business through some taxpayer subsidy. I mean, it would be just a huge number. So here we have the President of the United States wreaking havoc on the American economy—again, to pay for tax cuts for the very rich.

You know, I had some very small businesses in my State of Maryland writing to me about some of these costs that they are facing. Here is one I got just a couple of weeks ago. This is from, again, a very small business in Greenbelt, MD. This is a person who has a small hand-dyed cotton/yarn business.

She writes:

Most of my yarns are imported and can't easily be replicated by domestic suppliers. In 2 weeks, I will receive my first custom-blend yarn from Peru, which has taken me and the mill the better part of a year to develop. The 10-percent tariff on Peru imposed with no warning and no provocation means this yarn will suddenly cost me about a mortgage payment extra. Several of my existing yarns will also cost 10 to 25 percent more now when I go to reorder, thanks to the Canadian and EU tariffs. This cuts severely into my already tight margins.

Again, this woman is talking about cutting losses, cutting her income, and missing a mortgage payment. This is a very small business.

Here is another letter:

My daughter and I own a greeting card and paper packaging distribution company. It is our 45th year in business. We employ some 20 Baltimore City and County residents and have 100-plus independent sales reps throughout the United States selling our product.

While most of our products are manufactured in the UK and the European Union, 20 to 25 percent of our product, which is designed in the UK, is manufactured in China. And because of the first Trump administration, the cost of that went way up. But now, with this new round, it brings the total sales tax cost, the tariff on this small business, to 45 percent, with 10-percent increases each month.

This person says they have 20 people, 50 people. They are going to lay off about 10 percent of their employees if this happens. And it just did happen.

So this imposes real harm and costs on the American people.

As I say, it is a double whammy. First, it is a national sales tax, and so American consumers pay more. And then, American businesses get socked because they can no longer export as many of their goods and products overseas.

Let's look at another way that Senate Republicans want to pay for this tax cut for the very rich and the big corporations, and that is by cutting Medicaid. All you have to do is look at the instructions in the House budget resolution, which will be part of what is considered here today. And as the Congressional Budget Office has told all of us that the only way to find the \$880 billion that they want to cut under

the jurisdiction of the House Energy and Commerce Committee is to come after Medicaid. I mean, it is just mathematically impossible to do it otherwise.

So while Donald Trump said he “loves and cherishes” Medicaid, that is not what they are actually doing.

In addition to taking direct hits at Medicaid—and we have discussed the impact of that on the floor of the Senate at length, and we will discuss them at greater length—we also see Elon Musk and Donald Trump going after the people who administer Medicaid and Medicare benefits.

In fact, just last week, they fired at least 300 civil servants at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, or CMS. They provide and deliver those healthcare benefits to 160 million Americans across our country.

I want to read just one message from one of those fired civil servants. I just got this letter on Monday:

Today, my life was changed so swiftly I can barely catch my breath to consider what I have now lost. Just wanted to share my story after 44 years of public service (30 in the military and 14 in the federal government). I was proudly serving the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, and I got a letter today ending my public service—cold and hard.

It said—and she quoted:

“Thanks for your service . . . we basically don’t need you anymore.”

This is to a disabled veteran who loves her country and has been serving, as she writes, “since I was 18 years old.”

I have raised my right hand more times than I can remember. . . . I want my story out there to help others. . . . Federal workers and especially Veterans don’t deserve this treatment. No one does.

That is a story we are hearing across the Federal Government—people fired indiscriminately based on a big lie. Many of these people, just to add insult to injury, got letters saying they were being fired for poor performance, only to find out that they had actually received glowing performance reviews, and, in many cases, they had been recently promoted based on their merit.

That is not only happening at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid—again, these are the people who helped deliver those benefits. You know, benefits don’t do much for you if the people who deliver them and administer them are gone.

Of course, that is what is happening at the Social Security Administration as well. At the Social Security Administration, they came in. They randomly, indiscriminately fired a lot of people. And now reports indicate they want to get rid of over 8,000 more folks at the Social Security Administration. These are the folks who deliver Social Security benefits to 73 million Americans—1 in 6 Marylanders.

Social Security keeps 20 million Americans, including kids, out of poverty. We have 73 million people on Social Security. For 20 million of them,

that is the difference between being in poverty or not being in poverty.

I should point out, this is not about government efficiency, as I said earlier. If you look at the 12,000 Federal employees who work at the Social Security Administration, which is in Baltimore—we are proud that they have their home there—they have been running the Social Security Administration for the past 90 years and have never missed a payment.

So when Secretary of Commerce Lutnick said, “You know, I don’t think Americans would miss 1 week of their Social Security payments. Only the fraudsters would feel that. They are the only people who would notice”—what a pile of garbage. He said his mother wouldn’t notice. Well, you know, how many moms and dads have billionaire sons? That is the question.

I will tell you, 73 million Americans will notice. But that is the kind of attitude—the attitude—we are seeing from Elon Musk, the richest person in the world, and Donald Trump.

I see my colleagues are on the floor here, and so I am going to wrap up my remarks. But I will be speaking more in the coming days. I see both of my colleagues, the ranking member of the Finance Committee and Senator KLOBUCHAR from Minnesota.

I will tell you, the proposal we are going to hear from the Republicans is to add \$6 trillion to the debt over the next 10 years to pay for tax cuts for the rich. You know, if you really want to blow through the deficit like that, there are a lot of other more important things we could do for the country with that money.

We could save Social Security. Think about that. We could fund special education fully in our schools and finally meet those promises. We could expand Medicare to give seniors dental, vision, and hearing benefits—something that Senator SANDERS from Vermont has been calling for, for a long time. We could expand the child tax credit.

If you want to blow through the deficit and debt by \$6 trillion or \$37 trillion over 30 years, we have a lot better uses for that money than tax cuts for rich people and big corporations.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JUSTICE). The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I appreciated the words of my colleague from Maryland because I was standing there thinking that a budget is actually a choice. It is a value choice. It is an economic voice of where you want to spend the taxpayers’ hard-earned money.

What this budget does, as he points out, is \$6 trillion in the next 10 years that would be added to the debt because of tax cuts for the wealthiest people.

I have no problem making sure we don’t increase taxes for people making under \$400,000 a year. That is a good idea. But this is a way-different animal than that. It actually takes the parts

of the Trump tax cuts for the wealthy, makes sure they stay in place, and then adds even more so that two-thirds of the benefits from this is going to the wealthiest and the big corporations.

The thing he raised that I loved was, What could you do with that money? Well, you could reduce the debt. That would be a good thing. You could put part of it so that we make sure we do that. You could put the funding into actually taking on, some say, tax incentives for housing, which we so dearly need, to work with the private sector to build more housing. You could put it into incentives for childcare. You could shore up Social Security. You could do all kinds of great things that the people actually thought they were voting for, even a large number of them who voted for Donald Trump. But that is not what this budget is.

So I appreciate Senator VAN HOLLEN pointing out that, in the end, these budgets are a choice: Who do you want to spend the money on? What do you think is going to work for this economy?

We already know that Donald Trump has sent this economy into a tailspin, as the market continues to go down. And this isn’t just the market, as horrified as traders and experts on Wall Street are. You have got to take it to Main Street. And when you take it to Main Street, you have got people who have been depending on their retirement, whether it is a 401(k) or some other kind of retirement, for the rest of their lives.

You have people who have saved money for their kids to go to school. Or you have young people just starting out who maybe have, you know, 5 years into savings and don’t know if their jobs still are going to be there because the economy is going into a tailspin. That is a choice. That was a totally self-inflicted wound yesterday. That was a choice.

The economy, coming out of the pandemic, struggling through all of that—inflation and the like—was actually, when Donald Trump took over, in a pretty good place. And look at what he has done—a completely unnecessary, self-inflicted wound.

But the problem is who it wounds: thousands of dollars in taxes on the average family, \$20,000 more for a home for young people who might want to buy their first home, more money to buy a car. It goes on and on and on.

So when I look at that budget, I just can’t see it in a vacuum. I see it in the totality of what is going on right now, because with these tariffs, the wealthiest people are going to lose billions of dollars or millions of dollars, but they are going to be fine, though, because they have got everything else. But it is the people who are living paycheck to paycheck or are depending on Social Security—they are the ones who are going to suffer from this.

Then you add this budget to the mix. This budget would give massive tax cuts to the ultrawealthy and pay for it

by raising costs, taking away healthcare, and threatening the economic security of tens of millions of Americans. It is a major handout to the wealthy.

If you don't know what the numbers are, here is a great one to remember: It would give Elon Musk a \$50 million tax break over the next 10 years. Do we really think he needs that? Does he need \$10 million more? He does not.

You could literally structure this budget so that you are not reducing taxes or giving special deals to people making over \$400,000 a year. You could do that.

But that is not what this is. It went the opposite way. It gives the wealthiest 0.1 percent an average tax cut of \$180,000 a year. In total, over the next 30 years, it would give \$25 trillion in tax cuts for the wealthy and the big corporations.

Meanwhile, what is happening to people's grocery prices? What is happening to their healthcare prices? What is happening to their housing prices?

This isn't speculation. Look at what happened the last time the Republicans ran this playbook in 2017. They told us back then that those tax cuts would trickle down, that wages would go up, that jobs would come back.

What actually happened? Big companies spent nearly a trillion dollars on stock buybacks to enrich their executives and their wealthy shareholders. Wages for working people barely moved. Manufacturing jobs didn't boom. But the first year after that passed, corporate America spent over \$800 billion buying back its own stock at more than 50 percent higher than the year before. And this year those buybacks are projected to top \$1 trillion for the first time ever. That helps Wall Street, not Main Street. So here we are again: same trickle-down theory, just repackaged with even more debt and even fewer benefits for the middle class.

As noted, the debt, this budget, the Congressional Budget Office estimates it would add \$37 trillion to the debt over the next 30 years—\$37 trillion on the backs of our kids and grandkids. That is right. We are leaving the next generation to foot a \$37 trillion bill so we can give billionaires a tax cut today. That is the choice.

And it is all wrapped up in very complex language so it doesn't sound like they are doing it, but check actual news sources. Look at this to verify what the actual numbers are. And \$25 trillion of it is tax cuts for the wealthy and big corporations over the next 30 years.

The kicker: They are trying to hide that massive debt, what even their own Members—these are Republican elected Members of Congress—have called a budget gimmick, intellectual fraud, and—my favorite one—fairy dust. Instead of leveling with the American people, they are using an accounting trick to pretend that these new tax cuts cost nothing.

I believe that the American people know better. I believe they knew better when they woke up this morning to see where the stock market was and thought about all their hard-earned money and what they were doing with it. I believe they know better when they look at any kind of simple description of what this budget is.

They promised to lower the deficit, but this budget adds trillions to the debt. They promised to bring down costs, but you don't even need to check the news. Just go down the grocery aisle and see if that has really happened. And they promised to put everyday Americans first, but this budget, it puts the wealthiest first or they wouldn't be getting the lion's share of the benefit.

Under this plan, healthcare for nearly 80 million Americans is at risk, including two-thirds of nursing home residents, two in five kids, and one in three Americans living in rural areas. That is because—why do I say that? I am just making that up? No. That is because the budget plan includes instructions to cut \$880 billion from the House Energy and Commerce Committee—that is the one the House sent over—which oversees Medicaid.

The Congressional Budget Office—nonpartisan—said it plainly: It is mathematically impossible to meet that target without cutting Medicaid.

This is a plan to cut Medicaid. That is why we have a different vision. You could do a budget—and I see RON WYDEN is here, the highest ranking Democrat on the Finance Committee. He knows what we could do if they would work with us. We could do a budget that would lower costs, not raise them.

And how does this raise costs for people? You already see it right now, and they are not doing anything about it. You see the tariffs are going to make it worse, and then you also see what is going on with this budget with Social Security, Medicaid, and the like. We could strengthen Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security.

Instead of giving a \$300,000 tax cut to someone in the top 0.1 percent, we could invest in childcare, affordable housing, education, and—yes—affordable energy. And at the same time, we could put some aside to bring down the debt. That is how we support working families. That is how we make sure seniors retire with dignity.

So we are standing up all day today to expose this budget for what it really is. It is benefits for the wealthy and the big guys at the expense of everyone else, and that means you.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, before she leaves the floor, let me thank Senator KLOBUCHAR for her outstanding remarks. She and Senator VAN HOLLEN have really made the case that we want a tax bill that gives everybody in America the chance to get ahead, not

just the people at the top, and I want to commend her for it.

Mr. President, around the country this morning, Americans turned on the news, and they saw panic. Americans are wincing this morning as they look at their retirement accounts. Their savings are down. The cost of their morning coffee and eggs are up. The markets are looking bloody, and people are afraid for their jobs and their own personal finances. Not so for the ultrawealthy. They may not like what they are seeing, but they don't have anything to worry about because they have got an ace in the hole: their Republican allies here in the Senate.

While Donald Trump torches what used to be the world's strongest economy, Republicans scramble to pass a bailout for billionaires and big corporations. While typical families panic, the billionaires can go shopping for luxuries—for real estate, for yachts—safe in the knowledge that Senate Republicans have their backs.

That is what this debate is all about. Donald Trump is taking the United States back to economic policy that predates the light bulb. He is slapping random taxes on imports from all over the world—tariffs that are effectively huge tax increases on products American families and businesses use every day.

Donald J. Hoover says he is not going to back down, and that is terrible news for everybody who counts on a steady paycheck to be able to get by. Everything from cars and machinery right down to T-shirts and your morning cup of coffee—it is all going to cost a whole lot more because of what Donald Trump is doing. Small businesses are going to get clobbered. Parents are going to need to take out second mortgages just to take their kids back-to-school shopping. They are facing an increase in the cost of living by thousands of dollars each year. Big businesses are panicking too. They are worried about the prospect of a full trade war.

The only thing preventing an even larger panic and collapse is the faint hope that somebody—somebody—may be able to convince Trump to back down. Personally, I wouldn't wager on it. That is the economic carnage Trump is creating around the country.

Here on Capitol Hill, Senate Republicans are charging forward with a bailout for billionaires and corporations that, according to the Joint Committee on Taxation, could cost \$7 trillion.

People following along at home are going to hear a lot of sweet-sounding promises from Republicans about what they are trying to accomplish. They claim their tax bill is just all unicorns and rainbows. They will say everybody is going to benefit from a tax cut and typical families will get the help they need. They will promise rising wages and a booming economy. It is just not true.

The reality is, unless you are way out at the upper end of the income scale,

any benefit you get from this Republican bill is going to get blown out of the water as the Trump tariffs continue to hike inflation. If you are somebody who punches a timeclock or keeps an eye on the bills every month to make sure you can get by, there is no good news for you in what the Republicans are trying to accomplish.

So they move ahead with their \$7 trillion tax agenda, but there is no way to cover that cost without taking a wrecking ball to the Medicaid Program, and that is their plan. It will be devastating for tens of millions of Americans, with seniors and kids bearing the brunt.

I remember this from my days as director of the Gray Panthers, but I can tell you, Medicaid pays for two out of three nursing home beds in the Nation. If Republicans move forward with their nearly \$1 trillion in cuts to Medicaid, countless families will have to make impossible choices between keeping an aging parent or grandparent in a nursing home they can barely afford or bringing them home to try to care for them on their own.

Medicaid covers nearly 38 million kids in America. That includes half of all American kids with special healthcare needs. These cuts to Medicaid will set those kids back for the rest of their lives. Millions of parents will be left wondering how they will pay for the home-based care their children rely on to go to school every morning.

And let's be clear. These cuts may be partisan in Congress, but their consequences will transcend party lines. Medicaid cuts are going to hit red and rural parts of America the hardest. Hospitals, nursing homes, and other providers in rural communities all over the country right now are barely hanging on. They depend on Medicaid. If these Republican cuts go through, rural America will become even more of a healthcare desert.

So I, Mr. President, and colleagues will be offering an amendment to block these Republican Medicaid cuts and the damage they are going to do to millions of vulnerable Americans.

It is not only Medicaid that Republicans target. Countless other lifelines that seniors and families rely on are on the chopping block: Meals on Wheels, which helps seniors get a hot meal; Head Start, which helps kids get set up for success in the future with early learning and development; food assistance that is going to help millions of families stay out of hunger. Donald Trump even wants to gut the technology-neutral clean energy tax credits I authored, which would increase costs for consumers, wipe out potentially hundreds of thousands of jobs, and devastate energy security.

This is the hardship Republicans inflict on America and particularly on people who struggle to get by, and this is how Donald Trump is going to protect his ultrawealthy political donors from chaos. It is a one-two punch. Not

only are typical American families facing economic ruin as Trump hikes tariffs and increases the cost of living, not only are they panicking as the market crashes and their retirement savings shrink, but now they have Republicans here in this Senate coming after their pocketbooks, their healthcare, and the food on their dinner table.

As I began, it is clear Donald Trump is completely out of touch. He and his advisers don't give a whit about the harm they are causing to typical Americans. And you don't have to take it from me; Donald Trump literally says it himself. Talking about auto manufacturers, he says:

I couldn't care less if they raise prices.

After yesterday's market crash, Donald Trump was asked about the tariffs and said:

I think it's going very well.

Let me repeat that. Yesterday, after the crash, Donald Trump was asked about the tariffs that this morning are hitting so many working people, and Donald Trump said:

I think it's going very well.

The Secretary of the Treasury is on his own all-is-well media tour. Recently, he said:

Access to cheap goods is not the essence of the American dream.

I don't know about this billionaire's interpretation, but I will tell you what is not part of the American dream: getting charged 10 bucks for a cup of black coffee because the Trump administration is too incompetent to figure out a smart approach to tariffs.

A few days ago, with concerns bubbling up over what tariffs would do, the Secretary of the Treasury said:

The reason stocks are a safe and great investment is because you're looking over the long term.

The long-term spin is as dismissive as it gets. Try telling that to a 65-year-old who scrimped and saved and was planning on retiring this month, only to see their 401(k) deflate like an old balloon.

Nothing can illustrate how out of touch these guys are more clearly than what Trump said this week during his rambling press conference announcing his tariffs. Listen to this. Talking about shopping for food, Donald Trump actually said:

An old fashioned term that we use—groceries. I used it on the campaign. It's such an old fashioned term, but a beautiful term. Groceries. It says a bag with different things in it.

So in closing, Mr. President, it is obvious that Donald Trump has not got the first clue of how the vast majority of Americans live or the hardships they face in the months and years ahead as he wrecks the economy. What is he doing now? He is hobnobbing down in Florida at his private country club resort, where the Saudi Government is helping financially with a splashy golf tournament.

All the Trump administration is focused on—and this is what he is appar-

ently dealing with at his golf tournament—along with Republicans here in Congress, is passing this bailout for billionaires and corporations while everybody else fears for what tomorrow will bring.

As the debate goes forward, Democrats are going to offer a whole host of amendments to put what I believe is a morally bankrupt bargain on full display for the American people. It is going to be a long debate, but it is an important one.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Oregon for his outstanding words on this issue—on tax issues and so many other policies, trade, and everything else. He is one of our real experts in the entire Congress, so I thank him.

Now, I thank my colleagues for speaking this morning. We now continue to talk about Donald Trump's assault on American families. Last night, we talked about Medicaid; this morning, about taxes.

Now we move on to Donald Trump's dumb and costly tariffs—the Trump tariff tax. After that, we will proceed to talk about the need to stand up for our veterans and national security.

Then, on the unprecedented corruption and self-dealing that Donald Trump has unleashed on our government, helping his billionaire friends make money off the government to become richer, and, finally, on the existential fight to protect Social Security from the chain saw of Elon Musk.

TARIFFS

Mr. President, now on tariffs, the Trump tariff tax. This week, Donald Trump made one of the dumbest decisions he has ever made as President—and that is saying a lot. Instead of fixing inflation, which he promised to do, Trump unleashed a wave of tariffs that will make inflation much worse. How do Senate Republicans respond to Trump's tariffs? By cutting Medicaid and giving billionaires a tax cut. That is why he is doing this.

Why would he raise the cost on American families by \$5,000, as it is estimated? Simply because his very wealthy billionaire friends want greater tax breaks.

Here is what Chairman Powell just said about the Trump tariff tax. Powell said:

It would increase inflation and slow growth.

And then Donald Trump responded in his billionaire bubble, he asked Powell to lower interest rates. What planet is he on? The nonpolitical, bipartisan, nonpartisan Chairman of the Fed says it is going to raise inflation and slow growth, and Trump says lower interest rates. It is going to do just the opposite. That is what the Chairman of the Federal Reserve said.

And what Donald Trump has created with these tariffs is a brutal pincer move with American families trapped

in the middle. Trump's tariffs raise costs on one side, and Trump's budget cuts rob people of healthcare, nutrition, and Medicaid on the other and squeezes them in a pincer.

There are smart ways to use tariffs, and there are dumb ways to use tariffs. Donald Trump is using tariffs in the dumbest way possible.

In fact, Trump slapped tariffs on penguins but not on Putin. Yep, that is true. He sanctioned the Heard and McDonald Islands, only inhabited by penguins, but he left Putin's evil Russia alone. That is what happens when you have no clue as to what you are doing.

You fire air traffic controllers and dismantle disease outbreak monitors, sabotage Social Security, the VA, and censor climate data, defund public schools, and now declare a trade war on penguins.

These tariffs are a massive tax hike, pure and simple. JPMorgan, themselves a conservative banking organization, called them equivalent to the largest tax increase since 1998.

Everything is going to go up, my colleagues. This is 10 percent across the board, plus a whole lot of other tariffs; fruits and vegetables at the grocery store, more expensive; clothing and shoes, more expensive; gasoline and new cars, more expensive; electronics, like iPhones and TVs, more expensive. Donald Trump has singlehandedly started a financial forest fire.

Yesterday, the markets reported their worst day since the pandemic. The Dow, S&P, and NASDAQ dropped 4, 5, and 6 percent. Today is getting even worse because, quite naturally, other countries, including China—and I have no love for China and its policies—well, they put on a retaliatory tariff. We could be going into the greatest trade war in history.

We all know that the Great Depression was caused by a trade war like this when Herbert Hoover slapped on these tariffs and the whole world responded, and the Great Depression, which had started, was greatly worsened.

Donald Trump seems to have never—he doesn't even know history. He hasn't learned history. But we could be on the edge of the greatest trade war the world has ever seen, and who will pay the price? The average American family because not only will prices go up, but the economy will decline. Already, estimates that the recession is more likely than before are upon us. Today's actions by China make a recession even more likely, and the American people suffer all because he wants to give tax breaks to the billionaires.

What bubble do these billionaires, including Donald Trump, live in? How could they not understand how this affects American families? He is imposing these tariffs, raising the costs on American families, an average of about \$5,000—the number is probably going to go up after what China did today—all to give tax breaks to billionaires.

The American people are learning this. They are realizing Trump doesn't—he is not on their side. They are realizing that Donald Trump is not keeping any of his campaign promises, such as prices go down on day one. They realize Donald Trump is betraying the working class all for his billionaire friends.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I come to the floor with my colleagues today to echo concerns about the budget process that is pursuing here related to a proposal that we will be voting on that I am not sure I understand the math.

I certainly, when it comes to Medicaid, want to make sure that we are protecting Medicaid, that the House budget that proposed to have \$880 billion come out of the Energy and Commerce portfolio—a portfolio that is basically Medicaid and Medicare. So I don't know how you would get the majority of that money if it didn't come out of Medicaid, I hope my colleagues are not considering any cuts to Medicaid, and I heard from people all over my State last week about what a devastating impact that would be in the central part of our State, where many of our hospitals rely on a huge Medicaid/Medicare population, hospitals wouldn't be able to deliver services or stay open.

So I want to see a promise that we are not going to touch Medicaid, no sleight of hand, no gimmickry, no budget where all of a sudden now somebody is going to go in a dark room after we pass this and then say, oh, oh, but I got a great idea. Here is how I am going to save X billions of dollars out of Medicaid. I am just not for it.

When we had this debate before, I heard from Republican county commissioners all over my State, when people wanted to block grant Medicaid, and they were basically saying, How am I supposed to run this jail? How am I supposed to take care of these issues in my county if you are going to block grant Medicaid? So again, I hope my colleagues won't do that.

I also hope my colleagues won't count revenue from the tariffs. I hope that they are not saying, Okay, well, we got a brilliant plan now. We are going to give a huge tax break to corporations and billionaires, but we are going to do it basically on the backs of American people who are paying higher tariff costs today, I don't think we don't need that in America. We certainly don't need these tariff costs. And what we are now seeing this morning is that China is imposing reciprocal tariffs. We are seeing a counterpunch from our other allies.

A tariff is a last resort, not a first step in a process. We need to have a rules-based trade regime where you are doing trade that is fair trade, based on rules and not using a disruption of the market that ends up costing all of us,

trillions of dollars could be, and certainly impacting us. So my State obviously wants to see a more alliance-based approach. We believe in building alliances with like-minded countries.

It is very interesting how Europe successfully created a huge alliance. Europe, many years ago, said, You know, we are better off together. Let's create a European Union, and now they have something like a \$20 trillion GDP because they work together in an alliance. Or if you look at the trade deals that we did as a nation in the Bush administration, we did a half a dozen or so trade deals that now represent a \$47 billion surplus because we did those trade deals with those countries and we created an alliance.

So I just see this world view differently than what is being proposed today. I definitely think that building alliances, getting supply chains here in the United States, strengthening those alliances are the key to our success.

I believe in betting on the American worker. If you bet on the American worker, they will do the rest. And we do need to help upskill and train, and we should reward them for their upskilling. Right now, I think we need something like 500,000 electricians—that is what the AFL-CIO and Microsoft say. Hardly people that get up every day and get on the same page, but they are saying we need 500,000 electricians.

I met a young man in my State who said, You know, you helped us get the workforce training. And he said, You brought me out of poverty. I said, How did we bring you out of poverty? He said:

Well, I had some health challenges, and literally, I didn't even have tires for my car. but [because of] a stipend that went along with the program, I was able to then get tires, drive myself to another town, and get the training to become an electrician.

He said:

I accomplished that, and now I'm going to buy a house. That's how you got me out of poverty.

So that is what we need to focus on. We need to focus on skilling and training the American worker for the opportunities of tomorrow that are here today, and that is why I feel so strongly that we can't ask the American people to pay for a bill that gives away tax breaks to billionaires and corporations by taking money from tariffs that are costing us. I know in my State, because I am already starting to hear this from people all over, that they are impacted from these tariffs. They could be the largest economic impact in the history of our country, the largest increase and very regressive, burdensome to households. But here is what I am hearing from my constituents.

A retired woman told me that her stock portfolio which, along with Social Security, she relies on to pay for her living and healthcare expenses, lost \$40,000 yesterday. That was yesterday. I don't even know what is happening

today. But we have Americans who are like this individual counting on Social Security and that market income for her retirement, and it just got a big hole blown in it because of tariffs. So please do not put tariff revenue in this bill and say that you gave that revenue to corporations for a tax break.

I heard from the owner of Fernseed, a plant and flower shop in Tacoma. The owner said:

We work with the supplier of pretty much everyone and every vase that you will ever see in any plant or flower shop.

She goes on to say:

We got notification two weeks ago that there's just going to be a blanket 10% increase on prices, increased costs for imported ceramics, going to cut into our margins that we are going to have to pass on to consumers. And with margins of just six to 8% there's not enough breathing room.

She continued to say:

Our employee review cycle is in April, and because of the uncertainty about tariffs, I have to give my employees a small, incremental raise instead of a real raise. That puts me under the threat of losing those people that have been with me for three to four years, which is a lot in a very incredibly small business. And by the way, I don't expect to be paying myself either.

That is what I am hearing from my State.

We know that small businesses are going to be hard hit by this. They are resilient, but this is asking a lot. I heard from the president of the Washington Distillers Guild and founder of broVo Spirits. They told me:

For lots of distilleries in my State, it's 20% of business that's going away, whether that's from Canada or the EU, the two primary markets. So exports aren't a big part of our business, but it's 20% and that hurts enough.

I find this very real for my constituents.

I—oh my gosh—I am so proud to represent the State of Washington. They are a resilient group of people, but in our State, we evangelized becoming exporters a long time ago. We just told people, go, go, do it. You can grow your market. Go, take your product and get it sold overseas. And what we find is that a lot of these businesses, somewhere between 20 percent and 25 percent of their sales are in overseas markets. So it is a nice little boost to what just the domestic market is.

We certainly grow more apples than can be eaten in the United States of America, and we sure as heck want them to be reached to international markets. And I would say the same thing for these distillers. It is one thing to look at the U.S. as a geographic market. It is another thing to look at the whole world as a market. It is amazing. It is an amazing market, and they want to have entry into that market instead of having some aspect of their business being attacked. So people are now holding back on spending. They are not going out as much. They are staying home, and they are going to start cutting back on everything. The opportunity has been taken off the table for export growth, and at

the same time, we are getting hammered on day-to-day operation expenses.

So they continue to say at this distillery they are "concerned about bars and restaurants and surviving the tourism impact we're going to see during this summer." I am sure they are saying that because a lot of our tourism comes from Canada, and I know that they believe that that is going to be challenging, given what the Canadians are telling us.

I believe open markets and innovation are a better approach. I hope that we also don't see any cuts in these important programs on the other side of the aisle that I know have been proposed by DOGE. I can't believe that when it comes to agriculture, they are cutting the ARS programs and research that help our farmers be competitive in addressing issues to get markets open in the first place. We know that we have to continue to fight to make sure that we do get these markets open and, I believe, reverse these tariffs because I think that they are having a devastating impact.

When it comes to fair trade, we need a rules-based trading system. That is what the U.S. has led since World War II, creating bigger global opportunity, creating more prosperity, and certainly not leading with the tariff first approach. So I hope that we will hear in our budget discussions, think about these hard-working American families that are working so hard to produce these products. I hope that you will think about the fact that many of these people have taken the risk to become exporters, to grow jobs in our State. It was a risk. It is harder to do. No one wants the unknown of what is happening in an overseas market. That is why I also support the Export-Import Bank that made financing of those exports easier, and certainly it makes for the innovation that Americans pull off much easier.

I told a story yesterday about Cosmic Crisp. Cosmic Crisp—it took us 20 years, 20 years to figure out this apple and to get it produced for the market. It is the story of R&D work with federally funded research dollars from Washington State University. But that is about producing an apple that, once you cut into it or bite into it, doesn't brown. That is an amazing feat. It doesn't brown. That means all of a sudden, apples on a fruit tray or use in various things, people decide, wow, not only do I like the taste, I like the fact that it doesn't get discolored.

So we don't want to see markets close to our Washington apples. We want to see markets opened. We want the R&D and innovation that succeeded in growing this market be matched with the market opportunity around the globe, and that is why we were able to get reduced the first Trump administration tariffs on apples that shut us out of a \$120 million market in India.

My colleague, who is on the floor, Senator KLOBUCHAR and I wish we had

a Zoom or an app that shows us, but literally, she and I got to go to India, and right after an official greeting of Prime Minister Modi, we were standing there in somewhat of a reception. And she and I pounced on him, and the first thing that we did is we started talking about agriculture. What was good is that he wanted to talk about agriculture too. That was the good news. That was the good news.

But we had a very long conversation with him about opening up markets and why this matters so much to agricultural families across the United States. And he said—we were kind of surprised, but he said, yeah, maybe we need to figure out a new agreement that we need to do together. And when we came back, we were able to open that market, not only to apples and to chickpeas and lentils. It was a partnership that I think is going to continue to grow at a critical time.

So don't try to jam the tax bill with tariffs. Don't try to stick in something that is costing the American people a lot of money. Try to work together as a body to say that this approach to tariffs needs to be reviewed, but certainly make sure that we are thinking about the small businesses, the individual consumers, the individual investors who are getting hard hit right now over this and let's move forward on trying to come together on what will really help make American agriculture opportunity, small business success, opening markets the main focus of our work.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I am proud to be here with my colleague from Washington State, Senator CANTWELL. She and I both worked in the private sector for years before we got into politics or government. And I learned a lot from representing companies. I learned a lot from representing companies that did work all over the world and got a really good understanding firsthand of the virtues of working with the rest of the world and the virtues of capitalism when it goes well and it is done well.

So much of America's success has been our ability to bring people in from other countries that become our next doctors and become our next police officers but also to have those customers around the world. Ninety-some percent of our potential customers in America are in other countries.

No better example of that is Canada, which is directly to the north of Minnesota. As I like to say, we can see Canada from our porch in our State.

For my State, Canada—No. 1 trading partner—is actually bigger than the combination of the second, third, and fourth trading partners for our State. Yet this President has been messing around with Canada from the moment he got into office, mocking them and saying they should be the 51st State.

I hope Americans understand the result of this. It is not just retaliatory

tariffs that wiped Kentucky bourbon off the shelves in certain provinces; it is also that tourism from Canadians is now down 70 percent in our Nation. That is not some kind of group tariff; those are individual people who are so pissed off that they have just made their own decisions that they don't want to come to our country.

As bad as it is to have booing of Minnesota hockey teams—we are used to a lot of action in our sports leagues—but this is going to affect small hotel owners, small restaurants, cafes, people who run little bookstores.

These are the people that come and visit our country and love our country. And international tourists spend an average of something like \$5,000 every time they come to America. That money is going to Americans.

That is just one example, and that example just resonates with me because it shows these countries that have been our friends and our allies for so long, whether it is Canada, fighting alongside of America in two world wars; whether it is the fact that Canada was there after 9/11, and they were the first country there to be by our side; whether it is Europe, which has long been our friend. You think of all the Americans in my State, Norwegian-Americans—we like to joke that we have more people from Norway than they have in Norway—Swedish-Americans. Think about all the people that have long roots in those countries. Think about Japan and South Korea, which he put tariffs on yesterday that were even larger than the rest of the world. He did 10 percent on the penguins on those two islands, but Japan and South Korea get even double that at least. Why do that?

There are ways to negotiate this. There are issues we have with dairy in Canada that I am well aware of that could be negotiated, for instance in the USMCA trade agreement that President Trump had actually negotiated himself in the first administration that I supported. But instead we see total chaos.

So what does this mean? I was on some programs last night, and I could not believe the vitriol from the traders on Wall Street who could not believe how the market ended that day, yesterday, and now we see more of it today. Cramer, who is so really well known—Jim Cramer—for his views on the stock market and trading, was really, really helpful to listen to all of that.

But I then thought to myself, this isn't just about Wall Street; it is about Main Street. And what this amounts to, when you look at what happens with tariffs, when you raise these tariffs, when so many of our goods have parts from other countries or are from other countries—what does this mean? Well, it is the biggest tax increase on working Americans since 1968.

So I refuse to look at this budget that we are debating today just in a vacuum because, as problematic and horrible as it is that two-thirds of the

benefits are going to the wealthiest Americans and big corporations, you have that setting for that budget right at the same time as we see these tariffs.

As I noted about an hour ago when I focused on this issue of the unfairness of this budget and the values choices that are being made in this budget that are not in favor of regular Americans, I also believe that anyone that looks at these tariffs realizes, you know what, Elon Musk is going to be fine with these tariffs. He is going to lose money. Everyone is going to lose money because of this. You already see it with corporate value. But who is going to be able to afford that and who isn't? Well, the people who are not going to be able to afford it are the people who get by with their paychecks twice a month; the people who rely on their savings and their 401(k)s and maybe are about to retire or are in the midst of retirement; the young people who want to buy their first house and are now not certain, despite what has been a growing, strong economy, with issues of inflation. But now look where we are—completely self-inflicted wound.

On Wednesday, when the President announced an across-the-board tax on all imports, with even higher taxes, as I noted—some as high as 46 percent—on goods from the EU—20 percent tax on the EU right when they have been fighting alongside us with helping Ukraine and taking on the tyrant Vladimir Putin.

Why don't we just throw a bunch of taxes on a relationship that has been growing and getting better and better as we woke up from our slumber from the pandemic and realized we have real allies here? Allies—European Union, Japan, South Korea. When you combine our economy, something like 50 percent of all those allies' democracies, allied democracies, is unbelievable. And you have Russia at 1 percent, 2 percent, 3 percent. But where is he putting the tariffs? The most on our allies. It makes no sense.

These sweeping tariffs are taxes that will raise costs for everything from medicine and food to clothes and housing. You already see the damage. The impact was immediate.

Yesterday, the stock market fell almost 5 percent—the worst day since the pandemic crash in March 2020—and today, it continues to fall. Small businesses are freezing investments. Retailers, manufacturers, and farmers are in limbo. They were already operating on a small margin. This chaos and this uncertainty are hurting our economy.

It is unclear to me if the White House even knows what they are doing. They literally put a 10-percent tariff on a bunch of penguins on the Heard and McDonald Islands. There are no actual humans living on those islands, but they were afraid of those penguins, I guess, and decided that those penguins, which they must view as some kind of economic risk to our country, should be slapped with a 10-percent tariff.

Those penguins probably can't engage in retaliatory tariffs. I don't know.

But that is exactly the kind of nonsense and ridiculous chaos we are seeing.

So what are the facts? Americans were already feeling the costs of the Trump tariff tax. They are the ones paying the price.

Since he took office, wholesale prices have gone up on everything from meat and coffee to natural gas and lumber. That will increase what families pay—this newest tariff tax—for groceries, utilities, and housing. For the average American family, it is going to be a \$4,000 increase in the cost of living per year—the average price of a home to increase by \$20,000 and the price of an American car to rise by \$3,000.

Those aren't my numbers. Those are what experts have looked at. And they have to adjust it, of course, every single day when he comes out with a new tariff. So at one point it was \$5,000 and then \$4,000, but that is what we are seeing right now.

Again, it doesn't mean much to Elon Musk. It means a lot to the people in my State, the people I met with on my 14-county rural tour that I just took a week or so ago.

At smalltown townhalls with the Farmers Union, we heard repeatedly from farmers about how these tariffs—on top of higher input costs, avian flu, and, of course, weather events—threaten their livelihoods, and that is especially true for small farmers.

I heard from small brewers who know that much higher tariffs on aluminum will either cut into margins or raise prices for customers.

And I met with local leaders who don't know if they will be able to keep pace with their housing goals that they need to keep their economy strong in rural America.

People in my State do not want this Trump tariff tax, and our Republican colleagues should be standing up to him.

People in my State share the concerns of this broad bipartisan coalition—the retail industry leaders, the American Farm Bureau, the American Farmers Union, the National Association of Home Builders, the Chamber of Commerce. They have all been very clear in opposing this.

And the chaos doesn't end with economics. President Trump is invoking emergency powers to bypass Congress and launch trade wars.

Stand up, I say to our colleagues. Stand up and assert your power.

This is a dangerous abuse of authority that undermines the Constitution and threatens our system of checks and balances. That is why I cosponsored the bipartisan Trade Review Act, to reassert Congress's constitutional role in trade policy.

Our allies are stunned. After spending decades building strong trade relationships, in addition to longstanding security friendships, this Trump tariff tax is now blindsiding our closest allies

and our trading partners. The damage, as I note, is going to extend way beyond farm products and manufacturing. It is also going to be about the vibe, the fact that no one will want to visit our country. They are already canceling their trips. This will have a devastating effect on our economy.

And I see Senator ROSEN is here, who is actually leading the effort, a very key piece of legislation, to take this on and say: You can't do this if you are going to hurt tourism to this extent.

As you know, Senators Kaine and Warner and I put forward our amendment that finally got four Republicans to stand up with us when it came to Canada. We said: This is a false claim about the need to invoke emergency powers when it comes to Canada and the border. And four of our Republican colleague agreed with every single Democrat, and we actually passed that bill.

People do not want us to isolate ourselves from global supply chains, to forfeit foreign markets. They want to expand. We want to be a country that makes stuff, that invents things, that exports to the world, not a country that puts our heads in the sand and pretends the rest of the world doesn't exist. And then they all go out and do trade together, and we are here isolated.

Our country is a strong country. Our country is a strong economy. And he is going to literally throw away all of the gains we have made and these small businesses that have blossomed all because—I don't know—he said he was going to do something like this. And now he tells us we are in the middle of a surgery, and it is just going to be painful.

Well, again, for the wealthy, they can get through those surgeries. They can get the special rooms with the nice views and the nice windows. For the rest of us, the rest of the people in this country, people who live month-to-month, this is not the same for them.

We can and we should stand up to unfair trade practices. I have been a long believer in the targeted use of tariffs. It was helpful for some of our iron mines up north. But what he is doing here with these across-the-board tariffs is reckless. It is going to drive this economy over the cliff, and it is time our Republicans stand up in the U.S. Senate—we have already had four do it—and say: Enough is enough. Let's do things that help the American people instead of just helping a bunch of billionaires.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Ms. ROSEN. Mr. President, I represent a State that Donald Trump won in November. And one of the reasons he did was his promise on the campaign trail that he would lower costs for Nevada families.

He said this:

[O]n day one, we will end inflation and make America affordable again.

And he said—and I am going to quote again:

When I win, I will immediately bring prices down starting on day one.

Well, it has now been 74 days since he was sworn in, and it is clear that he actually didn't mean any of that. He betrayed the American people, and he lied to Nevada families.

Instead of lowering costs, he has done the opposite and imposed policies that have actually raised the costs. Two days ago, President Trump proclaimed April 2 as "Liberation Day," the day the administration announced the most sweeping tariff hikes in almost a century.

And just in the last 48 hours, this is what has happened: The stock market had its single worst day since 2020, at the start of the pandemic. It was on track to match or exceed that loss today. Car companies have already had to lay off hundreds of workers at their U.S. plants. And nearly half of the 60 countries that were targeted by President Trump have already announced retaliatory tariffs, which will only raise prices further and hurt American small businesses—Nevada's small businesses.

And all of this is before many of these tariffs actually go into effect at midnight tonight.

Most importantly, these tariffs, well, they are reckless, and they will decimate businesses around the country, and, like I said, including in my great State of Nevada.

I have already heard from Nevadans and Nevada business owners who are worried about how these new tariffs will impact their businesses, their livelihoods, and their families, including the founder of a small business in Reno.

They wrote to me saying:

We maintain a small production facility in Reno . . . these duties will force us to raise retail prices by 37 percent, and we don't believe our customers will accept that. This policy could wipe us out entirely.

And I am going to quote again:

I'm not asking for a favor. I'm asking for leadership that reflects the urgency and reality that we face. These tariffs do not bring jobs back. They raise prices, punish small businesses, and put livelihoods at risk, while making it harder for companies like mine to do what we've done for thirteen years: create jobs, innovate, and support our families.

And it is not just our small businesses in Nevada that will be hit the hardest. Our families—our families—already being squeezed by the high costs, are going to see prices go up even further.

And let's be clear, these tariffs—Trump's tariffs—they are a national sales tax. From your medication to gas, to the groceries you buy, Republican tariffs will increase the cost for goods for hard-working families across this country, things we rely on every single day.

Tariffs are also going to increase what you pay at the fuel pump. They are going to increase the price of con-

struction materials, making housing even more expensive.

Through his national sales tax, Trump is passing along higher costs to everyone, no matter where you live—passing them on to everyone. That is what Trump's sales tax is doing. That is what Trump's tariffs are doing.

In fact, a nonpartisan policy research center recently found that these new taxes, well, they are going to cost the average family nearly \$4,000 a year—\$4,000 a year—all while increasing home prices by roughly \$20,000 and car prices by \$3,000.

Where will it end? It makes absolutely no sense. It is just plain cruel to hurt families by raising costs when their budgets are already squeezed.

And this also hurts Nevada's local economy because when people start tightening their wallets because prices are higher everywhere they go, we start to see a decline in tourism, the very backbone of Nevada's economy. And we are already seeing the impacts. Domestic travel into Harry Reid International Airport was already down last month, which means fewer hotel rooms booked and fewer tourists visiting the entertainment capital of the world. International travel in the United States is also down, which is driving our visitor numbers down—again, hurting our economy more and more every day.

In fact, in the wake of Trump's tariffs on Canada that went into effect last month, bookings for flights from Canada into the United States are already down—down by 70 percent—compared to this time last year.

And here is the most troubling part: A recent report estimates that up to 14,000 hospitality jobs could be at risk due to decreased international travel as a direct result of Trump's tariffs.

When President Trump was confronted about the rising costs due to these tariffs, well, what did he say? Well, he said this. President Trump said:

I couldn't care less.

"I couldn't care less." That is actually what he said to all of us, to all of you. And that should tell you everything you need to know about where his priorities lie.

Donald Trump isn't focused on the American people, on all of us. He is focused only on making himself and his billionaire friends even richer.

While everyday families are paying the price, the wealthiest individuals and corporations are going to get more tax cuts, better tax cuts, leaving working families to shoulder the financial burden of his reckless decisions. And they will feel it every month at the kitchen table, when they go to pay their bills, every week when they go to the grocery store, every week when they go to the gas pump, when they try to buy a new home or even repair the one that they have now.

This isn't the direction we should be heading. As Democrats, we believe in a fairer economy, one where working

families are not left behind. We believe in policies that create good-paying jobs, reduce costs for families, and hold corporations accountable for their actions. We believe in an economy that rewards hard work and makes it easier for the middle class to thrive.

We owe it to our constituents, like the Nevada small business owner who wrote to me worried about how Trump's tariffs will hurt him. And that is why we are all here, because we have a responsibility to our constituents, to our family, to our friends, to our neighbors, to our communities to support policies, well, that benefit them, and to stand up to policies that do not, policies that hurt them, like Trump's reckless tariffs, Trump's national sales tax.

So it is time to put the needs of the American people first. It is time to deliver real relief to our workers, to our families, to our businesses that have been struggling for far too long.

So I urge my colleagues across the aisle to stand up against Trump's reckless tariffs, to stop this extreme Republican budget, which will increase costs on all Americans, on all families, on everyone, no matter what ZIP code or State you live in.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

TARIFFS

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, Donald Trump is ruining the economy on purpose. He is ruining the economy on purpose. I am not sure if there has ever been an American President, let alone a Chief Executive of any country, that has ruined the economy on purpose.

The stock market had its worst day in 5 years yesterday. I just checked before I delivered these remarks—just before, 5 minutes ago: 1,600 down on the Dow Jones, S&P down 5 percent, NASDAQ 4 percent, the Russell 5 percent.

What does that mean as a practical matter? It means if you spent all your life working and saving and investing and you are on the edge of retirement—let's say you have \$312,000 plus your Social Security income, you just lost \$30,000 in 2 days because of Donald Trump. Because of Donald Trump, you lost 10 percent of what you earned over a lifetime.

Now, for Howard Lutnick and Elon Musk and Donald Trump and everybody that surrounds him at Mar-a-Lago, they can ride this out. They can short it. They can buy crypto. They can do all kinds of wonderful things to make sure they can ride this out. Regular people cannot ride this out.

The dollar hit a 6-month low. Layoffs have already started. Consumers are cutting back on spending. By the way, the data is there—but also just talk to anybody, just talk to anybody about how they feel about spending right now—and the likelihood of a recession went up 20 percent in a day. JPMorgan now says it is more than 60 percent likely.

So what is this even for? Why are people so freaked out? Why is the en-

tire world, from friends and partners to adversaries and enemies, scrambling to retaliate against the United States, the indispensable Nation? It is so that Donald Trump can raise trillions of dollars in revenue to pay for the biggest tax cuts for billionaires in the history of the planet.

Starting tomorrow, we will be paying more for everything—groceries, food, cars, homes, toys, electronics, everything you buy. Estimates have home prices ballooning by almost \$20,000 per unit. Cars will cost \$6,000 more, an iPhone, \$250 more. Clothing prices will go up by roughly 20 percent. Also, what, we are going to be a textile manufacturer? That is our goal as a country is to make T-shirts and socks?

Workers will be laid off. But I guess it will all be worth it in the end because this is a pay-for. What does that mean? It means that in their big budget plan, they need to cut taxes for billionaires, but they don't have enough money to finance that. And so they are using tariff revenue to balance out the money that they are going to shovel to a bunch of billionaires.

Trump is very famous for having few firm, fixed political beliefs. He has changed his mind about just about everything but not on tariffs. He is a self-proclaimed tariff man. He has repeatedly said that the word "tariff is the most beautiful word" in the English language. For years, he lavished praise on 20th century tariffs, which, by the way, helped deepen the Great Depression. So he is very happy about all of this.

There should be no mistaking this is what he intends to do. This is one of the differences between Trump 1.0 and Trump 2.0. He is doing all the things—he is actually going through with it. This is not mean tweets and like normal behavior. This is all of the crazy stuff he is saying is now being effectuated as public policy, as economic policy, as fiscal policy.

He is going through with it. You can no longer be dismissive of these resistance types, these Democrats, these shrills, these partisans, these people who can't keep their head on straight, these people who just want to punish Donald Trump for saying, "Man, that guy is kind of crazy. He is going to crash the economy." He is literally crashing the economy on purpose.

The idea that other countries will just graciously pay the tariffs is a fantasy, much like Trump's claim that Mexico would pay for the wall. In reality, it is American importers who pay the tariffs, and then they pass it on to consumers, which is exactly what happened the last time Trump tried to do this.

Economists who studied the tariffs that Trump imposed during the first term on certain goods from China found it was consumers—it was consumers—it was you that paid the price.

So here is roughly how it will work this time around. There is going to be math involved here. If these tariffs are

expected to raise \$6 trillion, as Trump says, that would mean collecting something like \$600 billion every year over the next 10 years. Broken out by household, people are looking at \$5,000 a year in added costs. I bet you Donald Trump doesn't know anyone personally—maybe he has met people, but in terms of the people he hangs out with, that he spends time with, that he likes, that he works with, he probably doesn't know anyone for whom \$5,000 is an unmanageable increased cost. But I know a lot of people like that. In fact, a lot of people in my home State are like that. They cannot absorb a \$5,000 increase in the cost of everything. And that is before you consider the hundreds of thousands of lost jobs and the devastation of small businesses and farmers and others.

One small business owner in Iowa put it this way:

Trump's calling it Liberation Day. Maybe something like, Liberation Day: Liberated From Reality.

A farmer in Kansas agreed:

These tariffs are just absolutely bad news. They cause the prices for everything that we buy to go up, and the price for everything that we sell to go down.

Everything that we buy is more expensive. Everything we sell is cheaper. Does that sound like a smart economic plan? It is bad news any way you cut it, but even worse, more confusing, more idiotic, more infuriating when you look at how they arrived at these rates.

These are not actually reciprocal tariffs, reciprocal being essentially country X assesses tariffs in the amount of 15 percent, so we reciprocate, we do 15 percent back.

This is how they did it. They used a "one size fits all" formula to remake the global trading system. They took our trade surplus with any given country. The way you do it—to do reciprocal tariffs—is country X says 10 percent, we go back at 10 percent.

What they did is say: Let's take our trade surplus—which means what we export minus what we import—divided by total exports and then cut it in half. Cut it in half. Why didn't they cut it in a third, why didn't they do some coefficient other than 50 percent is like they wanted to keep it simple. I don't know. It is purely arbitrary.

We have an \$18-billion trade deficit with Indonesia. We import \$28 billion worth of goods from them—17.9 divided by 28 is 64. Divide that by 2 and you get 34, which is—surprise, surprise—exactly the rate that Trump set for Indonesia. Half of the differential between exports and imports literally makes no sense.

You have a bunch of economists right, left, and center going, "WTF." I cannot believe—this is bad policy—but also childish, childish math.

The White House formula is so bonkers that the same economists that it pointed to as the basis for the rationale immediately were critical. "They pulled two numbers out of thin air that perfectly canceled each other out. This

type of reduction analysis is very troubling and scares me," said economics professor Anson Soderbery, whose paper the White House cited. Even their sources are saying, "Don't use my name to justify this nonsense."

Another economist said that the White House had misunderstood his research which specifically cautioned against excessively high tariff rates like Trump's.

Making [rates] higher is a bad idea for the United States. . . . We use supercomputers to find optimal tariffs. The Trump administration seems to have taken a bit of a shortcut there. Also, our results suggest that the EU should not be tariffed, and yet they set high tariffs against them. Finally, our range of optimal tariffs is substantially lower than the ones the administration announced.

If you can believe it, we are in a situation where economists are using supercomputers to find optimal tariff rates while the President of the United States is using a formula—and I am not exaggerating—that a fifth grader could solve.

Whether it is the Signal chat or this formula, this administration's incompetence is on display every day. It is why we now have tariffs in places like Heard Island and McDonald Islands where there are no living human beings, only penguins.

Or, as the New York Times noted, "Trump's decision to put a 32 percent tariff on Switzerland stunned politicians and business leaders in the Alpine country. Switzerland has an open trade policy and recently abolished all industrial tariffs."

It is not reciprocal if they are not tariffing us. For countries like Brazil where we have a trade surplus, they still slapped 10 percent. Israel reduced their tariffs to zero. They still got the 10 percent.

This is not a case of a bunch of Democrats crying wolf just to wound the Republicans. The markets are speaking. They are terrified. And this isn't about a bunch of billionaire corporations and their profitability. This is about the ability for people to pay for college. This is about the ability for people to retire with dignity and comfort.

Trillions of dollars of wealth are being demolished. These are everyday people panicked about how much more expensive their next trip to Walmart or to Costco will be or when they will lose their job. People are already stockpiling supplies.

Shortly after Trump's announcement, JPMorgan described the impact of the tariffs over the next few months like this:

On a static basis, today's announcement would raise just under \$400 billion in revenue, or about 1.3 percent GDP, which would be the largest tax increase since [the Revenue Act of] 1968. . . . The resulting hit to purchasing power could take real disposable personal income in the [second and third quarters] into negative territory, and with it the risk that real consumer spending could also contract in these quarters. This impact alone could take the economy perilously close to slipping into recession.

Countries are already responding. It is not like this is a static situation which can't get worse because the retaliations are going on. This idea that this is just a leverage play—there are 200 countries out there with whom we have some sort of—roughly, 200 countries that we have some sort of trading arrangement with.

And Donald Trump is very unpopular. So asking a leader of a country or a Parliament of a country to waive their tariffs at the end of an economic gun because Trump is bullying them, it is like not good domestic politics for them. The best domestic politics for them is to stand up to Donald Trump's bullying, and that is bad for all of us.

We are not going to waive our way through 194 trading partners. China just imposed a 34-percent reciprocal tariff for our 54-percent tariff on Chinese goods.

In a truly bizarre turn of events, we forced our allies and adversaries to try to find ways to work together. Earlier this week, for the first time in years, China and Japan and South Korea discussed the possibility of working together on free trade as a response to Donald John Trump.

The most shocking image is this red line continuing to go down precipitously. Among the other most shocking images, there is a picture of high leaders from Korea—first of all, Korea and Japan are in a better place now, but there have been diplomatic challenges over the decades and the generations. But they are in a reasonably good place. Just to see them shaking hands is a big deal, but to see them shaking hands—literally holding hands—with a high official from China to indicate they are in this together against us.

So it is true that Donald Trump is uniting the world. The problem is, he is uniting the world against us.

Look, there is a real objective here that we have been working on for the last 4, 8 years. And whether it is chips or it is cars or it is clean energy, we have actually increased the amount of domestic manufacturing in the United States of America with good industrial policy and targeted trade policy. But this is mayhem. This is mayhem.

JOHN KENNEDY, the current Senator for Louisiana, said it exactly right. Tariffs, like whiskey, can be refreshing, can be useful. Too much—I am paraphrasing—and very bad things happen.

Very bad things are happening. In the time I took to deliver these remarks, probably some number of tens of billions of dollars of additional wealth from working people was just wiped out.

I want to make one final point, and this is the most important point: Republicans can and should stop this. With the exception of maybe three or four Members, almost every Republican Senator hates tariffs. The question is whether they will stand up to Donald Trump, who has taken this

deadly protectionist, anti-market, superharmful direction. All we need—Republicans are in charge of the Senate—is for them to exert their constitutionally given authority over the assessing of tariffs. There is bipartisan momentum in that space, but we are not there because what I am reading and what I am hearing is they are willing to give this a couple of months.

Let me give a bunch of free advice to my Republican friends: If you are going to stand up to him in 2 months, do it now. Your people are suffering. People are being laid off.

By the way, most of what is happening in terms of Trump's plummeting popularity is what they are seeing on their screens. But in the next week or so, it will not be what they are seeing on their screens; it will be what they are seeing when they try to buy something. It is what they are seeing amongst their friends who are being laid off.

This is about to get very real, and I advise you against my own political interests but in the country's interest: If you are going to stand up to him in June, my God, do it now.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

MR. KAINE. Mr. President, I rise to join my colleagues—I really appreciate my colleague from Hawaii's leadership on this topic and the Senator from New Hampshire—to talk about the pending discussion about the budget reconciliation bill and the vote-arama that will start in a few hours.

I want to begin by thanking my colleagues for joining me to pass S.J. Res. 37 two days ago, which was the resolution that I had to challenge President Trump's Canadian tariffs—a horrible idea. We were able to get 51 votes in this Chamber. It was a privileged motion. The majority was sufficient to pass it to turn off the Canadian tariffs because they hurt consumers, they hurt businesses, they hurt farmers, and they also hurt our national security by raising the price of aluminum and steel. Thirty-five percent of the aluminum and steel that goes into U.S. ships and subs comes from Canada; the other 65 percent, from the United States.

It was an important bill to pass because we don't need to put an additional sales tax on goods purchased by Americans that come from Canada. We don't need to inspire a Canadian retaliation against American products. Finally, we need to send the message that we understand that Canada is not an adversary but that Canada is a friend.

That bill passed the Senate and is on to the House. We are already working on the House side to see if we can get it passed there.

But, today, what I want to address is not the Canadian tariffs that were announced now months ago but the new "reciprocal" tariffs that President Trump announced on Wednesday, on

the south lawn, at the very moment that we were voting to overturn the Canadian tariffs. President Trump deemed these tariffs as “reciprocal” tariffs, but I have another phrase for him: They are economic idiocy.

I want to talk about why they are so bad, why the policy is bad. And when the policy is so bad and seemingly inexplicable, something else is going on, and I want to conclude by focusing on what that something else is.

I went to the University of Missouri, and I majored in economics. I had some amazing professors, and I just want to give them a shout-out: John Kuhlman, Whitney Hicks, Walter Johnson, Ron Ratti. I had some amazing professors at Mizzou.

I graduated with an honors degree in economics in 1979. If they were standing here with me, they would say: TIM KAINE, you were my student. I hope you remember what we talked about in these economic classes.

They would point out what I am about to point out as to why these tariffs announced broadly against virtually every nation in the world at the say-so of one person—a national sales tax falling on American consumers at the say-so of one person—are, in fact, economic idiocy. They will hurt our families. They will hurt our businesses. They will hurt our farmers. All of the economic signs suggest that President Trump is flipping the world’s strongest economy toward a recession.

When we were kids, we all learned the fairytale—I think it is a Brothers Grimm fairytale—of Rumpelstiltskin, the mysterious figure who turned straw into gold. What we are now seeing is “Trumpelstiltskin” turning gold into straw.

President Trump started with the strongest economy in the world on the day he was inaugurated—a strong stock market, strong consumer confidence, strong growth rates and growth projections, manufacturing up, infrastructure up, America building again. In 2 months, his chaotic economic idiocy has turned it around where the American economy—just go turn on the TV right now and look at what is happening in the markets. The American economy has nothing but red lights and question marks all over it because of the economic idiocy.

“Economic idiocy” is a strong charge for me. I am not one to do a lot of name-calling but that is exactly what this is. Let me focus on some examples from President Trump’s Wednesday announcement that show how idiotic these tariffs are.

Japan and South Korea are two great allies of the United States. We have been working very carefully to deepen the relationship they have with each other and with us to check against the nation that we all in this Chamber and President Trump also view as our chief adversary: China.

President Trump, in his Wednesday announcement, imposes a 24-percent tariff on goods coming from South

Korea and a 25-percent tariff on goods coming from Japan. This is no way to treat a friend. And guess what these friends are doing. They met with China to talk about a free-trade agreement. They met with China to talk about how they need to band together to protect themselves from the economic policy of the United States.

Japan and South Korea are two of the best allies we have in Asia or anywhere in the world. The relationships we have had with both nations have been very strong, whether it is military-to-military cooperation, trade, diplomacy, working together on humanitarian issues, or on educational exchanges. Donald Trump’s tariffs are chasing Japan and South Korea into China’s arms—idiocy.

Here is one: Israel is an ally, and Iran is an adversary. I think we can get a 100-to-nothing vote on that proposition in this Chamber. Israel is an ally; Iran is an adversary. Guess what President Trump did with his tariffs on Wednesday—a 17-percent tariff on Israel and on Iran, a 10-percent tariff. A 17-percent tariff on our ally Israel and on Iran, a 10-percent tariff. What kind of friend is that? How is that the way to treat an ally?

We are rock-solid in sending military support to Israel. I helped with votes almost exactly a year ago on the Senate floor to get a \$14 billion defense aid package for Israel. But we are going to put a higher tariff on Israel than Iran. It makes no sense. It is idiocy.

Here is another one: Trump says these are “reciprocal” tariffs. We are putting tariffs on nations that are treating us unfairly in trade, but he is imposing tariffs even on nations that put no tariffs on U.S. products, that have no trade barriers on U.S. products. Singapore has no trade barriers on U.S. products, but Trump is socking them with tariffs anyway. Israel has no trade barriers on U.S. products, but Trump is socking them with tariffs anyway. Idiocy. Idiocy.

Here is another one: Trump, in his rambling monologue on the south lawn on Wednesday, when he defined “groceries” as a bag with stuff in it—I was very happy to be enlightened about what groceries are—said that he was imposing tariffs on nations where the United States has trade deficits.

So the idea is we are going to put tariffs on them because they are not buying enough of our stuff. We want to penalize nations where the United States has a trade deficit. But guess what. We have trade surpluses with Brazil, Australia, Hong Kong, the Netherlands, Singapore, and the UK. So what did Donald Trump do? He put tariffs on them anyway. He said it was about trade deficits and that he is putting tariffs even on nations that are buying more of our products than we are buying of theirs. Idiocy. Idiocy.

In Donald Trump’s first term, he encouraged American businesses to move their supply chains out of China, and a lot of businesses did. Many American

businesses followed Donald Trump’s instructions and moved their supply chains from China to Vietnam. In President Trump’s first term, he boasted about that. He patted himself on the back. He told these American companies: Pull your supply chain out of China. And when they went to Vietnam, he patted himself on the back about that. So what is he doing now? A 46-percent tariff on imports from Vietnam.

Well, that is quite a way to treat American companies that moved their supply chains out of China at your request just a few years ago.

Some moved their supply chains to nations like Cambodia or other nearby nations. Trump socked them all. He socked them all with tariffs, even for these businesses that did move their supply chains at his request.

Then we get to something that has been more widely known, which is Trump putting tariffs on tiny, nearly uninhabited islands—Reunion, the Heard and McDonald Islands, and Norfolk Island. There is a tiny French island off the coast of Canada that I will admit I was not even aware of, St. Pierre and Miquelon—a 50-percent tariff on these places.

I mean, I will say one thing about Donald Trump’s tariffs that is good, and it is the only thing that is good: It has made a lot of people pull out their globes and look at nations they didn’t even know existed.

St. Pierre and Miquelon will now have a 50-percent tariff; Heard and McDonald Islands, a 10-percent tariff; Svalbard and Jan Mayen, which are actually not even countries but part of Norway, a 10-percent tariff; Norfolk Island, a 29-percent tariff; and Reunion, a 37-percent tariff.

Donald Trump at least has inspired interest in geography—a subject that, often, kids find boring.

OK. So I have gone through these examples of pure idiocy. The tariffs are not designed to punish adversaries, since we are hurting allies and treating them worse than adversaries, in many ways. The tariffs are not designed to lower trade barriers, since nations with no trade barriers are still getting socked. The tariffs are not signed to counter trade deficits, since nations where we have trade surpluses are getting socked.

So why do them at all? Why punish Americans with a national sales tax, which all the economists say is the largest peace-time tax ever imposed in U.S. history? If it is not to reduce trade barriers, if it is not to punish nations with trade deficits, if it is not designed to punish nations that are adversaries, why would we impose a sales tax on the American consumer, the American family, American businesses, American national security?

That is what we are going to be talking about tonight during the vote-arama. That is what you will see Democrats emphasizing with amendments that we are offering.

These tariffs are not about trade deficits, trade barriers. They are not about the behavior of adversaries. It is about raising money to fund a tax cut for the rich. That is what they are about.

Peter Navarro, the President's chief economic adviser, says—and I think this is probably optimistic. These guys like to puff up the numbers. He says that these tariffs will raise \$6 trillion over the course of the next 10 years, about \$600 billion, all taken out of the pockets of everyday Americans who are paying more for groceries, who are paying more for building supplies when they do a home renovation; farmers who are paying more for fertilizer because the key component, potash, 80 percent of it comes from Canada.

The \$6 trillion that these tariffs will raise all comes out of the pocketbooks of Americans who are working hard and who don't want to pay more taxes. But they are going to fork over \$6 trillion because of these tariffs.

Then President Trump and my colleagues here are setting up a budget where they will take that \$6 trillion, and they will add to it all of these slash-and-burn cuts that the chain saw-wielding Elon Musk is finding by laying off 80,000 people at the VA or indiscriminately firing veterans in every Agency in the Federal Government. They will combine the tariff revenue with the savings from Medicaid cuts or cuts to school nutrition or cuts to the Pell Grant Program, and then they will take all of that revenue and hand it over to the richest people in this country, many of whom are the richest people on the planet Earth, in tax cuts for the wealthiest.

How do we know? How do we know to predict that? We know because that is what they did when Donald Trump was President in 2017.

In 2017, the tax bill that passed by a simple majority vote in this body was a big giveaway to the rich, and that is what Trump and my Republican colleagues are preparing to do yet again.

The only difference between 2017 and now is this: In 2017, when the Republicans and Donald Trump gave a tax cut to the rich, they didn't pay for it. It was all on the deficit. They just put it on the credit card for our kids and grandkids to pay. This time, they decided they don't want to continue to jack up the deficit—although, they are likely to anyway—and so they think they need to pay for the tax cut. How are they going to pay for it? By cutting programs that everyday Americans rely on and by socking families and businesses with a \$6 trillion tariff-tax increase imposed purely to fund the tax cut for Donald Trump and his friends. That is what we are going to fight against in this budget.

In the same way that we succeeded by getting Republicans to vote with us against the Canadian tariffs, a few days ago, it is my hope that when we get to the end of this process, we will have some Republican colleagues in this House and the next who will stand up

against the President who thinks one man can shatter the economy and impose costs on everyday people to benefit himself and his friends.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. MOODY). The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. Madam President, on so-called "Liberation Day" this week, President Trump imposed sweeping tariffs on all of our trading partners—the size, the scope, and the impact of which have not been seen for nearly 100 years.

The last time our Nation imposed tariffs of this magnitude, it was when Republicans passed the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act in the 1930s. And when they did that, it crashed our economy and drove the United States further into the Great Depression. It was a history lesson that should never be repeated.

Let me say that again. It was a history lesson that should never be repeated.

But, yesterday, Donald Trump imposed far-reaching tariffs at a rate higher than Smoot-Hawley, higher than it was then with those catastrophic consequences. The history is clear. This strategy does not work and can have absolutely catastrophic consequences.

It is no surprise the President's tariff announcement sent shock waves through our economy, dropping markets to their lowest level since the COVID pandemic in 2020. Just yesterday, the Dow Jones Average dropped more than 1,600 point—a 4-percent decline. The S&P 500 companies lost a combined—this is a big number—\$2.4 trillion in value. And as Wall Street opened today, we are, unfortunately, seeing the market continue to plummet—as I speak right now, another \$2 trillion lost.

That is quite a record for the President, to lose Americans \$4 trillion in 2 days. That has never been done before. That is a record.

Let's just get this straight. During his first administration, we know Donald Trump grossly mismanaged the pandemic and tanked our economy then, and it took years for the markets to recover. Now, to kick off his second administration, he is playing poker with Americans' livelihoods, with Americans' retirement savings, and with Americans' hard-earned incomes.

It is clear what this means to the average American. It means that when you go to buy things like eggs and clothing and new appliances for your home, they are going to cost more. You will notice that when you go to the store. It is going to be very real. You will have less money in your pocket, and it is because of Donald Trump. He owns this—because of Donald Trump.

If you are thinking about retiring soon, you have seen—in the last couple of days, if you look—your 401(k) and your IRA retirement funds decimated, and it is because of Donald Trump.

There are folks out there right now who are being forced to have real, hard

conversations about whether they can even retire as they had planned, or are they going to need to keep working a little longer. And, let's be clear, it is because of Donald Trump.

But, you know, he didn't have to do this. In fact, some of you know Jim Cramer, a leading voice in financial markets. In response to Trump's decisions, he said:

I struggle for what the president's game plan is because if you wanted to make the market crash, I think you would go with this . . . plan.

He said:

It should not be in our country's interest to have the market crash.

That is not a hot take, to me. That is just plain old common sense.

So what happened? Well, on Wednesday, the country experienced a national sales tax day. In the coming days, weeks, and months, the impact of the President's national sales tax will be devastating. And it won't be our competitors who are footing the bill. It will be the American people who pay the tax on their groceries, their gas, and all the other goods that they buy.

For instance, take the price of a new home. Building a new house requires everything from lumber to steel, to concrete, light fixtures, ceiling fans, and appliances. And thanks to the President's all-out trade war, imports of every single one of those products will be subject to the national sales tax that Americans will pay—that Americans will pay.

As a result, the price of a new home has been estimated to increase up to \$20,000. Buying a home is already challenging enough for most folks. Putting that additional cost on American families is simply unacceptable.

It is not just homes. Gas, vehicles, groceries, household appliances—all will become more expensive because of Donald Trump.

Remember, when you see higher prices at the store, as you go to the store in the next few weeks and months, and you say, "Whoa, this price is up," it is because of Donald Trump. He owns this.

In fact, it has been estimated that the Republican national sales tax will cost the average family more than \$5,000 per year.

This national sales tax won't miraculously improve trade relationships or bring jobs home. It will only make it harder for hard-working Americans who are trying to create a better life for themselves and for their children.

In fact—and this statement is shocking, but it is true—Donald Trump is actually prepared to plunge this country into a recession, one that could cost up to 400,000 jobs. And he said it.

Just yesterday, because of Donald Trump's tax plan, JPMorgan raised the odds of the United States heading into a recession to 60 percent, and it is likely to go up as things continue.

But, again, what does Donald Trump have to say about all of this? He said he doesn't care. Look it up. It is clear. He said it.

I can honestly say, I do not think I have ever, ever heard an American President say they don't care if we go into a recession. I have never heard an American President say they don't care if American families and small businesses are hurt because of their policies. I don't think any President in history has ever said that, not just those whom I have experienced in my life.

What makes it worse is that while Americans bear the brunt of this new sales tax, the White House and Republicans here in Congress are actively working right now to give a big tax break to billionaires—not everyday working people, billionaires. They are going to be increasing the taxes on everybody through this national sales tax.

And they plan to do it, among other things, by cutting things like essential healthcare that Americans rely on each and every day.

I will say—I will step back here. There are instances where tariffs can make sense. Tariffs are—if they are strategic, if they are targeted, they can be useful tools in bringing back American jobs. Certainly, they can be used to combat unfair trading practices used by adversaries like China, and I support those types of tariffs. For example, last year, I supported the 100-percent tariff we imposed on Chinese electric vehicles.

We know the Chinese Government is actively working to undermine our national security and our economic success. And companies backed by the Chinese Communist Party are flooding the global marketplace with artificially cheap vehicles that are, really, actually capable of stealing Americans' personal data, committing espionage, and even manipulating folks on the road while they are driving.

It makes sense to raise tariffs on those technologies because they do, indeed, present a real national security threat to Americans, and they could impact in an incredibly negative way our auto industry.

When it comes to protecting the future of our auto industry and cementing Michigan's leadership in automotive innovation, there is no question that I support taking strong action to bring auto manufacturing jobs back to the United States, to secure a better trade deal for our auto industry, and to make sure that we have a level playing field for American workers and businesses to succeed.

But these on-again, off-again, across-the-board tariffs—this isn't a real plan. This is chaos, and it will not help us to achieve any of our long-term goals.

For tariffs to work, they have to be a part of a comprehensive strategy that actually supports American workers and businesses. They can't just be haphazardly dumped on our trade allies like Canada, whose goods and products actually help us grow our manufacturing sector, create more jobs in America, and remain the greatest economy in the world.

Take our auto industry, for example, the lifeblood of my State and the foundation of American manufacturing. The trade relationship between Michigan and Canada is so integrated that car components cross the U.S.-Canada border up to eight times before they are actually installed in final assembly. In fact, if Michigan were a country, we would be one of Canada's largest trading partners in the world.

Going after Canada will be devastating for Michigan businesses that work hand in glove with our closest trade ally to the north to grow their companies and to create jobs here at home.

If President Trump is serious—if he is serious, big question, if he is serious—about leveling the playing field and bringing auto manufacturing jobs back to the United States, here is a playbook that he could actually follow:

One, we need to pursue targeted tariffs on our adversaries, like China and our biggest overseas competitors, to ensure that more cars that are sold in America are built here in America.

Two, we need to renegotiate any trade deals that aren't favorable to American businesses and workers—something that offers far, far more certainty than sporadic tariffs. Specifically, we need to take a look at USMCA, where we have a real chance to address some of the shortcomings and outdated policies of our current trade landscape. Because while USMCA brought back some manufacturing jobs and some job opportunities, it is far from perfect.

China, unfortunately, has found ways to take advantage of the agreement's preferred treatment of goods by locating facilities in Mexico. And labor standards, particularly in Mexico, certainly need to be a whole lot stronger.

We will have an opportunity to renegotiate this agreement next summer, at times that the current administration actually agreed to when it negotiated this deal in President Trump's first term, and we need to seize—we need to seize—that opportunity. But with these tariffs looming like a black cloud over some of our most crucial relationships, I am concerned that we will be coming to the negotiating table with one hand tied behind our back.

Let's be clear. We should look to pursue those types of renegotiations throughout all of our trade agreements to ensure they are advantageous to American businesses and workers.

Three, we must aggressively enforce the trade laws that we already have on the books. We need to double down on our efforts to deter trade cheats like China, which requires providing more resources for our Federal Trade Agencies, not indiscriminately firing Federal workers. Doing so will allow us to counteract countries that try to evade tariffs, dump their products into our markets, and engage in transshipment.

And finally, if President Trump is serious about protecting auto jobs here in the United States, he needs to end

his attacks on the Inflation Reduction Act, plain and simple. Right now, Republicans are proposing a budget that will repeal incentives in the IRA like the advanced manufacturing tax credit and the electric vehicle tax credit, both of which have already—they have already—created thousands of new auto and battery manufacturing jobs right here in America.

To me, that is absolutely unthinkable, to end this. Why would you want to put an end to something that has proven to be successful at creating economic growth and good-paying manufacturing jobs in our country? It makes no sense.

The President needs to put his money where his mouth is and end this tariff charade. The stakes are just too high for American families, for our workers, and for our economy to get this wrong.

Madam President, I urge all of my colleagues to say no to the national sales tax, and instead, let's liberate some common sense and work together to make this country stronger.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

MR. LUJAN. Madam President, I come to the floor today to raise my voice on behalf of constituents all across New Mexico.

Now, this week, all eyes have been on the U.S. Senate. Millions of people across the country tuned into C-Span, social media live streams, and YouTube to watch our friend from New Jersey. We all got to bear witness to the unyielding patriotism of Senator CORY BOOKER, who rightfully said: This is a moral moment. This is not about the right or left; this is about right or wrong.

Today, I am proud to join my Senate Democratic colleagues in pushing back against a Republican budget resolution that is wrong for the people not just of New Mexico but every corner of America. Today, Senate Democrats have uplifted the stories of Americans who are worried about the path that President Trump, Elon Musk, and congressional Republicans are putting us on, folks who feel the pain every time they go to the grocery store, moms and dads who don't know how they are going to afford food next week, grandmothers and grandfathers who are scared that their hard-earned benefits are going to be eliminated.

Now, New Mexicans have been calling, emailing, texting, and talking to me from all across New Mexico.

I hear you. I see you.

Every time I go to the grocery store, folks stop me in the grocery aisles back home and ask me when President Trump is going to start lowering prices.

Now, as I was walking over here today, I was surprised to see that while the American people are trying to put food on the table, I see that Donald Trump is out there playing golf. That is what is on the TV screens for all the folks back home that are going to be

going to the grocery store or maybe going to a restaurant and see if you can even afford the food that is over there any longer because of these tariffs and what is coming our way. The President should be listening to the people across the country. Maybe he should go into a grocery store and do some walking, talking to folks.

Now, one of my constituents who works at a car dealership, a very successful car dealership in New Mexico, said her managers notified the team that they are no longer fulfilling orders in the United States. She wrote to me saying that all of her friends and co-workers are scared of being fired because of President Trump's reckless tariffs.

A woman in Questa, NM, pleaded with me to help restore the U.S. Department of Agriculture funding for schools and food banks. She told me that because of high grocery prices caused by this administration, the demands at their local food bank have more than doubled.

Another constituent told me that she is ready to retire—looking forward to it—but she is scared that the Trump administration will continue to take a sledgehammer to Social Security. And I guess that Elon Musk is going to take a chain saw to it. Unless this stops, she doesn't know if retirement is even an option.

My constituents can see the economy is slipping before their eyes—they feel it—and their paychecks are not going as far as they used to. Now President Trump is imposing sweeping, across-the-board tariffs that will increase prices for everyone back home. The tariffs are going to cost New Mexicans nearly 4,000 bucks a year—\$4,000 that a lot of folks don't have.

Donald Trump's own former Vice President, Mike Pence, said the Trump tariffs will decimate family budgets. That is right. The former Republican Vice President under President Trump's first term said that the Trump tariffs will decimate family budgets.

When the new tariffs were unveiled this week, more chaos and confusion ensued. There was a lot of conflicting information being put out by the White House—I would argue, intentionally—with different countries on different lists and inconsistent numbers that were confusing not only to the American people but to some of our allies across the world.

These tariffs will not only cost hard-working families thousands of dollars each year, but they will undermine many of the relationships that America has built and strengthened for decades.

The U.S. auto industry, they cannot afford the 25-percent tariff already in effect. In Detroit, MI, our proud "Motor City," 900 autoworkers have been temporarily laid off as a direct response to these auto tariffs.

When household costs skyrocket, it crushes entire families. Forget changing to generic brands and not going out

to eat anymore; more families will be struggling to get food on the table, period. And because of the Trump administration cutting food programs—the U.S. Department of Agriculture and State food programs—there is less fresh and local food for families on the lunch trays of our students. This is also hurting farmers and ranchers all across America, constituents who have told me that they voted for this President and have now come to tell me this is not what they signed up for.

Now, how does President Trump respond when families start to speak up about the rising cost of groceries? The President says he really doesn't care and he thinks the term "groceries" is old-fashioned. I don't know the last time that he went grocery shopping for himself. They are not old-fashioned. It just shows how disconnected he is. He doesn't get it, and I don't think he cares.

To sum it up, groceries are a necessity. I just don't understand. Who is talking to this President? I hope someone gets his ear to help correct that approach to what families depend on every day.

Now, my constituents living in rural parts of New Mexico depend on the local grocery store to have food stocked at prices that don't break the bank, if they can find them in rural America. Some folks in the country take it for granted that they have a Whole Foods or a Trader Joe's on every corner block, but countless Americans and New Mexicans need to drive more than 30 minutes—some, 60, 90, or 2 hours—in one direction to find the closest grocery store. When you are living in a food desert with nothing healthy to eat, what else are you going to get?

Nominee after nominee that are now part of the Trump administration has asked me: Well, why do those folks that live out in the rural parts of New Mexico just eat Doritos or chips?

What other stores are out there? Go out there and see for yourself.

But when this administration and these Secretaries choose to cut the food programs that allow us to do something about these food deserts, to be able to get healthy food out there and support more local farmers and ranchers, they just cause more devastation. They are hurting families. And like I said earlier, I don't think they care. I don't think they know.

And now, thanks to Republicans and this President, a lot of the things we are eating just to sustain ourselves are getting more and more expensive.

Now, a little story about one of these nominees, who is now the Secretary of the Department of the Treasury: I had a conversation with Secretary Bessent in my office about tariffs, and I told him about New Mexico's incredible food culture and how we depend on specialty imported foods and crops and some of the things you might find at the local grocery store or even, if you are fortunate enough to go to one of

the local restaurants, even one of the local food trucks.

I told him about something called guacamole. Most people across the country know it is made out of avocados. That is one of the key ingredients. That is where the story begins. I told him people were already upset that they couldn't get avocados for some of their meals or some of the restaurants. Yesterday, the New Mexico Restaurant Association was in town, and two of the restaurants that were represented—I am telling you what—they are scrambling right now to be able to find the ingredients that are part of these old family recipes that have allowed their restaurants to be so successful. This is one of them.

Now, the Secretary said that where he comes from that they grow a lot of peaches and maybe we should try that.

I don't know about you, I have never made guacamole out of peaches. I don't think it is going to work.

I congratulate this Secretary on his success. He is one of the wealthiest people in America. He probably gets subsidies from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for the farm that he has, even though he is one of the richest people in America. Talk about not getting it.

Now, at a time when grocery prices are rising, Republicans are actively working to dismantle the programs that keep folks with maybe a meal on the table. As soon as tonight, during these late-night votes that we are going to have this evening, Senate Republicans will move legislation that proposes to cut up to \$230 billion from Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs. Some people across America know this simply as SNAP, that acronym.

One in four people in my State rely on this program, many are children. Think about food banks. Think about meal programs for schools. Think about meal programs for seniors. This comes on the back of President Trump and this administration firing the people that are delivering Meals on Wheels to seniors, some of which may not even be able to get out of their home, may not even be able to go to the grocery store to get a meal. This President saw fit to fire those people. Talk about a lack of respect and dignity.

If \$230 billion is cut from a program that feeds mostly kids and seniors, what does everyone think is going to happen all across America in all of our districts, in all of our States? I am not the only one that represents rural America. I am not the only person that represents families that have to drive hours in one direction just sometimes to get fuel or to find milk, if they can find it, or find a grocery store.

I am not the only one. I know my colleagues know exactly what I am talking about because when I speak with them in private, they share similar stories with me. This is just about common sense.

We have got to do better here. And then to boot, my Republican colleagues

like to preach about fiscal responsibility. We all know across America that we need to get our fiscal house in order at the Federal level. We all know that we need to work toward those balanced budgets and that we need to find a way to get everything under control; lower our debt; lower those annual deficits.

Part of the gimmick we are going to hear and see tonight is that my Republican colleagues are trying to convince the American people that this Trump tax scam—the same thing that happened in 2017 that they are trying to extend now—here is the secret: The program costs over \$4 trillion. You heard it correct—\$4 trillion. That is how much this thing costs. Everyone knows it, including my Republican colleagues.

Why is it that my Republican colleagues are trying to tell the American people: Well, after tonight, it costs \$0. Doesn't cost a penny. It is going to add \$4 trillion, some argue even more, to our debt—to the annual deficit.

If that is the case, then why don't our Republican colleagues just say: No more debt in America. That is gone too. No more annual deficits. That doesn't cost anything. It is nonsense. It is a lie. It is not true.

Don't take my word for it. You are going to see it in the next few hours. You will see it on this floor. You already saw it in the House of Representatives where Speaker Johnson and House Republicans pushed this through. That is what this vote tonight is all about, everyone.

If you have not figured it out, keep a close eye on this because we are trying to open up these curtains to let a bit of sunshine in so the American people can see what they are up to because what they are up to is not right. This is wrong. My Republican colleagues know better.

My colleagues that once called themselves fiscal hawks, let's see if they have the courage to stand up tonight and stop this nonsense because there is many of us that want to work with you to get our fiscal house in order.

There is little piece of policy that was instituted during a recent moment in history under former President Bill Clinton, and it was the legislative branch showing fiscal constraint. It was something called pay-go. It said, if you are going to pass a piece of legislation that cost a dollar, you either have to save a dollar in Federal spending or you have to create revenue, but you have to pay for it. That is how the American people live.

If they spend a buck, they have got to pay for it. They have got to cut the budget or they have got to go get another job or try to find a way to get another dollar. Let's work together.

But after tonight when my Republican colleagues move this nonsense forward, I don't want to hear one of them talking about fiscal constraint or fiscal responsibility because they are about to blow it out of the water. I

hope they think about it. I am praying for you. I hope you take a moment and pray before you come to the floor and vote tonight.

Now from the grocery stores to the doctor's office, the budget proposed by Senate Republicans will hurt families everywhere they turn.

A mom from New Mexico told me that she is scared—scared that if congressional Republicans and President Trump rip Medicaid away, she will lose her son. Six-year-olds should be entering the first grade, outside playing, getting into good trouble, getting to know the neighborhood kids, even watching superhero movies, maybe even arguing with siblings about whose turn it is to do the dishes.

Six-year-olds should not have to worry about whether or not they are going to get to see a doctor, where their next meal is going to come from, whether they are going to get the medicine they need to feel better so they can do all things that a normal 6-year-old and healthy 6-year-old can do.

I know each of us has these stories. Whether you are a Member of the Senate or you are just tuning in or you are visiting with us today, you all have these stories.

The Republican tax scam benefits the top 1 percent more than anyone else. Look at the actuary numbers. Look at the economists. Look at the facts around us. Don't fall for the nonsense that is coming from my colleagues who are trying to pull the wool over your eyes. Tell the truth to the American people.

Now, if you make under \$60,000 a year, you lose, plain and simple. It is not a fair system for Americans. Look, I want my friends across the country who have done well for themselves, who are so successful financially, that have made millions or tens of millions or hundreds of millions of dollars, I want them to do more and do better. I congratulate them. All I am saying is, I don't think they need a tax cut.

How about we help the folks making less than \$60,000 a year, \$80,000 a year. I mean, heck, \$400,000 a year. How about we agree with our Republican colleagues that let's put a cap there.

A few weeks ago, there were votes on this floor that asked my Republican colleagues, Can we agree to put a cap at \$10 million? They voted no. They said: OK. If that is not enough, how about a \$100 million? Nope, they voted that one down. So one of my colleagues said: Well, how about \$500 million? If someone is making \$500 million a year, can we agree to put a cap there that says no one making more than \$500 million a year gets a tax cut? Surprise. Surprise. They voted no.

Even the leader asked my Republican colleagues: How about \$1 billion? If 10 is not enough, 100 is not enough, 500 is not enough, how about \$1 billion? If someone is doing so well in America that they make \$1 billion a year, can we agree to put a cap there?

They voted that down. Out of touch.

Today, and all through the night, you will hear from a number of my colleagues, all representing different States across America, different people from all walks of life. They are standing alongside me to speak up about the harmful repercussions that this Republican budget will have and the damage that we are already seeing.

I urge my fellow Americans: Pay attention. Get the facts. Demand that the people that ask for your vote to represent you, that they stop lying to you. Just tell the truth. My Republican colleagues won the election. I understand that. They have the majority votes in the Senate and in the House. They even control the White House. It is no secret that they want to devastate Medicaid and Medicare.

But then my Republican colleagues say: No, no, no. We are not going to touch it. We are going to leave it up to the States while they take the Federal money away. Don't worry about Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs and those food programs that help food banks, that help schools. We are not taking the money. We are leaving it up to the States.

But these votes are going to eliminate all those dollars so there can be another handout to the wealthiest people in America. That is what is at play. I know my constituents cannot afford to pay for another Trump tax scam. My constituents cannot afford to pay for this national sales tax that is coming our way because of the Trump tariffs.

I urge my fellow Senators, listen to your constituents, be honest with them, understand what it is like to walk in their shoes.

Let's work together. Let's find a way to get this done instead of ignoring the Parliamentarian, finding some accounting gimmick to get around this. Let's work together. Let's follow the rules. Let's listen to the American people. Let a little common sense come into our lives.

Reflect, a little prayer is not going to hurt you, and do the right thing.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER. Madam President, yesterday when the budget resolution came to the floor, I introduced an amendment. It is a simple, straightforward piece of legislation that will protect American consumers by prohibiting tariffs that increase the costs of building a house.

About 2 days ago, we passed a bipartisan resolution reversing President Trump's unnecessary national emergency on Canadian imports. That is right. Our closest ally to the north is now on the receiving end of a senseless trade war. Essential groceries and food products, building supplies, materials that impact our national security, all of these things and more that cross the border are now each and every day in jeopardy.

I recently asked the Federal Reserve Chairman: Are tariffs a tax?

And he said: Well, you will pay either the tariff at the exporter level, the importer, the retailer, and/or the consumer. And who is most likely to feel the pain? I and most economists believe it is American families and small businesses.

When it comes to the cost of building materials, home buyers are going to bear the brunt of the burden. All of this in the same week that the Trump administration said it would “shake up” the Agency that oversees Federal housing loans.

I wrote to the administration on Monday to get just some clarity on what does “shake up” mean, because I believe—and I know—that this will ultimately mean higher mortgages and higher rents.

At this rate, in just a few weeks’ time, the cost to build a home is going to go up. The cost to own a home is going to go up. The cost to rent a home is going to go up while we are in the midst of a housing crisis, all thanks to reckless policies of this administration with the support of my Republican colleagues.

Picture this: You are a young couple living in Wilmington, DE. You have been married a few years and have been saving to buy your first home. You were smart. You have been investing with the intention of putting 10 percent down. You have nearly \$40,000 in investment that you were ready to sell to cover your downpayment.

You are almost there—almost there. That \$400,000 home that you were eyeing has been on the market for a few months now, but then this administration slaps tariffs on half the world, and the market drops. There goes your \$40,000. There goes your downpayment and your dream of homeownership.

Or think of a couple in Dover. They have been living in their home for about 10 years, and they are looking to sell it. They have saved up about \$20,000 to redo their kitchen so that they can increase the value of their home. They want to update it and then put it on the market—so a new refrigerator, maybe a new dishwasher, update the cabinets and flooring, the works. But with the tariffs, what would have once been covered by what you saved—now it is just a drop in the bucket. A house is made of many imported materials, and these tariffs increase the amount consumers will have to spend each and every step along the way.

Let’s look at a new build from the ground up and how the President’s tariffs will make it more expensive.

According to the New York Times, the United States became the biggest importer of cement in 2023. Cement is a key component in laying the foundation of a home, and these tariffs could raise the price of cement alone 18 percent—just the foundation increased by 18 percent.

So now you have spent the money to build the foundation, and it is time for the framing. Well, the cost of lumber is expected to go up 4 percent.

You will need exterior windows and doors too. Those materials could go up 11 percent.

Want a roof? Anybody want a roof? Another 21 percent bump.

Siding—7 percent increase.

How about some water and electricity? Plumbing, electrical, and mechanical parts could cost as much as 8 percent higher.

Insulation and drywall are expected to cost 20 percent more.

Add another 17 percent bump for countertops and cabinets and an 11-percent increase for appliances too.

These dollars add up. It is a compounding effect and an avalanche of increased costs at a moment where investment accounts, savings accounts, and retirement funds are starting to drain.

I actually met someone this morning who was ready to retire from their job this year, and he said: I can’t retire. I am going to have to just wait until the dust settles.

For so many across our Nation, these tariffs mean more than an increase in price. It can cost them their dreams, their financial future, a literal roof over their heads in a place called home.

Now, I am pretty sure that President Trump ran on an agenda of lowering costs, but what we are seeing here are broken promises and a shakedown of working families to line the pockets of his billionaire friends.

When I came to Congress back in 2016, I was driven to serve when I saw a dad and three kids in front of me in the supermarket put back grapes because they were \$9. It wasn’t soda; it wasn’t candy; it was grapes. Many times over the years, I have thought about that dad and those kids. I think about them today. And the reality is that this administration’s policies are only making it harder for them to make ends meet.

I am sorely disappointed that my Republican colleagues refuse to stand up for their States and their constituents despite knowing how harmful these tariffs will be. The rest of the world knows. As a matter of fact, it is why we are seeing the stock market perform at its worst. It is a collapse that we have not seen since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

So let’s be clear. These 19th-century trade policies do not prepare us for the 21st-century economy. Instead of a national, well-thought-out, and comprehensive strategy that includes strengthening our supply chains, this administration is approaching trade like they are approaching government efficiency—with a chain saw, a woodchipper, and a hatchet. It gives new meaning to the phrase “using all the tools in your toolbox.” The problem is, they are using the wrong tools. The uncertainty being created will, in fact, stop investments, hurt innovation, and lead to layoffs and less hiring and stunted growth.

This budget does not reflect the needs of our constituents or the times.

I urge my colleagues to vote no on this budget resolution.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. HICKENLOOPER. Madam President, today, the other side is trying to pass I think what can only be called an extreme budget plan—very extreme—which is chock-full of bad ideas to help pay for their tax breaks, most of which are for the ultrawealthy.

They are targeting critical services like Medicaid.

They are trying to green-light a fire sale of public lands, which I have an amendment on to present later to try to prevent.

They are even floating an idea to stick small businesses with the bill for some of these cuts. One idea they proposed could cap or eliminate the ability for businesses to claim a deduction for their property taxes, which is one of the most common business expenses there is. Bare bones, it would raise taxes on small businesses, these businesses being the engine of our community.

Running a small business isn’t easy. I know that firsthand. I remember how hard it was when I first opened the Wynkoop Brewing Company, Colorado’s first brewpub. We worked long hours, both before we opened and especially after we opened. We were constantly stressed about having enough money to pay for our rent, our staff, to purchase the foodstuff that we made into meals—all of our expenses.

I can tell you that having to pay even a little more in taxes would have made life that much worse. It would have devastated us. So why would Republicans on the other side want to make it harder to grow or open a small business? We should be helping entrepreneurs. We should be helping small businesses and not adding to their burden.

These proposed changes would also wreak havoc on the real estate industry. Coloradans and Americans are worried about the cost of housing. We hear from people all the time from all across the country about how they work two or three jobs just so they can afford their rent and their groceries. We need to build more housing, and we need to make rent more affordable.

Why would we want to disincentivize new housing construction and encourage higher rents for families or businesses? But that is what happens if you take away some of the basic, fundamental deductions that businesses need. It is just one out of many what I would call reckless ideas to fund these in many cases unnecessary tax cuts for the ultrawealthy.

Now, this budget comes at a time when small businesses and American entrepreneurs are already under pressure from what I would call the administration’s unhinged trade policy.

As my colleagues have noted, this week, President Trump announced another wave of what we have been calling tariff taxes that will go into effect

this weekend and are going to raise prices for Americans all across the country.

Ten percent on all goods from all countries, 20 percent on goods from the European Union, 24 percent on goods from Japan, and 34 percent on goods from China. These tariff taxes mean Americans will pay higher prices on pretty much everything, starting with their groceries.

Buying a six-pack of Colorado beer? Better bring some extra cash; it is going to be more expensive. Filling up your truck? That is going to cost more. Replacing a part on your car? Be ready to pay a surcharge. Building a new home? Expect the bids to come in. Expect inflation during the construction project. Expect to pay more.

We are already hearing from small businesses back in Colorado. Craft brewers whom I know well are worried about the sky-high increases in imported aluminum. Farmers are worried about fertilizer and other products they depend on that are getting more expensive, and this doesn't even mention that most of them recognize they need to export some of their food. We grow more than we can consume ourselves.

The impacts for consumers are just as bad. Major companies like Target and Best Buy are saying that they will have to raise prices. Even President Trump's own Commerce Secretary has publicly said that these tariff taxes are going to raise prices.

The bottom line is that these tariff taxes will lead to higher costs. They are going to hurt small businesses, and I think ultimately they are going to increase unemployment.

I don't think I could find anyone in Colorado who would say this is what they were voting for in the last election.

We should be focusing on helping small businesses, not just in Colorado but across the country. We should be helping lower costs, not just in Colorado but across the country. I think we should be trying to stimulate and expand their businesses rather than being forced to shrink them.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, we have discussed already how this budget has such horrible effects on American families by slashing Medicaid—we did that last night—giving tax cuts to the rich—we did that earlier this morning—and now how the tariffs are such a huge Trump tariff tax on American families.

We continue to show how bad this budget is for American families—in this case, veterans, led by Senator BLUMENTHAL.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, I thank Senator SCHUMER for opening this tremendously important segment of our argument, our case,

against this budget resolution. I am here to talk about veterans—what they deserve and what they are being denied, what they have earned and what is being taken away.

I rise to honor veterans, who deserve our accolades for their service and their sacrifice.

Very often, we fail to appreciate who our veterans are. They are members of our family, our neighbors, our friends, my two sons who have served, one as a Marine Corps officer in Afghanistan and the other as a Navy SEAL. They are role models, as veterans of previous generations were role models for my two sons. They look like America, men and women—increasingly women—different races, religions, backgrounds, national origins. Some are immigrants.

What is common to all of them is that they share a bond. The bond among veterans is unique. And they are increasingly a smaller portion of our population. Less than 1 percent of Americans are veterans or even families of veterans.

More and more, they serve in multiple deployments. That is what we have seen over these last wars in Iraq and Afghanistan—multiple deployments.

We know that families serve as well as veterans.

And so the impact of the Veterans Affairs governmental structure, or VA, is more important now—or, at least, as important as ever before—in keeping our word and our promise to those veterans that we will leave no veteran behind in jobs, in education, in skills training, and, yes, in healthcare.

The VA Healthcare Administration is the gold standard for this country, and veterans know it. They deserve it.

Today, we are in a crisis in veterans care. It is a crisis of this administration's making. It is a self-inflicted wound. It is a bleeding wound, and I am here to echo the commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars when he asked us in one of our hearings: Stop the bleeding. Stop the bleeding in our services to veterans through PACT Act care and benefits, in our VA hospitals around the country, in the Veterans Crisis Line, in programs to keep them in their homes. Stop the bleeding.

Already, 2,400 have been fired, and 83,000 jobs are on the chopping block. The VA Secretary has said: They are going to go.

We are here to sound the alarm and reverse this self-inflicted, ongoing, destructive cruelty and incompetence.

I would like to think that it is malign neglect, not purposeful malevolence. But one way or the other, the impact of Elon Musk and Donald Trump and, yes, Secretary Doug Collins has been monumentally destructive, and it is stupid. I am going to use a word that I told my children never to use—a four-letter word, D-U-M-B. It is dumb. There is no rhyme or reason to firing 83,000 members of the VA workforce, about a third of them veterans, when, at the same time, there are

40,000 openings for the same kinds of positions: surgeons, physicians, nurses, counselors, schedulers, janitors—they are all part of a team—and including claims processors for the PACT Act, the Dole Act, and other kinds of benefits that they have earned and they deserve not next year but now. There is no sense in firing people for the very positions for which the VA is trying to recruit. It makes no sense.

We are at a moment of historic challenge that demands accountability. It demands actions, not just words. I understand the notion of accountability may be scary for the President, for Elon Musk, for Secretary Collins. Elon Musk is unappointed, unelected, unaccountable. But Doug Collins was chosen for this job, and he promised to be accountable.

He made a lot of other commitments that led me to vote for him, and that was a mistake for me, and I apologize to the people of Connecticut and the veterans of America for that error. But it was based on the commitments and the promises he made at the time, and one of them was to be accountable.

He has so far refused to answer my written questions and requests, not even the courtesy of a letter back. He is perhaps reluctant to provide those responses when he knows he is on the wrong side of the law. These firings, cuts, and freezes are illegal. He is on the wrong side of the facts. He is on the wrong side of history, and the veterans of America deserve better, and they know better.

Instead of coming before Congress under oath, hosting a regular press conference, like his predecessor, or attending a townhall open to the public—I have invited him to Connecticut—Secretary Collins hides behind social media and deceitful assurances to veterans. He attacks the media, veterans' leaders, Members of Congress. What he owes is the facts and actions to correct the mistakes that are being made in real time.

Veterans know better. They know that the Biden administration was delivering more benefits and more healthcare to more veterans than ever before, as a result of the PACT Act. They know that the care they receive at their local VA hospital or clinic is among the best in the country. They know they can rely on it. And they know that this administration is systematically betraying them with policies that put their interests last, not first; with the goal of saving money, not saving them. They know that that money is designed to finance tax cuts, not for them but for the billionaires and millionaires that populate this administration and drive this administration's policies.

And veterans know that this administration has fired 2,400 VA employees with consequences that are mushrooming in their disastrous impact. We are talking about people in positions of healthcare and disability benefits processing.

Now, I know disability benefits processing is a complicated abstract term, but what that means is, as every veteran knows, the compensation you deserve for injuries you have sustained is not just some hypothetical check in the distant future. It is now because it is needed now. It is not a promise that, a year or 2 years from now, you will be getting the benefits that you have earned and you deserve. It is right now that you need those benefits to put food on the table, to pay rent, to finance education, to pay for your kids' clothes. And the reason is that often our veterans with disabilities or veterans who have retired need that money to simply stay alive.

The health professionals who save lives every day, the schedulers and support staff who connect them to the care and services they need, and the claims processors who were producing at historic levels as of 3 months ago, I am disappointed to say a lot of them have been fired.

The cuts in funding, the freezes on hiring, the firing of the VA workforce have direct human impacts on real people in real time, and I am disappointed that a number of my Republican colleagues—so many of them—are seeking to minimize or diminish the human impacts of these cuts in funding, freezes, and firings.

But the human impacts are what trouble me the most. These heartless cuts, freezes, and firings are heart-breaking. We held a shadow hearing just a day or so ago where we heard from people whose lives had been up-ended, not just their lives but those they serve.

The human impacts of the firing of, for example, Shernice Mundell, an Air Force veteran, illegally fired after starting a new position in the Office of Personnel Management, confirmed DOGE's "Fire first; aim and analyze later." That is, apparently, their strategy. Elon Musk has taken it over and weaponized it.

She said:

A lot of people get confused when they say OPM is the one that is doing the firing. It is not OPM. It is DOGE, and they are doing it, and they are just going under the guise of being OPM.

She also confirmed that no one from DOGE ever reached out to understand her role or the role of her office at OPM, helping retired Postal Service employees with healthcare and benefits.

Her termination was announced in a prerecorded video. She had just been promoted because of her exemplary performance, and in that new position, she was provisional. She was fired. Maybe it was an algorithm or an AI formula, because she was provisional. One of our best and one of the first to go—it makes no sense.

Similarly, Jonathan Kamens, another of the mass probationary terminations. We heard from him and some of his colleagues that they were no longer needed. Really?

Before he joined his team at the U.S. Digital Service in 2023, his role was vacant for nearly a year due to the lack of qualified candidates, and there are live postings for the exact positions he and other fired colleagues held.

Now, his role was to protect the privacy and integrity of data in the VA system. Nobody is doing it now. The VA will be recruiting for it, but they have just fired him.

These are real life impacts on real people, and veterans know it, and they are telling the administration that they know it. They are telling the administration:

Our freedom was paid for in blood. Have some respect.

Remember our veterans. Remember those human impacts on the world-class researchers who were doing work on mental health and substance use disorders among veterans? They have been terminated. There are openings of new clinics that have been delayed because the VA cannot hire the necessary staff to open their doors. Our colleague from Virginia told us about the Hampton facility, which has been delayed because of an inability to fill those positions.

VA mental health staff are being forced to conduct counseling sessions while in open cubicles, putting veterans' privacy at risk.

Service lines at VA hospitals and clinics have been halted. Beds in operating rooms at VA facilities have been suspended. Support lines for caregivers have been reduced. Veterans Crisis Line employees have been fired, and suicide prevention training sessions have been postponed or canceled.

And just yesterday, the Secretary of the VA announced he will be canceling the VA Servicing Purchase Program, known as VASP. Everything in the military, in the VA has an acronym. This one is the Veterans Affairs Servicing Purchase Program, and it will be canceled at the end of the month.

What does that mean? This program helped veterans experiencing severe financial hardship avoid foreclosure and stay in their homes. It currently serves roughly 15,000 veterans. Like everyone else in this country, veterans are encountering financial hardship and tough times. They need to stay in their homes. We don't want them to be homeless. Veteran homelessness is a scourge that is unforgivable in the greatest country in the history of the world. This program enables them to avoid foreclosure. The VA is canceling them.

Housing is more unaffordable than ever before. Veterans are losing jobs across the Federal Government—83,000 from the VA alone, thousands of others from other Agencies, because the Federal workforce consists of about one-third veterans.

It is reprehensible that the Secretary is canceling a critical program that helps veterans undergoing tough financial times to stay in their homes. It is simply another heartless and heart-

breaking decision by the Secretary that puts veterans needlessly, recklessly, incompetently at risk.

This Secretary apparently just is signing off and accepting every suggestion—maybe it is every order—from Elon Musk. He has the obligation—he took the oath—to put veterans before Elon Musk, to put veterans before savings to finance tax cuts for the billionaires, to put veterans first always.

That is the reason that I have introduced a measure called Putting Veterans First that would reverse all the firings from the VA. It would reverse all the firings of veterans from the Federal workforce. It would provide rights of appeal, the right to an individualized performance rating before someone is fired, not the videos or the mass firings that have been used. It would protect the privacy of veterans in the VA system from the rummaging and monetizing, potentially, of veterans' data and information, most sensitive and confidential information about them in those files of the VA.

I am joined in this criticism of the VA not only by many of my colleagues but by leaders of the veterans community, the VSOs who have come before our committee and have told us about their concerns.

I quoted earlier the national commander of the VFW, Alfred Lipphardt. I want to quote him again:

I was wounded in combat during the Vietnam war. I am thankful that the medics who treated me chose not to take my whole arm for the sake of efficiency. It took a trained eye, a skillful hand and human intuition to fix me up and get me back in the fight. In my experience, those operating with a scalpel have a better chance of saving limbs than those who operate with a chainsaw.

Unfortunately, it appears humans have been taken out of what is a human capital issue. It has been reported to us from veterans who have lost their jobs that the emails they received letting them go were disjointed, and inconsistent across the board. This leads us to believe they were automated with little to no oversight or thought. When it comes to complex problems, we rely on humans to make the right choices at the right times. We should never leave the hard decisions that impact people's lives and livelihoods to an algorithm or an email distribution system.

He goes on:

"Honor the Contract" the government made with those who have already served and sacrificed so much for America and their fellow Americans. It's time to apply pressure and stop the bleeding.

"[S]top the bleeding." That is what the VFW national commander has asked us to do. Respect human beings—not only the humans who are affected. Make them in a human way when decisions put them and their futures at risk.

Stop the bleeding when it comes to the benefits under the PACT Act. We know that in 2023, the VA delivered more disability compensation benefits to more veterans than ever before. The VA delivered \$163 billion in earned benefits, including \$150 billion in compensation and benefits to over 6 million

veterans and survivors. The VA processed almost 2 million veteran and survivor claims.

The rate of processing and the time required have gone up since then. The numbers served have gone down. These are real-life consequences with impacts on real human beings in real time.

I am hopeful that this cause will be bipartisan. Our Veterans' Affairs Committee has always been among the most bipartisan in the work they have done and the collegiality that has been inspired.

I am hopeful that Republicans will join this fight. I hope we can work together as we have in the past. But it will require standing up to Elon Musk. It will require Doug Collins to say no to the Musk-DOGE tech bros, who are trying to eliminate waste by laying waste to the whole VA. It will require using a scalpel, as Al Lipphardt said—not sawing off the limb but taking the shrapnel out of the wound; eliminating waste in a targeted and calculated, calibrated way that involves keeping the limb—the program—and eliminating the waste. It is there. It is in every big organization we know, private sector or public. But it requires care, not cruelty.

That is, at the end of the day, in a sense, what most troubles me about these Musk-Trump cuts. They are cruel. They are needlessly mean, dumb, malevolent. Trying to eliminate waste with a chain saw has that effect.

I ask my Republican colleagues to join me in saying no more business as usual if it means using a chain saw on the VA, if it means punitively putting our Nation's heroes at risk.

I will be offering an amendment to the budget resolution later today that will seek to safeguard veterans' access to care by ensuring that the Veterans Health Administration is adequately staffed and funded. We owe our veterans no less—a lot more but no less than making sure we provide the resources and the staff to ensure they continue to have gold-standard care in the hospitals they visit, in the clinics they populate, in the claims they make under the PACT Act. All have been bipartisan in the past. I urge my colleagues on the Republican side to join me in this effort.

My amendment will reaffirm our Nation's commitment to veterans. Their lives are on the line, and I deeply hope my colleagues—regardless of whether your State is red or blue, it certainly makes no difference to veterans, and party is of no consequence to them when they need care and benefits. It ought to be of no consequence to us in making sure we keep our commitment to our Nation's heroes. Put veterans first.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. SLOTKIN. Madam President, I rise today to talk about the threats to the VA Administration and to our veterans, all in the name of finding \$6 trillion in the couch cushions for President Trump's tax plan.

I come to this very openly because of my background. I am a former CIA officer and Pentagon official. I did three tours in Iraq alongside the military. I spent my entire professional life before coming to elected office serving in the sorts of jobs that had me working on an hourly basis with the military. I served in the House and served on the Veterans' Affairs Committee there and serve on the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee.

What I am concerned about right now is that in this rush to cut everything for the sake of cutting, we are going to affect the very people that should be treated as nonpartisan.

It shouldn't be a partisan issue to serve our veterans, who have risked their lives, put themselves in danger, and come home with the express understanding that their Nation owed them a debt.

What we have seen so far is deeply disturbing. Secretary Collins, who is someone I served with in the House of Representatives, has already cut 2,400 employees from the VA.

Now, look, everyone has the opportunity to go after waste, fraud, and abuse. I served in places like the Pentagon. If you would have come to me and said "You need to cut 10 percent of your workforce," I could have come up with a plan that was targeted and thoughtful but that cut out missions and organizations that probably didn't need to be there anymore.

But that is not what this was. You can't say with a credible, straight face that those 2,400 people—all were people that made sense—weren't important to the mission of helping veterans. We know that because people who were fired on a Friday were rehired on a Monday.

Now we are facing the prospect of 70,000 to 80,000 additional people from the VA being cut across the country. That is the kind of cut that no mission to veterans can survive.

The VA is in a different position than a lot of our government Agencies. The VA, unlike a lot of our government offices, just went through a moment where they are taking on more veterans for care.

Just a couple of years ago, this body, on a bipartisan basis—Democrats and Republicans—voted on something called the PACT Act, which expanded coverage at the VA for our 9/11-era veterans—Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Somalia.

Anywhere we burned trash in a combat zone, where people were inhaling that trash, we said: Look, that experience is showing up with more cancers, more unusual cancers. We should give our 9/11-era veterans the benefit of the doubt on that care and not make them wait 40 years the way we did with Vietnam veterans and Agent Orange.

This body voted on that, and we are going through a significant expansion of care to veterans because of that—younger veterans, veterans with different needs, veterans who have PTSD

and head trauma, in addition to all the other things we know that they suffered, injuries seen and unseen. So when you start talking about cutting 70,000 to 80,000 people out of the VA, there is no way you do that without cutting services.

Here is the thing. I held a veterans townhall a couple of weeks ago in my home State. This is not a partisan event. These are people who are the heads of veterans service organizations. They do outreach to veterans. They are almost all veterans themselves. Ninety-five percent of them are veterans themselves.

What they said was: Look, we see that they are cutting, for instance, people who answer phones.

That may not seem like it is direct medical care to our veterans, but if a veteran has to file a claim to get a surgery and instead of waiting a month to get approval, they have to wait 18 months to get approval, that is damaging veterans' access to care.

So it is not just what doctors are doing in the workplace—and we know that some healthcare professionals in our hospitals have been cut. It is also the wraparound services that our veterans get.

So Secretary Collins was in Michigan—in Howell, MI, right in the center of my State—just in the past 10 days. That is a place—a county—that has a tremendous number of veterans and a tremendous number of veterans service organizations. It is just a really incredible county for supporting our veterans.

He was asked a direct question: Hey, you fired 2,400 people, but what about this leaked memo we heard about firing 70,000 to 80,000 people? Where do you stand on that? That can't be right.

And he doubled down.

He said: We are not going to lose any care. In fact, we are going to improve veteran healthcare, but we are going to cut 70,000 to 80,000 people.

I just don't understand how the math on that works. I don't think anyone in that room understood how the math on that worked, unless this is some big move to privatize the VA, which is something my Republican colleagues have wanted for a very long time.

I will tell you I feel very strongly, as someone who has served in combat zones alongside the military, that there are some things that this Nation should not do through private contractors, not through private health insurance, not through "whatever," but as a mission of the government. When you volunteer to put yourself in harm's way, you make a commitment to the Nation. So we should make that commitment back to you.

So we are waiting to see what happens. Unfortunately, we are seeing the veterans on the ground in our States come forward and, again, come back into the fray, come back into the fight, come to townhalls, and ask tough questions. Again, these aren't political people. These aren't elected officials.

These are people who are saying: Hey, I fought three tours in Iraq or in Afghanistan. Now you are telling me there is not going to be anyone answering the phone at the suicide hotline or at the claims department; that we are going to cut research; that we are going to cut all of these things. What are you doing to my care? Answer for that.

So I think we have to be aware of what is happening, and we have to hear the voices of our veterans as they are saying these things to me.

I happened to be up at the veterans hospital up in Iron Mountain, MI, in the UP of Michigan, the Upper Peninsula. It serves the entire upper peninsula, which is a huge swath of territory. It serves a ton in Wisconsin and even into Minnesota. It is the only VA hospital around. When I went there, the director of the hospital is walking us around, and he is saying, "Right now, we are all right," but he has no idea what is on the horizon. He can't say for sure what is on the horizon with that kind of instability, that inability to plan. You know, he wants to open a new specialty wing so that veterans can get specialized care when they come in. Should he open it? Should he not open it? Should he move forward? He doesn't know.

So it is just creating an uncertainty around our medical centers, which are, in some cases, the only hospitals around for 400, 500, 600 miles for our veterans to access.

You know, the other thing that I am completely concerned about is access to veterans' data. What we are seeing through DOGE is a bunch of 20-, 22-year-olds going into these Departments and Agencies and going over the heads of the Cabinet officials, saying: We know that you were just confirmed by the Senate, but we don't care what you think. We are coming in. We are going to take all your programs, put them through a meat grinder with artificial intelligence to sort of look at key words and key things, and we are going to make decisions coming in over your head. And, by the way, in some cases, we are going to bring in our own servers—literally, carrying in servers, plunking them down in the Agency, piping in all the plugs and getting all that data.

We have already seen them at the Treasury get access to taxpayer data. We have already seen them through Medicare get access to healthcare information.

Now, I am concerned. What are they going to do with veterans' information, with Active-Duty uniformed military information? with base information? with spouse information?

I think most Americans agree we don't want our data floating around on random servers that aren't protected from the national security threats that we know are after our data.

Data is the future. Having data and huge amounts of data is absolutely essential for our foreign adversaries and

for bad guys all over the world. They want that—not to mention private sector companies, right? It is hard to miss that Mr. Musk and the Silicon Valley set that are now so close and doing the bidding of President Trump are deeply interested in that data. They can monetize that data and use that data to understand how to target you, what algorithms to use for you.

So I have asked Secretary Collins and everyone else coming up here for confirmation: Please affirm for me you will protect our veterans' data. They don't want it sold, and they don't want it used.

I have gotten no assurances. They will not provide fitting assurances or they provide assurances in the way the Secretary of the Treasury did.

Secretary Bessent came in for his confirmation hearing, and he said: Of course, I won't let people get access to taxpayer data.

And literally, that week, DOGE got access to taxpayer data.

So we now have a situation where even taking the word of the Secretary of the VA is hard to do, given what has been going on in other Departments and Agencies.

I want to make one additional comment before I wrap up and turn it over to our next speakers. I just want to note that, just as we see the risks to our veterans, I am also watching significant risks to our uniformed military and that desperate desire that I hope we all have to keep them apolitical.

Earlier this morning, we learned about the dismissal of one of our senior-most generals in our national security community, General Haugh, who was the head of the NSA and Cyber Command. These are the people who keep us safe from cyber threats, who do our wiretaps on our adversaries abroad. These are folks who are critical in keeping us safe.

As a CIA officer, I worked every single day with the NSA. It was like a tag team. We would understand the intentions and goals of our adversaries—the Chinese, the Russians, the North Koreans, the Iranians—by getting that superclassified information, that top secret information that only intelligence communities can pick up and then turning that into a plan to protect the country and then, in some cases, go offensive, right? Just like our enemies are going against us, we have very sensitive information and operations that go against our adversaries.

General Haugh is deeply respected. He served in the military for more than 30 years. He is a good man of dignity and was basically fired for no reason.

From what we understand, a White Nationalist walked into Donald Trump's office—a woman who is a well-known conspiracy theorist. She just fingered certain people she thought should go, including two- and three-star generals, and, the next day, they were gone.

I want to say that I have heard the general brief the Senate Armed Serv-

ices Committee and the House Armed Services Committee many, many times. He has some of our most sensitive assignments in the entire military. What concerns me is this has become a new norm. This is going to become normal. They are going to say: Well, he is tainted.

So we are going to take someone who has served more than any of those people who are sitting around in the Oval Office, and we are going to kick them out and say: We don't like the looks of you.

We are going to say that service means nothing to your country and that, while we know the military swears an oath to the Constitution and not to any one political party or any one leader, we don't believe them, right? We believe ourselves and our conspiracy theorists more than the decency and service record of a respected general.

So, while I apologize to him and to the other leaders in his Department who now are dealing with that absence, we have a hearing next week with that leadership. I wonder if that hearing can go forward to tell us about the most pressing threats—a classified hearing.

What I am most worried about is the signal it sends to so many other uniformed officers serving their country. They signed up to serve, and they are being treated like trash. They are being treated like a piece of political trash because of conspiracy theorists who have a greater influence on this President than the men and women who serve every day.

It is a shame on the heads of this President and on the Secretary of Defense for letting it happen, and I can't let a day go by without marking this time in space.

Who is the next general who is going to be fired? What is the next mission that is going to be thrown out simply because someone looked at it the wrong way? That is the moment we are in.

I am shocked at my Republican colleagues, who have always claimed themselves to be pro-defense, pro-patriot, pro-America, pro-flag. Then stand up for people who have served 30 years, and don't let them go down in flames because you are scared of the spotlight being put on you. You are scared of that man.

So many actions that are happening on the floor of the Senate these days are out of sheer fear, right? There are very few true believers. They are terrified of being primaried. They are terrified of someone turning against them.

Stand up for at least the U.S. military. Every single person in this Chamber has lived a good and decent life. They haven't had bombs going off. They haven't had missiles flying into our country every single day, the way war-distraught towns and cities in other countries live through. We do that on the grace of our military, and they are being treated like trash by Donald Trump and by everyone in this Chamber who doesn't stand up.

And, while we are talking about veterans, I can't escape the notice of what is going on in our uniformed Active-Duty military, the soon-to-be veterans.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I am proud to follow my colleague from Michigan, who, of course, has served herself. Then I am also proud to be here with Senator ROSEN of Nevada, and there are so many veterans in Nevada.

We rise today to urge our colleagues to oppose this budget. A budget is a statement of priorities, and our priorities should be helping people who are the hard-working people of this country, particularly those who have served our Nation, and not giving two-thirds of the tax cuts to a bunch of wealthy, wealthy people and big corporations. That, sadly, is what is in front of us today.

Of course, the whole situation is exacerbated by the Trump tariff tax, which amounts to \$4,000 per family every year, \$20,000 more on a new home—really a problem for young people—and \$3,000 more on a car. That is what we are dealing with right now.

But our focus, right at this moment, is on our veterans. When our veterans signed up to serve our Nation, there was no waiting line. And when they come home to the United States of America and they need a job or they need an education or they need to get healthcare, there should never be a waiting line in the United States of America. We have worked so hard from way back to the fiasco at Walter Reed, after we added new veterans into our healthcare system—after Afghanistan, after Iraq—to upgrade the benefits for our veterans, to upgrade the kind of services they have gotten. For the most part, there have been some major improvements, but the VA is under attack, sadly, by the Trump administration and, in particular, by Elon Musk. We need to stand up for the more than 9 million veterans who rely on the VA for care, including the 106,000 veterans in my State.

For weeks, I have been hearing from veterans and veterans' families who sacrificed for their country. They are worried about what the slashes to VA services will mean to them.

I heard from a disabled Gulf war veteran who is living with lung cancer who is concerned that he won't be able to get the care near where he lives anymore.

One woman whose husband was exposed to Agent Orange in Vietnam pleaded that our veterans answered a call to serve and protect democracy.

She added:

We need to reciprocate by providing them with the service and benefits that they earned and need.

I heard from the mom of a vet who served in Iraq. Her son suffers from traumatic brain injury and also was exposed to burn pits. She said her son had

received life-changing therapy through the PACT Act, which is something we worked so hard on in a bipartisan basis to pass, but his access to that care is now at risk.

Those cuts that were proposed in the House budget and, over here—the funny math, where you can't figure out where anything is going—all of it puts this at peril.

In her words:

Promises were made, and promises need to be kept.

I was at one of our county VAs. Senator SMITH and I and Congresswoman CRAIG were there, and we met a man who had served our country, who went into the private sector, and who took a significant pay cut to go work in veterans services and help our veterans. He was just up to his probationary period, was told he was fired, and then maybe he is rehired. He doesn't know because he doesn't have email access anymore. Even if he is rehired, he is not sure he wants to go back.

One of my husband's law students spent his whole life defusing bombs. That was his work with the military. He then came back home. He went to law school. He worked really hard. He then got hired as a lawyer at the VA—something that he could only have dreamed of in the early part of his service. He is also disabled. He works there at the VA. He is 2 weeks short of meeting his probationary period, Senator ROSEN, and he gets fired. He told my husband, who had been his professor, that he doesn't think he is going to go back if he is rehired. Why? Because no one deserves to be treated with this indignity.

So we are not only seeing these funding freezes and problems, we are also seeing incredible patriots who have served our country who are having to leave the work at the VA.

Just last month, we learned that the administration is not done. They now plan to fire more than 80,000 staff by the end of the year. That would mean firing nurses and staff who process benefits. This is not hypothetical to our veterans. It shouldn't be hypothetical to anyone in this body.

We must stand up, and we must stand up to this budget. I hope that our Republican colleagues, as they see the news from their constituents of what is happening, particularly in rural areas with people who have worked their whole lives and now they don't even know if they are going to be able to keep their farm going because of these tariffs—the last thing you want to do is pass a budget that gives two-thirds of the budget to the wealthy and big corporations. That is the opposite of what we should be doing right now.

We ask our colleagues to stand up to this President and finally say enough is enough. This is not a kingdom. They are not subject to a King.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Ms. ROSEN. Madam President, we are here today to talk about our Fed-

eral budget. Republicans are, once again, going to use the budget reconciliation process to pass a massive new tax cut for billionaires—a massive new tax cut for the billionaires—and the ultrawealthy, paid for by cutting programs and services critical to Americans' health, like Medicaid.

This is going to affect children, families, even the men and women who serve our country. This would be on top of devastating cuts that Elon Musk and Donald Trump—well, that they are already implementing across the government—cuts that are hurting men and women who bravely served this country, cuts that are hurting our national security, and cuts that, sadly, cruelly, are making life harder for our veterans.

I don't have to tell anyone here the Department of Veterans Affairs provides essential care to the men and women who served this Nation as well as their families who worry about them every single day.

These services are not a luxury for our veterans; they are a necessity. They are a promise that we, as a nation, will take care of those who are willing to risk their lives for our safety and for our freedom. This is the very least we can do for those who sacrificed so much.

But instead of working to cut down on wait times at the VA or expanding access to these critical services for our veterans, the Trump administration announced a plan to cut 80,000 employees from the Agency, where one-quarter of those employees are veterans themselves, as Senator KLOBUCHAR just alluded to.

It is bad enough that those 80,000 people are out of a job, through no fault of their own, but on top of that, this misguided action is only going to make those wait times longer—make them worse—and it is going to limit the Agency's ability to care for and to support our veterans.

Of course, we are not just talking about healthcare here. The VA provides services on everything from short- and long-term housing options, life insurance, pensions, education stipends, and assistance for our—our—veterans, not Democrat or Republican veterans, our veterans, the veterans who served the United States of America, not a red America, not a blue America, America. These are our veterans. It is our responsibility.

The VA plays a pivotal role and particularly plays a role in groundbreaking public health research.

This is not the first time that Trump and Musk are attacking the government Agency that our veterans depend on. I can't even believe I am saying this, but they have gone after the Veterans Assistance Hotline and the Veterans Crisis Line—the Veterans Crisis Line. This line provides veterans with lifesaving mental health support and support for navigating the complexities of getting the care they need. Could you imagine?

These cuts, they are just not numbers on a page. These are real people—employees who work tirelessly to make sure that our veterans have someone to talk to in their deepest, darkest moments, many of these employees veterans themselves.

I have had veterans come to my office in tears who are there helping younger veterans who come back to save them from the brink of suicide. They cry to me: Please don't cut these services.

We have to help each other. These hotlines save lives every day. That is what my veterans services folks are telling me. It is what I know, and it is what we all know.

Firing these staff members, it means fewer people answering the phone when a veteran is in need. We don't know what hour of the day that will be. There are going to be fewer people to help guide them through the system. There would be fewer people ensuring that they receive the benefits that they have earned through their service.

Veterans, they already face long wait times for medical appointments, overwhelmed VA staff, and a system that is already stretched far too thin to meet the demand. Now these layoffs are only going to exacerbate the problem. It is just unconscionable. Frankly, it is just plain cruel.

I, for one—and I hope everyone here, I know everyone in Nevada—believe that our veterans deserve respect and deserve so much better.

You don't have to take it from me. Veterans in my State of Nevada are paying attention. They have been reaching out to my office every single day to push back on these reckless actions.

In fact, I am going to read a letter I got from a veteran in Reno. A veteran wrote to me, and I am just going to quote their letter:

I am a Nevada veteran, raised in Reno. I joined the Marine Corps after high school and served honorably to then return home to begin my studies at the University of Nevada, Reno.

Veterans have fought for their fellow countrymen and women due to their selflessness and sense of responsibility to protect our communities. Senator, I am asking you to return the favor and protect our Veterans from President Trump's attack on the PACT Act and his cutting of VA jobs.

That is just one of the letters I recently received.

Another veteran from Las Vegas wrote to me. Again, I am going to quote their words. It starts like this:

I, as a veteran, am concerned with the continued attacks on the Department of Veterans Affairs. I am currently awaiting a benefits claim for a condition that the army claims to have caused, as well as receiving treatment only through the VA.

I served two tours in the army as a combat medic and [I] am entitled to my benefits. These attacks delay care and create undo anxiety both regarding my health and [my] finances. I implore you to fight with everything you can.

This is from a combat medic, imploring me to do everything I can.

So the idea that cutting jobs at the VA for the sake of "government efficiency," it is nothing more than a smokescreen. This isn't wasteful spending. This is not wasteful spending. I can't say that often enough. Taking care of our veterans, it is not a waste. Serving our veterans, it is not a waste. Our veterans are not a waste, and this isn't wasteful spending.

The people who work at the VA, they serve our country, and they serve those who have served our country. And they are proud of it. They provide services that help our veterans access critical healthcare and the benefits they rely on. By failing to protect that, we are failing our veterans, plain and simple.

It doesn't end there. Congressional Republicans are following suit, and they are proposing cuts to other critical programs like Medicaid and SNAP, both of which millions of veterans rely on to pay for more of their tax breaks for billionaires. So they are going to cut Medicaid, cut SNAP, cut the VA. Why? Because billionaires, the people who need it least, are going to take it from the people who need it most. I am going to say that again. They are cutting benefits for people who need it the most to give it to billionaires who need it the least. They don't need any more money. They have plenty.

More than a million veterans live in a household that participate in SNAP, that food assistance program. Ten percent of veterans under the age of 65, well, they are covered by Medicaid. Make no mistake, cuts to SNAP, cuts to Medicaid, just like cuts to the VA, are going to hurt our veterans and their families.

We cannot allow these cuts to go through without understanding their devastating consequences. The men and women who served our Nation deserve better. We have promised them better.

Veterans aren't the only ones being impacted by these devastating cuts from Elon Musk and the Trump administration. Every single one of us—all of us—are being put at risk. The very safety of our Nation is threatened by the cuts this administration is making.

We have heard, time and time again, from those in Congress who prioritize a very strong national defense that we have to protect our military. And, of course, I am right here with them. Of course, we need to make sure our military has the funding and the resources to protect itself, protect our freedoms, and make sure Americans are safe around the world.

But, you know, our security as a nation isn't just protected with our military might. Defense is just one of the three legs of a stool which our national security stands upon. Without diplomacy and development, our defense is weakened—the three-legged stool: defense, diplomacy, and development.

Yet the Trump administration has gutted USAID. And even the current Republican agenda has proposed even more cuts that would reduce our global

leadership, leaving us with a national security strategy that is dangerously out of balance.

For decades, USAID has been the cornerstone of our foreign policy. The Agency has worked to help prevent conflicts, respond to global pandemics, promote democracy, and strengthen the economies of our partners, which all of that, in turn, strengthens us and creates new opportunities for us. And it does all of this for less than 1 percent of the Federal budget.

Despite this, the Trump administration and Elon Musk have cut efforts to vaccinate populations against infectious diseases and to trace outbreaks. Do you know what? This leaves Americans abroad and at home at high risk.

They have cut programs that foster stability in the areas that are on the brink of war. And they have cut programs in which our partners and allies depend on.

Now that we have stepped away from our leadership role around the world, we are seeing those who do not share our values—China and Russia. When we leave, who rushes in to fill the gaps? They do. Make no mistake, China and Russia are there to fill the gaps. And I ask this question: How does any of this make us safer?

We cannot afford to ignore the importance of diplomacy and development in our national security strategy. To do so would be to ignore the lessons of history, which tell us that investing in peace and stability abroad is just as crucial as investing in our military at home.

Unfortunately, the Trump administration has not only gutted USAID, it has also cut funding to the State Department for support for counterterrorism, counternarcotics, cyber security, anti-trafficking, and so much more.

These programs are not wasteful spending. They are investments in our national security, in the health of our citizens, in the safety of the world. These efforts help us build a safer, stronger, and more prosperous future for the United States, and they must be prioritized alongside defense or, make no mistake, we will all pay the price.

At a time when global instability is on the rise, it is critical that we take a comprehensive approach to security.

Our military men and women are indispensable, and so are the diplomats and aid workers who help build the conditions for lasting peace and prosperity around the world.

The stakes are incredibly high. By attempting to eliminate entire Agencies like USAID or slashing national security programs at the State Department, the Trump administration is undermining our long-term security. By slashing funding for the VA and cutting jobs that support our veterans—cutting the Veterans Crisis Line—the administration is turning its back on those who have already sacrificed so much for this country.

And this isn't just a matter of dollars and cents; this is about our values,

about who we are as a people, about what we stand for, what we respect, who we honor, who we care for, and how we stand up for each other. It is about ensuring that the men and women who serve in this country and those who protect our national interests around the world have the support, respect, and what they need to succeed and protect each and every one of us.

We can't afford to let these cuts go through, and I urge my colleagues to stand with our veterans and their families, our military and their families, and our global security partners. Let's protect the people who protect us. Let's invest in the diplomacy and development efforts that keep us safe. Let's ensure that the men and women who have proudly served this Nation get the care and respect they deserve.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. McCORMICK). The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, first of all, I want to thank my colleague. I agree with her comments about how we need to not just pay lip service to our veterans or the fact that for 70 years, America has used soft power through organizations like USAID in ways that have been incredibly important and have kept our country and the world safer.

I thank the Senator for her comments and, frankly, the others who have been on the floor.

We have been talking about, I think, unfortunately, the myriad ways the Trump administration is undermining our security and, quite honestly, making Americans less safe. Now, as vice chairman of the Intelligence Committee, I have some additional thoughts to add about the way this administration is endangering our national security with its reckless, sloppy mishandling of classified information, by firing people who keep our country safe, and by abandoning and alienating the very allies whose support is crucial for our security, prosperity, and global influence.

Now, let me not go way back in time. Let's just look at what we have learned in just the last 24 hours.

Yesterday, we learned that President Trump apparently had a meeting in the Oval Office with a self-described pro-White nationalist, proud Islamophobe, and conspiracy theorist who has called 9/11 an inside job carried out by the U.S. Government.

The Presiding Officer is from Pennsylvania, where many of the victims of 9/11 took brave actions and Flight 93 crashed. Many of the victims of 9/11 were in my State as well when the Pentagon got attacked.

So the idea that someone and that any administration would let anyone with these kind of views—and it is not just that 9/11 was an inside job; she questioned Governor DeSantis's wife's breast cancer. If anyone would have let that kind of individual within 100 yards of any White House in the past, we

would have all said: This is beyond belief. But according to press reports, the President is actually taking staffing advice from a person whose rhetoric is steeped in hate, misinformation, and dangerous conspiracy theories.

First, yesterday, we learned that the President dismissed several members of his National Security Council staff because this person, who is so far out that even the MAGA crowd thinks she is extreme, Laura Loomer, told him to do so. Some of these staff are actually well known to Republican Senators because they worked for them.

So I implore my colleagues to just judge for themselves whether they think it is good for our national security to have these staff members thrown out of the building at the behest of a podcast host who, as I said, has actually accused First Lady Casey DeSantis in Florida of exaggerating her struggles with breast cancer.

This same individual has claimed that school shootings are staged and suggested that the deep state used an atmospheric research facility in Alaska to create a snowstorm over Iowa. This is whacky even for MAGA world. Yet this individual is in the White House giving staffing advice to the President, and it appears the President is acting on that advice.

If that wasn't bad enough—and this was, again, the last 24 hours—the Senate Intelligence Committee received notification that—in the middle of the night—the President has fired the Director and Deputy Director of the National Security Agency.

Gen. Timothy Haugh and Wendy Noble are career officials who have spent decades working to protect our country, serving under both Republican and Democratic administrations alike. Wendy Noble joined the National Security Agency in 1987, working her way up to become the top civilian leader of the NSA. And throughout his distinguished career of more than 30 years in the Armed Forces, General Haugh has exemplified the very best of military service: dedication, integrity, and an unwavering commitment to our country.

Again, this morning, we learned that these firings, too, were done at Loomer's behest—an unprecedented politicization of our intelligence community.

I ask my Republican colleagues: How much longer will this go on before you find the courage to speak up and say "enough"? How much longer will we permit this administration to politicize, attack, and hollow out our intelligence Agencies?

If we go back to the beginning of the administration, I guess we maybe shouldn't be surprised because one of President Trump's first acts in office was to fire some of the most experienced agents at the Federal Bureau of Investigation, including top leaders in counterintelligence, cyber security, and counterterrorism.

Now, in a move that was even hypocritical by modern political standards, a

few weeks ago, in his joint address to Congress, President Trump boasted about the recent capture of the architect of the 2021 Abbey Gate bombing at Kabul Airport in which 13 American servicemembers were killed. This welcome achievement was the result of extensive investigative and intelligence work, but when President Trump was boasting about this, he made no mention of the fact that just a few days earlier, he had literally fired—fired—the FBI leader responsible for overseeing that investigation.

I ask anyone who is listening: How is America made more secure by that? How is America made more secure by firing the staff responsible for overseeing the safety and security of our country's nuclear stockpile? How is America made safer by firing the people responsible for responding to cyber attacks like Salt Typhoon or the Chinese that have literally infiltrated all of our telecom networks? How are we made safer by firing the researchers and scientists responsible for preventing diseases like Ebola from reaching our shores?

Now, this is in addition to firing hundreds of intelligence officers, who have received specialized training and been subjected to extensive security vetting—at, I might add, considerable expense to the taxpayer—so they can actually carry out some of the Nation's most sensitive classified work, often in spite of great personal danger, as the 140 stars carved into the CIA's Memorial Wall attest.

Can anybody tell me how firing probationary officers without cause and apparently without regard for merit or accomplishment, recognizing that in virtually every one of these cases, the taxpayers spent literally hundreds of thousands of dollars getting them a security clearance and then putting them through training? How is that making us safer or, for that matter, a more efficient use of taxpayer dollars?

I believe this administration just simply doesn't take protecting our national security very seriously. How else do you explain their sloppy, reckless behavior with classified information?

It has been more than 10 days since we first learned that President Trump's top advisers were using an unclassified, commercial messaging app to discuss details of a planned military strike while U.S. pilots were flying into enemy air defenses. And the remarkable thing is, it has been 10 days, and no one has been held accountable. I can assure you, the men and women flying those planes were in danger if that information had been disclosed.

One thing I know—and I saw this last weekend when I was down in Virginia Beach in Chesapeake, VA. That region is called Hampton Roads, and it is where the Norfolk naval station is. It is where the USS *Truman*, the aircraft carrier which the planes launched from to attack the Houthis, is home-ported.

Folks in that community knew, and they let me hear it. They knew that

their friends and loved ones' lives had been put in danger because of the sloppy, careless treatment of this classified information. They also knew very well that if any rank-and-file enlisted military or intelligence officer had so carelessly jeopardized our national security, they would have lost their security clearance and their jobs, no questions asked.

The remarkable kind of irony and hypocrisy here is that a nearly identical event involving a Homeland Security employee who accidentally included a journalist in an email chain with even less sensitive information resulted in that employee being punished immediately. So a low-level employee, the rules apply to. The Secretary of Defense, the Director of National Intelligence, and the National Security Advisor—they bear no responsibility?

No one has been held accountable. Not Waltz, who initiated the group chat. As we have now come to find, this one Signal chat was not a one-off; it was a series of at least 20 of these chats, which we don't have full background on. Not Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, who gambled with the lives of our fighter pilots by sharing the details of weapons, targets, and timing nearly 3 hours before military operations were scheduled to begin. And sure as heck not Tulsi Gabbard, who, as Director of National Intelligence, is charged with keeping our Nation's secrets safe from our adversaries but appears to have boldly lied about this incident before my committee.

But what is so frustrating is that this is just part of a pattern for this administration, which, during its first few weeks in office, exposed the name of CIA officers over an unclassified email. Those men and women can't serve abroad anymore.

The same group, driven by the DOGE bros, publicized the classified head count and budget of a U.S. intelligence Agency and posted online the location of a classified government facility.

We spend a lot of money trying to keep certain things secret. And yet they post this as supposedly a property up for sale. All of this sloppiness is deeply damaging, not only to the morale of the men and women who serve in the military and the intelligence community, but it is deeply damaging to the intelligence relationships upon which our security depends.

The intelligence we gather to keep America safe is frequently contingent on friends who tip us off or have access to sources that we lack. Israel, one of the best sources of intelligence in the Middle East is, according to public reports, furious that the Signalgate breach exposed a sensitive intelligence source on the ground in Yemen.

I have got to tell you there is nothing that requires Israel or, for that matter, any of our allies to share this kind of intelligence with the United States. These are relationships that depend on mutual trust. And the truth is,

other countries—and I have already started to hear—may now be reluctant to share information, knowing that the Trump administration can't be relied on to protect sensitive sources and methods.

Whether it is the President's bellicose threats to annex Greenland, the trade war that he has launched that is melting down the market and robbing people of their retirement funds, or this sloppy, reckless mishandling of America's classified information, the one thing that is true without a doubt is that America's credibility around the world is being severely endangered.

Already, longstanding allies like Canada, Australia, and Portugal have said they are reconsidering buying American-made F-35 fighters because they no longer feel they can count on the United States or, for that matter, American businesses to stand by our commitments.

Does anyone realize—I have got to believe my Republican colleagues realize this—how unimaginably foolish and shortsighted it is to have a policy where you piss off Portugal, Canada and Australia like this. How does that make us safer?

The amazing thing about these relationships is, even if they reverse course, as they have done so many times, that trust you can't put back in the bottle when the trust has been broken. We have already heard that from the Prime Minister of Canada. I fear that we will feel the ripples of the erosion of trust from our workforce, American businesses, and from our international partners for many years to come.

Make no mistake about it. All of these actions will make America less safe, and unless we stand up and take back the powers that were granted in the Constitution to this body, unless we stand up and demand that our intelligence community not be politicized and still able to speak truth to power, unless we stand up and say to our friends around the world—70-years-plus of allies that have kept our world safe—if we allow these actions and others to go unabated, we are shirking our duty, making America less safe and making the world less safe.

In a moment, Mr. President, I am going to yield the floor, but I see my friend the Senator from California. I just want to commend him. He was chair of the Intelligence Committee in the House before he came to this Chamber, and he has suffered for speaking truth to power, for standing up for the rule of law, a level of attack and abuse, oftentimes personal, that no American-elected official should have to stand for. If we allow that kind of behavior to continue, as well, we are less safe.

Let me remind you, especially the folks listening: This is not a partisan issue. We have seen Republicans Members of the Senate threatened to the point where they had to hire security for their family because they decided to speak truth.

Our country is better than this. We just need some of the good Americans who we work with on a day-in and day-out basis to find their voice and say: On these matters of national security, there is no partisan divide. There is no MAGA version that makes our country safer.

We will have a chance to debate and talk about this and amendments like this tonight. I hope our colleagues will find the strength to finally speak truth to power themselves.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. President, I want to acknowledge my colleague from Virginia, Senator WARNER. Thank you for your extraordinary leadership of the Senate Intelligence Committee. You have brought your intellect, your talent, and your ingenuity to the service of the Nation's security, and you have been doing a remarkable, remarkable job. I thank you.

Mr. President, in February 2024, Russia began its invasion of Crimea, a part of Ukraine. Little green men arrived suddenly in masks and unmarked uniforms, but everyone knew them to be Russians, acting on the orders of the Kremlin, despite the Kremlin's rather pathetic denials.

I traveled to Ukraine shortly after, joined by colleagues in Congress from both parties. We were there to speak with our friends in Kyiv and to pledge our support for our ally, to reinforce in our own way our commitment to NATO's eastern flank and to uphold our obligations under the 1994 Budapest Memorandum. That memorandum assured Ukraine's territorial integrity if Ukraine gave up the nuclear weapons it acquired when it was part of the Soviet Union.

At the time, Ukraine had the third largest nuclear stockpile in the world. Not only was the United States a signatory to that assurance, along with the UK, but so was the Kremlin. Well, Ukraine did give up its nuclear weapons in 1994, and, sadly, Russia violated the terms of that agreement with ferocity. When people like Steve Witcoff say they believe Russian leaders live up to their word, they are dangerously ignorant of history.

In 2022, Russia launched an even more massive invasion of Ukraine, and just a month later, I returned to that country, alongside Speaker PELOSI, for the first congressional visit to that country during the war.

I am not here today to talk about Putin's aggression or this administration's shameful betrayal of Ukraine and capitulation to the Kremlin. I am here to talk about the fact that before those trips, we received clear guidance: Assume everything you say will be overheard by the Kremlin. Everything you type on a phone may as well be a direct message to the Kremlin dictator. Certainly, do not message anything sensitive. Just don't do it.

The danger of Russian hacking and spying is high enough abroad. Just

imagine how aggressive they are in a country they are actively invading. But that caution, that instruction was not limited to our visits to Ukraine.

As the former chair of the House Intelligence Committee, I found myself traveling around the world to places like Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, and more—numerous secret trips over a decade. And every time, the same message: Assume everything you do on your phone, personal device or burner phone—it doesn't matter—will be snooped and scooped up by any adversary who cares to do so.

And let me tell you, they care to do so.

The same is true here at home. Handling classified information, we took every precaution. Practically, that meant we spent a lot of time underground, quite literally, inside a windowless secure compartmented information facility, or a SCIF, in the basement of the Capitol—an actual bunker.

No phones allowed. No recording devices of any kind, not even a Fitbit. We understood: Hey, this wasn't going to be convenient. It wasn't designed to be convenient. It was designed to be secure.

We all knew then, as we all know today, that preserving the classified nature of our Nation's secrets is of the utmost importance, which brings us to today, where we have witnessed the top officials in this administration discussing classified military operations, military strike plans, war plans in the open on Signal, a commercial app like WhatsApp.

The administration's top officials created an unsecured group chat and shared information before—before—the start of a military operation that could have put the pilots flying these missions directly in harm's way.

Now it appears this was not a one-off because, of course, it wasn't a one-off. We are now hearing that there were 20 or more chats involving top officials discussing sensitive information, where the administration seems to have shared national secrets like they were discussing—well, I don't know—March Madness, texting them recklessly.

And it appears that the only reason—the only reason—we know about these chats is because they accidentally added the editor in chief of *The Atlantic* into one of them, while he was apparently sitting in his car in the parking lot at a Safeway grocery store.

It would be funny if it weren't so damn dangerous to our national security. Put aside the amateurism of debating and deliberating over our national security operations using emojis and whatever else they used on this chat. From a counterintelligence perspective, this was the effective equivalent of shouting our national security secrets on the busy streets of Beijing or leaving folders of information in cafes near the Kremlin. It is a national security screwup of epic proportions.

As the former chair of the House Intelligence Committee, I have heard

after-action reports of what happens when an intelligence failure occurs, when a source or an asset is compromised, when an enemy penetrates our networks or gets a source that can provide a glimpse into our secrets, because when an intelligence failure happens, it can be catastrophic. Informants can be burned. Lives can be ruined. In some cases, human sources can be tortured and murdered. Operations can be compromised, our soldiers put in harm's way without their knowledge, our methods exposed and therefore adapted to, future missions scuttled because the source, human or technical, has been burned, gone.

In Syria, the Houthis are undoubtedly turning everything upside down to figure out how we knew where the target of this operation would be. Was there a human source who knew the location of the building which was, apparently according to this chat, the girlfriend's residence? Or was there a technical source, like the target's phone or someone else's phone?

What future missions will now not be possible because we don't know if our sources have been compromised.

The loss of trust is also significant from our allies around the world that contribute intelligence to support operations like this one. Published reports indicate that Israel may have provided some of the information used in support of that attack on Houthi missile operatives, and that the Israelis are furious.

For me, it brings back memories of other published reports of President Trump whooping it up with the Russian Ambassador and Foreign Minister in the Oval Office. Do you remember that saga during Trump's first term, while reportedly discussing, still, other intelligence reportedly provided by Israel?

The accidental inclusion of a reporter, Jeffrey Goldberg, sitting in that Safeway parking lot, privy to that classified exchange of operational military planning, is a serious indictment of the arrogance and incompetence of this administration.

The fact that information was shared with such reckless disregard on an unsecured, vulnerable network, apparently with regularity, is a scandal of historic proportions, and yet they refuse to accept any accountability. They engage in more whataboutisms.

They dodge every which way. Deny, deflect blame, blame the journalist, blame the publication, blame the app. Call it unimportant, call it a lie, call it a hack. Say that someone's contact information was just sucked into their phone. The list goes on. The lies and obfuscation gets worse, and in the end, no accountability, no security, no nothing.

Signalgate is the perfect microcosm of this administration's carelessness with our national secrets. But it doesn't start or end with Signal or using Gmail for sensitive national security matters. Just yesterday, we

learned of another purge, this time at the National Security Council. The firing of inspectors general and ethics lawyers and career prosecutors wasn't enough; senior officials at the NSC just got shown the door. Among others, Lt. Gen. Timothy Haugh, the well-respected Director of the National Security Agency, the NSA, and Commander of CYBERCOM—fired; not because of incompetence, no; not because he was responsible or involved in the Signal group, no.

The folks in that Signal chat, they are doing just fine. No, these folks were fired because a rightwing influencer and conspiracy theorist apparently told the President to get rid of them—because an internet troll, not an intelligence professional in any sense of the word, walked into the Oval Office and claimed that these officials were not sufficiently loyal to the President.

National security be damned, in this troll's view they were not sufficiently loyal to the President. How can we not see what is happening here or do we see it and just don't care enough to do anything about it? To say something, anything. They are betraying our national security, and they will do it again.

They are turning their back on our closest allies and friends as they cozy up to dictators and murderers, and they will do it again.

They are compromising the safety of our servicemembers, and they will do it again. They are investigating the investigators, and they will do it again. They are prosecuting the prosecutors, and they will do it again—over and over again—because this administration has all the wrong priorities in all the wrong places, and whom does that hurt the most? The American people.

What are we supposed to say to families unable to sleep at night, worrying that their father or daughter or sister or brother may not come home from their deployment or may come home in a body bag because some administration official was sloppy handling war plans and their plane got shot down?

The Houthis have air defenses. They can shoot down aircraft, and they have. The servicemembers who volunteered to go into combat to keep us safe don't know if they can trust their own government to do the bare minimum to ensure their own safety.

The plain, simple, indisputable fact of the matter is this: All of us, all of us are less safe because of this administration. We are lucky—damn lucky—that no one has died as a result of their repeated incompetence and mishandling of classified information. We are damn lucky.

But it has got to change before our luck runs out and someone gets killed. I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. KELLY. Mr. President, it has been just over a week since we learned that our top national security officials were discussing operational details before a strike on the Houthis, in Yemen on an unsecured platform.

The White House has said the case is closed, but the American people still haven't gotten the transparency and accountability about the national security breach that they deserve.

So I wanted to stress a few things. Now, let's start with how dangerous and irresponsible this was. This wasn't just a policy violation; it was a reckless breach of our operational security.

The information shared on this unsecured platform is some of the most sensitive information that our military has. We are talking about time on target, the weapons systems used, and other details about the strike over hostile territory.

This is exactly the kind of information you do not want in the hands of an adversary or an enemy, especially one that has a significant surface-to-air missile capability that can shoot our airplanes down.

They were discussing this information hours before these pilots took off of the deck of an aircraft carrier, and that is a big deal. It could have resulted in these pilots being captured or killed.

No one, especially the Secretary of Defense, should be discussing these things on an unsecured platform. This is personal for me. I flew combat missions off of the USS *Midway* in the first Gulf war. We treated this kind of information like lives depended on it because they did.

I had to walk out to my aircraft on the flight deck of an aircraft carrier dozens of times, often in the middle of the night, to carry out strikes just like this. And if I later found out that the Secretary of Defense had been this reckless with the details of my mission, I would have been pissed off.

Look, I mean, I use Signal too. It is a good app. I use it to schedule meetings or to say: Hey, Senator SCHIFF, remember that thing we talked about the other day, that thing? We need to talk about that thing again when we get down to the SCIF. That is the kind of thing you say on Signal.

But I do not use Signal to share realtime operational military plans or any sensitive or classified information. You just don't do that. It is not what the thing is for. And just for a second, just because Signal is encrypted does not make it secure.

We know this, and especially when you know that the device you are using it on is vulnerable. These are phones used sometimes during official travel but also personal phones, often used overseas, exposed to adversaries' WiFi and RF systems where they can attack these devices. They often also have physical access and other kinds of surveillance.

And once an adversary is in, hard to get them out. And if they had access to even one of those phones on this Signal chat, they saw everything. This wasn't just sloppy, it is a national security risk. This kind of breach endangers not just pilots but also intelligence sources, especially from our allies and

their assets who risk their lives to share critical information.

It damages our relationships and trust with intelligence partners who now have to worry about whether their information that they are sharing with us is being handled properly. And it could burn sources entirely, meaning that we won't get valuable information anymore like the location of targets.

We also just happened to get a brief window into how these decisions are being made by this administration. And I have got to tell you, I wasn't impressed. The Vice President. The Vice President doesn't seem to understand that keeping global shipping safe is in our interest or how important our European allies are to our own national security.

And I also want to point out that our adversaries got this same insight. They saw not just the operation but they saw the personal dynamics of the decisionmakers, and they saw their internal discussions. That is exactly the kind of insight our intelligence Agencies are always trying to get on foreign powers. And this administration, they were just dumb enough to just give it away.

In my view, the Trump administration is reckless. We have seen this before. CIA officer names e-mailed on an unclassified system, Agency head counts leaked, sensitive site locations posted online. The use of Signal for a live military strike is just the latest in a long list of security failures.

This exposes how this administration makes decisions, and what I saw is alarming. But that is what happens when you put unqualified, unserious people into critical national security roles.

This wasn't a mystery. This was all exposed during their confirmation processes. Yet my Republican colleagues bowed to pressure from the President and confirmed these nominees anyway.

And this is what happened, the lack of accountability from the people in this chat and at the White House isn't just reprehensible, it is also dangerous, especially when it comes from the Secretary of Defense, the leader of our Armed Forces, who put the lives of these pilots at risk with his actions.

When you are in charge and you make a mistake, you have got to own up to it. Everybody knows that. That is what we do in the military; you fess up. Secretary Hegseth doesn't just owe that to the American people, he also needs to own up to this in order to maintain the good order and discipline of our forces.

How can anyone respect the Secretary of Defense who screws up like this and then can't take responsibility? And what message does that send to the next pilots who have to launch off the front of an aircraft carrier and into hostile territory?

Pete Hegseth needs to resign, and if he won't, the President should fire him. No accountability sends the wrong message.

Now, I asked the DNI, Tulsi Gabbard, and CIA Director Ratcliffe directly in a hearing, I asked them:

Was there discussions of targets in Yemen?

And the DNI, Tulsi Gabbard, said:

Yes.

And that is a big deal. And I also asked: Would they approve that chat for public release?

Neither would say yes, and that tells you all you need to know.

If anyone from the most junior enlisted servicemember to a four-star admiral had done this, they would be facing real consequences. They would be fired or possibly worse.

But here, these top leaders, the top leaders of our national security apparatus, are just making excuses.

My view is this Secretary of Defense must go. Two months ago, during Hegseth's confirmation vote, I asked: Is this really worth the risk to our servicemembers and our national security?

Well, I think we now have the answer. This is what happens when you put the most unqualified nominee in charge of life-and-death situations.

Now, we are lucky that this didn't result in American casualties. But the fact that it could have and the fact that he hasn't taken responsibility makes him unfit to lead.

He needs to resign. Again, if he doesn't, the President should fire him.

By the way, yesterday, he fired the wrong guy. The head of the National Security Agency, I think, had broad bipartisan support, in my opinion. He was doing an excellent job. The President is confused.

This is the kind of transparency and accountability that the American people deserve. This is not about politics; this is about keeping our country safe.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

MR. BENNET. Mr. President, I am sorry it is the misfortune of the Presiding Officer to be in the chair again when I am speaking. I don't actually speak that often on the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. I wouldn't miss it.

MR. BENNET. Thank you, Mr. President, and thank you to the staff who is here as well.

This actually is the third time I have been down here in the last couple of days to talk about some of the things we are confronting at this moment when we are passing the budget. I have spent a couple of speeches talking about how problematic I think, to be kind about it, this budget is—in many ways, devastating. But today I want to join my friends that are here to talk about our national security and our intelligence.

Since President Trump took office as President just over 70 days ago, he has treated the American people to a dangerous parade of incompetencies that put our national security at risk.

Most egregiously, he has repeatedly sided with Russia and Vladimir Putin

rather than standing with the Ukrainian people as they defend themselves against Vladimir Putin's aggression.

After President Trump and Vice President JD VANCE embarrassingly berated Ukrainian President Zelenskyy in their February Oval Office meeting, the Trump administration temporarily halted all security assistance to and intelligence sharing with Ukraine. This outrageous decision resulted in losses for Ukraine on the frontline and emboldened Putin and other dictators around the world, like China's Xi Jinping, undermining Ukraine's bargaining position and ours and American national security.

Given the stakes for the United States, democracy, and the West, this was, in my estimation, the worst decision the Trump administration has made so far, and that is a long, long list. Near the top of that list is the now-infamous Signal chat that National Security Advisor Mike Waltz created to share what was clearly classified information related to U.S. strikes on Yemen and Waltz's accidental invitation of Atlantic Editor-in-Chief Jeffrey Goldberg to that chat.

If that weren't enough, Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth sent precise war plans for the U.S. strikes on Yemen—specific times and weapons types—in that chat.

I am a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee. I see classified information every day. I wish I could say that we saw, you know, anything more secret than what was related in that Signal chat by Secretary Hegseth. But the truth is that what he sent—that targeting information, the precision with the timing of that—actually required more security than anything that I see on the Intelligence Committee on a daily basis. I would say 99 percent of what we see in the Intelligence Committee, which is meant to be confidential and is meant to be classified, is far less significant than what Secretary Hegseth sent in his Signal chat. In fact, I would say if that information is not classified, I don't know what information is.

Signal is encrypted, and it is acceptable for some government use. That is true. I use Signal but never ever for sharing sensitive or classified information.

The intelligence community and national security Agencies across the government have clear protocols to protect the kind of information that Secretary Hegseth sent. All of the people in that Signal chat, which included the Secretaries of Defense and Treasury, know this. They have ultrasecure rooms and platforms where they are legally required to discuss classified information.

People at home might not know this, but when you go into one of those rooms, you have to leave your cell phone outside. You have to leave your cell phone in a box when you go into the room because you can't know and we can't know whether an adversary has placed malware on that phone.

I think there are a lot of reasons to throw our phones into the Potomac River, but that is one good one—to not bring it into meetings where you are going to have classified information because you can't know who is on it.

These people know better than to use Signal or any platform the way they did, but they were reckless, and they were lazy, and they put our national security at risk.

By the way, they won't admit to this day that what they did was wrong. Not a single one of them will say that what they did was wrong. They are denying that they passed classified information on that call, when anybody who is reading it knows that. The people of Colorado certainly know that.

China and Russia and others are surely monitoring these officials' unclassified phones, and Signal is not immune. In fact, in late March, just a week before Jeff Goldberg exposed the Trump Signal chat, the Department of Defense itself sent a Pentagon-wide email warning of Signal's vulnerability, noting that Russian hacking groups were trying to spy on Signal conversations. It is remarkable that the Secretary of Defense couldn't even follow his own Department's guidelines.

Now credible media reports indicate that Mike Waltz used his personal Gmail for government business and that his team created as many as 20 Signal chats to communicate about crises around the world.

This utter incompetence and recklessness in the handling of sensitive and classified information is inexcusable, and it is a threat to our national security. When the truth comes out, that will be the judgment.

They are putting the men and women of our Armed Forces and our intelligence officers and our allies at risk. They are eroding our standing around the world.

They are going to make even our closest allies question whether they can even share intelligence with the United States. Why would MI6 or Mossad share their secrets with the United States if Pete Hegseth is going to post them in Signal for Jeff Goldberg to publish in *The Atlantic*?

The Trump White House tried to declare "case closed," they said, on their poor handling of classified information, but since then, the Department of Defense's acting inspector general saw through the lies, and they launched an evaluation of this administration's use of classified information.

The acting inspector general is a senior civil servant with a strong record of nonpartisan public service, including Active Duty in the Army, and I am confident he will conduct an independent and thorough investigation.

It is worth remembering, too, that the inspector general is only acting because President Trump fired the former inspector general in February, along with the inspectors general of 16 other Agencies because he felt he couldn't control them. He was worried that they

were going to blow the whistle on what he was doing.

Clearly, the Trump administration wants to hide their sloppiness and their incompetence, but unfortunately for them, Waltz was incompetent and sloppy enough to accidentally add *The Atlantic's* editor-in-chief to their Signal chat in which Pete Hegseth was sloppy and incompetent enough to share classified information.

After Jeff Goldberg reported on the evidence of this chat, the administration's first action was to pretend like it had never happened. Then they lied about the information they shared—information that they never should have disclosed anywhere but in a classified space.

It is an insult to the American people's intelligence to say that not only was this not classified but that nothing they did was wrong, that it was perfectly normal to have a discussion about targets in Yemen on a Signal chat that was made available to the editor-in-chief of *The Atlantic*. I mean, how about apologizing to the American people for that?

Jeff Goldberg didn't put himself on the chat; he was put there by Mike Waltz. By the way, he had the decency and the patriotism not to disclose the information that he was worried was classified and that might put at risk the troops that were doing that dangerous mission.

These are issues of life and death, particularly for our troops and for our intelligence agents and professionals. And now the White House has fired several members of the National Security Council on top of all of this and the head of U.S. Cyber Command after Laura Loomer, a known conspiracy theorist and close Trump ally, told the President to do so.

Why is the President taking national security advice not from the generals that have become the head of the NSA but from a dangerous conspiracy theorist who says 9/11 was an inside job and who has never abandoned it? How is any of this remotely acceptable to the American people—of course it is not—or to my Republican colleagues?

The Trump administration's lies and incompetence are an insult. With their recklessness, they have already put Americans in danger and alienated crucial allies and partners around the world, making the world even more dangerous and weakening U.S. national security in the process.

Otto von Bismarck, the 19th century German Chancellor, famously said that "God has a special providence for fools, drunkards, and the United States of America."

We are, indeed, blessed by our size, our abundant natural resources, and our relative distance from adversaries that wish to do us harm. Our advantages are so great that the only country that can destroy the United States, as Lincoln told us, is the United States.

No wonder why Xi Jinping thinks that the United States is in decline,

that there are great changes unseen in the country, as he put it, and that he can simply wait for President Trump to accelerate our decline by tearing down the bedrock of America's national security and our prosperity.

No wonder Xi and his strongmen friends like Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong Un believe that the global order is up for grabs, that they are on the rise and that we are on the collapse, on the fall. Thanks to President Trump's wanton and self-harming recklessness, incompetence, and isolationism, that is how they feel.

No wonder why Xi continues to ramp up pressure on Taiwan, with live-fire exercises around the island earlier this week, and Putin continues to wage his unjustified war on Ukraine while threatening NATO allies like Poland and the Baltics.

Emboldening these dictators, as President Trump's administration has, will make the world more dangerous to the United States.

I can see the leader is here, so I am going to bring my comments to a close, but let me just say that nothing has been more contrary to the national security interests of the United States, our allies, and the Ukrainian people than the undermining of the Ukrainian soldiers on the frontline by this President—nothing—from his telling the American people that Ukraine started the war to his constant coddling of Vladimir Putin.

This is a generational moment for the United States of America to step up for democracy and for freedom around the world, and we are going to do it notwithstanding what President Trump said.

This moment demands sober, careful, and calibrated policymaking on the international stage, not the Trump administration's recklessness. Their failure to meet this moment will be our shared failure. We will not let it happen.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, Senators have just come to the floor to show how the Republican agenda would be a gut punch to our Nation's veterans and so dangerous to our national security, as the Senator from Colorado so eloquently outlined. I thank them for speaking passionately.

Our next topic that we will be speaking about—each one is so dangerous to America, and each one is Donald Trump betraying America and just totally going back on what he said when he ran the campaign. And now, again, he is with those bubble of billionaires and doesn't care about the middle class and how he is hurting them.

Now Senators will turn to an issue especially alarming to so many people—the deep, deep corruption that Donald Trump and Elon Musk and DOGE have unleashed on their watch. The amazing amount of self-deals as they are trying to enrich themselves

on the backs of the government, which mean on the backs of the American people.

One of our great experts in this area who has been talking about this a very long time is Senator WHITEHOUSE.

I yield to him.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, let me thank our Democratic leader for that very kind intro.

I will confess that I come to the Senate floor today with a pretty heavy heart. The effort that we are engaged in right now is going to be extremely damaging to our country. We are talking about hundreds of billions of dollars in cuts to Medicaid that are part of the plan here. And we are talking about hundreds of billions of dollars in cuts to Medicaid that are coming on top of this tariff madness emanating from the White House that was already estimated to cost families north of \$3,000 a year in added costs for the same stuff—average \$3,000 per year, per family. And that was before the retaliatory tariffs came back, so that is kind of the baseline.

Trump campaigned on lowering costs and the first thing he has done is to raise costs by thousands and thousands of dollars for American families. On top of that, their pensions and 401(k)s got slaughtered. I think it is about \$3 trillion in value was lost because of this maniacal tariff effort that gives nobody any confidence about which way we are going to go.

Set aside how bad the tariffs are—like the lesson the last time we tried this back in the Depression era—isn't it obvious enough that tariffs harm the economy unless they are precise and intelligent and purposeful and focused, which these are, by definition, not.

But just the uncertainty, just the fact that every day it is a different tariff, it is another number. It is such a ham-handed "Gong Show" over at the White House that the White House website and the White House press conference put out different numbers for the same companies. This whole thing is like being run by the Keystone Cops, but they are playing with economic dynamite.

And between what is about to happen to Medicaid, which supports so many folks: mothers and fathers, aunts and uncles in nursing homes; that supports so many folks: spouses, sisters when they give birth; that supports so many folks: family members who are in addiction recovery and are getting support from programs in Medicaid—when you kick out elderly family members from nursing homes, you are doing a real blow to a family on top of the \$3,000-plus, on top of the hammered 401(k) or pension.

So this is a very, very grim time for American families economically, and there is no sense or logic behind it. There is big talk, but it is really economic nonsense that is happening around us right now.

Into this comes—like that is not bad enough—a complete disavowal, a completely hypocritical repudiation of things that Republicans have claimed to believe in for a long, long time. And what we are seeing in this budget reconciliation process is massive lies exposed.

The first one is that Republicans care about the debt and the deficit. Let me tell a few stories about my time as chairman of the Budget Committee. As chairman of the Budget Committee, I paid a lot of attention to what climate change portends for the American economy. And the reason I did that is because there is some pretty damned serious and very dire warnings that are out there and that come from some pretty damned serious people—not Green New Dealers but really significant people, often ones who have a fiduciary duty to get this right. They can't be like the fossil fuel industry and lie at an industrial scale about climate change because they have a fiduciary duty to tell the truth and get it right. And in particular, that is the insurance industry.

I will show you. Last April, The Economist magazine cover article: "The next housing disaster." The next housing disaster is what they predicted to be a \$25 trillion hit to the global real estate asset class. Why? Because of climate risk because if you can't get insurance on a property, you can never again get a mortgage on that property. And when most Americans still buy their property with a mortgage—it is fine if you are one of Trump's billionaires and you swap properties around paying cash—but if you are like most Americans and need a mortgage to buy your property or if you are like most homeowners and you want to sell your property, you need to find somebody who can buy it with a mortgage.

Well, if your property won't support a mortgage any longer because your property is too dangerous to insure, here is what the chief economist from Freddie Mac said about that. He said that you have an insurance crisis in homeowner's property insurance, which we are already seeing in Florida. This is not a prediction in the future, this is a now thing. We are in the early stages of this. It is happening.

Earnest Hemingway was asked: "How did you go bankrupt?" He said: Gradually, and then all at once. We are into gradually already, and we don't know when "all at once" will happen.

But when it is \$25 trillion out of the world's largest asset class, that is a massive economic hit to our economy, so the insurance crashes. Right behind that comes the mortgage crash. Right behind that comes the property values crash because no mortgages. And that leads to another recession, according to the chief economist of Freddie Mac, the American mortgage giant. And he made that prediction of insurance crash to mortgage crash, to property values crash, to national economic crash based just on the risk to coastal properties.

You see here how they use the ocean tearing away at the underpinnings of the real estate. He was looking at coastal property risks. He was talking about a coastal property values crash. Well, guess what. Coastal risk now has an evil sibling that is just as bad and may be worse, which is wildfire risk. Look at what happened to L.A. Look at how wildfire seasons have become year-round in parts of the West. Look how wildfire area has expanded beyond traditional wildfire risk areas.

Between coastal risk and wildfire risk, our insurance markets are taking a beating, and that is the cascade into economic recession. A third of our debt comes from economic hits to our economy—COVID and 2008. So if we are going to be serious about the deficit and about debts, we have to be serious about the major risks to the economy. So *The Economist* is one of these warnings.

But just to show how serious this is, I want to go through a couple of others. Allianz. Allianz is one of the biggest insurance companies in the world. And one of its board members just wrote an article saying climate change, if we don't fix it soon, is going to be the end of the insurance industry business model. And that is going to cascade into other parts of the economy where insurance is essential to support the other industry.

Well, mortgages is an obvious one. But there are others because throughout the financial system, there are deals that are held together because of insurance policies.

So he predicted—the headline was really extreme—the headline was “End of Capitalism.” I don't know if that is true, but you can sure as heck expect a very significant economic wipeout as the insurance markets collapse in the face of unpredictable risk. So that was Allianz.

Jay Powell, Chairman of the Fed, wants nothing to do with climate. He doesn't want to talk about it. He is not green one bit. But he testified about 3 weeks ago in the Senate Banking Committee that in 10 to 15 years, there will be whole regions of the country where you can't get a mortgage any longer. There is that cascade—no insurance, no mortgage, property value crash, recession. The Fed Chair is confirming that domino. In 10 to 15 years we will fall.

The mortgage bankers—my God, talk about a group that is not green. The mortgage bankers have written a report called “The Impact of Climate Change on Housing and Housing Finance.”

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the executive summary of that report be printed in the *RECORD* at the end of my remarks.

You have *The Economist* magazine, which is not green at all, a very conservative, international publication. You have Allianz, one of the insurance giants of the world. You have the Chairman of the Federal Reserve. You have the Mortgage Bankers Association.

What else have we got? Well, the Financial Stability Board. The Financial Stability Board is the board that warns the World Banking system of risks to the World Banking system that it has to prepare for. What did they just warn the World Banking system? Better get ready for this risk—better get ready for this risk for two reasons, actually.

One is when the insurance crash wipes out mortgages, it wipes out a huge revenue part of the banking system. The second is, after you lost all that revenue because mortgages aren't available in whole regions of the country any longer, then you have the problem that banks are solvent or not, in large part, dependent on what is called their loan-to-value ratio.

Their value depends on the value of the properties against which they hold the mortgages. If the value of a property crashes because it no longer can support a mortgage and can't be sold to anybody except somebody who can pay cash or because the carrying costs of the property insurance have gotten so great if it goes from \$4,000 to \$5,000 a year to \$16,000 to \$20,000 a year, that crashes the value of that property.

And when that property value goes down, the bank has to keep track of that. And when they go underwater on a loan, when the amount that they have loaned out becomes less than the value of the property, and when that is happening across the board, particularly for regional banks in a region where you can't get mortgages any longer and property values have crashed, you have a serious banking solvency problem. And that is what the Financial Stability Board reports.

I would commend that report to anybody who can put up with complicated economic terminology. It is not a fun read. But it is pretty telling when the body responsible for economic stability in the world's banking system is putting out these warnings.

So you have *The Economist*, you have Allianz, you have Chairman Powell, you have the mortgage bankers, you have the Financial Stability Board. I mentioned already Freddie Mac's chief economist who explained how this cascade works. More recently, another group called First Street just stood up, and they showed what is going to happen in specific areas where property values are going to crash; where premiums are going to soar—property values down by as much as 100 percent, total wipeout—and premiums quadrupling in places.

And then Deloitte comes along, the corporate consulting firm—not green at all—and they warn that if we screw up on climate, if we continue to screw up on climate versus if we get it right, the swing 50 years out from now will be \$220 trillion in world GDP.

So I spent a lot of time talking about this in the Budget Committee. Did my Republican friends want to hear about it? No. Why not? Because that party is funded by the fossil fuel industry and can't bear a serious discussion about

climate; can't bear looking at the lies that the fossil fuel industry dispenses in industrial levels. They have a whole apparatus of fraud—front groups with funny names that constantly put out false information; people who pretend to be scientists and cook up fake science that comes not out of labs and research but out of Madison Avenue propaganda firms.

So what they said to me over and over again was: Why are you talking about climate? That doesn't have anything to do with the budget. You need to be talking about deficits. You need to be talking about debt. They are all about how our children are going to have their futures imperiled by deficits and debt.

Well, they are going to have their futures imperiled by climate change is what all pretty much anybody who is sensate still is showing. But, oh my gosh, how much talk I had to listen to, how much self-serving, self-aggrandizing talk I had to listen to about how we really, really had to deal with our debt and deficit problem.

Well, look at what they are up to now. The Senate budget that the Republicans are pushing blows the deficit through the roof by 2035—doubles it, our national debt. I said the deficit, I meant our national debt. We are talking here about \$60 trillion in debt.

Where was “we want to raise it to \$60 trillion in debt” when I was getting all these lectures in the Budget Committee from all my Republican friends about how the most important thing was our national debt?

The House budget resolution is no better. It is just as bad—\$30 trillion goes to \$56 trillion. And if you look at some of the numbers here, we got a letter—I ask unanimous consent to have the letter printed at the end of my remarks.

It comes from the Joint Committee on Taxation. It is their job to review these things. It begins:

Dear Senator Whitehouse, Senator Wyden, Mr. Neal and Mr. Boyle:

This letter is in response to your request for revenue estimates to extend permanently the individual tax provisions—

Et cetera. We asked: What is it really going to cost for the Republicans to do this stuff? Well, here at the bitter end, you actually get to the numbers. The numbers are the total of the tax provisions just over 10 years. Just to like here goes up \$4.6 trillion. And then because you have to borrow money to fund that additional \$4.6 trillion, the Republicans want to add to our debt. The actual number settles out at \$5.5 trillion. And \$5.5 trillion is added to our national debt after all of those lectures—after all of those lectures—I got about how you couldn't pay any attention to climate change while their pockets are stuffed with fossil fuel money, metaphorically. Instead, we get really focused on the deficit, and the first chance they have to focus on the deficit and the debt, what are they doing? It is up \$5.5 trillion—trillion

with a “t.” If you throw in the new tax breaks on top of the 5.5 that we asked about, it goes to \$7 trillion—\$7 trillion.

The Senate Republicans—here is where it gets really sick because they are cheating the budget process. They get to the lie that this won’t cost money by cheating. They are planning to simply ignore what the Congressional Budget Office said and ignore what the Joint Committee on Taxation calculated. They are planning to dodge the Parliamentarian and just make up numbers on their own and ignore what the statute says contrary to five decades of law and practice.

The budget law, for instance, includes a section telling CBO how to count tax cuts. They ignore that section. They just make up their own numbers. You don’t need to be a budget expert to figure out that \$7 trillion in tax cuts is going to worsen the budget. It is going to worsen the debt.

In fact, we kept bringing in witnesses to talk about the debt and the deficit, and the Republicans could never produce a witness who said that tax cuts paid for themselves. Scott Hodge from the conservative Tax Foundation, who was a witness, called to the Budget Committee by the Republicans, said that the Tax Foundation modeled every iteration of what became the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which is the Trump tax scam 1.0, and that at no time did their model ever predict that it would pay for itself. The model does not estimate that virtually any tax cut will pay for itself. That is the kind of myth that has been created.

So it is really frustrating to hear colleagues who lectured me and lectured me and lectured me, as their excuse to ignore the very plain climate economic risk we are facing, about how we really had to deal with the debt, and then when they have the chance, what they are doing is they are blowing it through the roof, and to do that, they are going to hack away at Medicaid.

At the end of the day, most of this goes to the very rich. The original thought was that, at \$4 trillion, it was \$2 trillion-plus just going to a very small group of extremely rich people and very big corporations.

Our Tax Code is riddled with corruption. We could raise a lot of money and actually fix the deficit by pulling out the corruption. But the big businesses would squeal and scream because they don’t like paying taxes, and for a long time, they haven’t had to.

In what some of my colleagues seem to think are the good old days—that is the 1950s, the good old days in America when men were men and life was good—corporations contributed 30 percent of America’s revenue. Corporations contributed 30 percent of America’s revenue. Look at what has happened to it year after year after their lobbyists have come here and after they have written checks to Republican super PACs after they have worked this building. They are down to about—under 10 percent. They have been down as low as 6 percent.

By the way, it is not because corporations got smaller and poorer in that time. They are bigger than ever. The fossil fuel industry alone made the biggest profits in corporate history by gouging American consumers after international prices went up post Putin’s invasion of Ukraine.

There is plenty we could do to solve the debt problem, but—oh, my God—the flagrancy of the lie about concern about the deficit is pretty stunning.

The other thing that they have said—and I will close with this. The other thing that they have said is: Oh, we have to defend the filibuster at all costs. Oh, we can’t do the nuclear option. Oh, the only time we possibly ever use the nuclear option is when the Democrats did it first.

So they did a nuclear option to put their people on the Supreme Court and blamed it on Harry Reid because he had done the same thing for the DC Circuit after they had put up a firewall around the DC Circuit. But since then, it has been: We will never, never, never, never, never, never blow up the filibuster. We will never use the nuclear option.

Well, here is where we are with the Parliamentarian right now: They have done an end run around getting a determination on whether this stunt that they are pulling by pretending that these tax cuts don’t have any economic effect and don’t add to the debt will get reviewed by the Parliamentarian.

I will tell you one thing: There have probably been documents brought to the Senate floor before that contained a lie, but I can’t think of one that has been brought to the Senate floor that both contained a lie and that lie’s own rebuttal in the same document.

The lie is that all of these tax cuts for billionaires and big corporations won’t add to the debt. That is imaginary. That is fake. That is not economically possible, but they say it. Then, in the same document, they lift the debt limit by \$5 trillion. If these tax breaks don’t have any cost and don’t add to the debt, why do they need to raise the debt limit by \$5 trillion?

The problem is, it is very hard to go to the Parliamentarian’s Office and say: This is legit because, at the same time, I am lying that it is free and adding \$5 trillion in debt limit because it obviously isn’t free.

When you are dealing with the debt limit, you are dealing with banks and the Treasury and people who can’t participate in the Senate hothouse lie that this doesn’t cost \$5 trillion, and so you have these two things side by side in the same bill—the lie and its own rebuttal baked right in.

How do you get that by the Parliamentarian? It is very hard to do, so they skip. But the problem is that sooner or later, there will be a parliamentary ruling. Maybe they hope that they have so much steam built up that the Parliamentarian will just roll over or maybe this whole thing just blows up and the Parliamentarian says:

No, you can’t do that. You have a lie and its own rebuttal in the exact same document. You can’t pretend this is a true thing.

Therefore, it is not compliant with the budget laws for all of the reasons I mentioned earlier: out of compliance with the CBO; out of compliance with Joint Committee on Taxation; out of compliance with proper reporting—all of it.

So what does that mean? That means that at some point, the time will come when the Parliamentarian says “nope” and blows the whistle. They think that that is going to happen already, which is why they are doing the end run. When the day comes and it actually happens, that is when they will have to go to the nuclear option because otherwise this all will have been in vain. So we are on a path to the nuclear option.

Pretty much everything Republicans have claimed to stand for is destroyed in this process—the hypocrisy alert about the deficit and the debt—and now they are raising it by huge numbers.

When you have to put real numbers in the document, you simply deny them even though the debt numbers prove the lie. When there are budget rules that we have honored for decades, they are going to ignore them, just blow it through. There is the end run around the Parliamentarian, folks. Then, at the end, they go nuclear after saying: We would never, never, never, never, never, never do that.

This whole thing is such a con and such a shame and will cause so much damage to families dependent on Medicaid—all so they can give billions of dollars in tax breaks to big corporations and to billionaires, who don’t need it. In fact, their share of Federal revenue has gone down from like over 30 percent to below 10 percent. They have just walked away from their responsibilities to help fund America. They left that on the backs of regular taxpayers. And it is not enough for them to be under 10 percent; they want more. They want to get that down to—what?—5 percent? 4 percent? nothing and be complete freeloaders? This thing is an embarrassment.

I will say I rest my case, but when you actually look at their debt limit numbers, maybe I should say they rest my case.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Research Institute for Housing America Special Report]

THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON HOUSING AND HOUSING FINANCE

(By Sean Beckett)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Earth’s climate is changing. These changes will impact housing and the housing finance industry. Beyond these two certainties, there is a long list of unknowns. What forms will climate change take? How extreme will these changes be? Where will they be most concentrated? And what will be the pace of these changes? Can these changes be reversed or mitigated?

The impact of climate change on housing and housing finance depends on the answers to these and other questions. And the answers depend on the actions taken—or avoided—by governments, businesses and individuals. These actions will affect the future path of climate change and hence will either mitigate or exacerbate the impacts on housing and housing finance.

This paper reviews what we know so far about climate change; the likely impacts to housing and housing finance; strategies that can mitigate climate change or adapt to the part of climate change that cannot be averted; and the things firms in housing and housing finance can do to articulate and measure their exposure to climate change.

The paper is divided into four sections:

THE EARTH'S CLIMATE IS CHANGING

The evidence for global warming is unassailable. Greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere regulate the temperature of the Earth. As the concentration of GHGs in the atmosphere increases, so does the Earth's temperature.

For roughly 150 years, since the start of the Industrial Revolution, humans have steadily increased the amount of fossil fuels they burn. In addition, the Earth's population has grown rapidly, further boosting the demand for fossil fuels. The concentration of GHGs in the atmosphere has increased about 55 percent since the preindustrial era. As a consequence, the Earth's temperature has increased by around 1 degree Celsius over the last hundred years. That increase may not seem large, but the effects of that bit of global warming are surprisingly large.

That much is certain. What is open to debate are the precise links between global warming and specific extreme weather events such as flooding, sea level rise, hurricanes, wildfires, drought and more. Also uncertain is the future path of global warming and its effects.

Every few years, the international scientific community issues a summary of the consensus on these uncertainties. Their summaries consider multiple scenarios, because the path of global warming in the 21st century depends on the actions the world takes to limit further additions to atmospheric GHGs. Stringent limitations, as proposed in the Paris Accord, may prevent an acceleration in the pace of global warming, while conditions are likely to be much worse if use of fossil fuels continues on its current trajectory.

In all these possible futures, the consensus projections of the scientific community are unsettling. Sea levels will rise, flooding will increase, and other extreme weather events will become more destructive and more frequent. The second half of the 21st century will see increases in food insecurity as the result of reductions in marine and freshwater populations and declining agricultural productivity. Many land- and water-based species will face extinction. Reliable water supplies will become scarcer. Human health will suffer, especially in poorer regions where the infrastructure lacks resilience to climate change.

CLIMATE CHANGE WILL IMPACT HOUSING AND HOUSING FINANCE

Climate change will impact all governments, industries and individuals. Housing and housing finance will not be spared.

One way to understand the likely impacts is to review the types of disclosures that firms are recommended to make. The Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) recommended firms disclose two broad categories of climate risks: *physical risks* and *transition risks*. Physical risks comprise the familiar *acute risks*—floods,

hurricanes, etc.—that are projected to grow worse as a result of climate change and *chronic risks* such as secular increases in temperature or sea level that may threaten buildings and infrastructure. Transition risks include all the changes firms may be required to take to adapt to the world's response to climate change.

Coastal flooding provides perhaps the best example of how both physical and transitional risks are likely to impact housing. The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), the primary system of flood insurance in the United States, has numerous well-known challenges and deficiencies. Increases this century in insurance claims generated by climate change are likely to stretch the NFIP to the breaking point, facing homebuyers, lenders, GSEs and governments with a host of difficult questions. In addition, independent estimates of flood risk suggest that the NFIP currently excludes ⅓ of the at-risk properties, suggesting that the current government approach to disaster recovery may become too expensive to sustain in future.

Even if the weaknesses of the NFIP are repaired, insurance alone may not be enough to sustain the complex system of risk allocation that underlies the housing system. The magnitude and persistence of climate change, particularly in the latter part of the 21st century may overwhelm the ability of insurance to spread and manage risk.

Some of the impacts of climate change on housing and housing finance may not fit neatly in the TCFD categories. In addition to increasing residential property damage, climate change may increase mortgage default and prepayment risks, trigger adverse selection in the types of loans that are sold to the GSEs, increase the volatility of house prices, and even produce significant climate migration.

THERE ARE STRATEGIES FOR MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION

Strategies are available both for mitigating climate change and for adapting to the component of climate change that can't be avoided.

To slow the increase in global warming, the world must find ways to reduce the increase in the concentration of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere. It's as simple—and as complicated—as that. The growth in GHGs that began at the outset of the Industrial Revolution is the driving factor in global warming, and the use of fossil fuels is the leading source of the growth in GHGs.

Prompted in part by the Paris Accord, countries are exploring ways to reduce GHG emissions. Some of those ways, such as the transition to electric automobiles, are obvious. Some, such as removing GHGs directly from the atmosphere, are experimental and may have unanticipated side effects. Most of the methods for reducing GHG emissions require additional investments, at least during transition, and there is some reluctance to making those investments. In any event, climate mitigation will entail changes to the way we live, work, and travel.

Even in the most optimistic projection, some additional global warming is virtually guaranteed along with its consequences of additional flood, wind, and heat risks. Climate adaptation can limit the damage and disruption from these risks. To adapt to climate change, houses and other structures can be modified. To increase resilience to flood risk, the first finished level of a home can be raised a couple of feet above the projected elevation of the 100-year flood. New building materials and techniques can make homes more resistant to wind damage. Passive cooling techniques—common prior to

the advent of air conditioning—can be reintroduced. Similar strategies can be employed at the community level to make community infrastructure more resilient.

As with mitigation, adaptation tends to be costly especially when retrofitting existing structures. To date, the public has shown limited appetite for paying a premium for homes that incorporate resiliency features in excess of those required by building codes. Accordingly, builders have little incentive to absorb the costs of those resiliency features in new construction.

FIRMS IN HOUSING AND HOUSING FINANCE ARE WORKING TO QUANTIFY AND MANAGE THEIR CLIMATE RISK

Regulators and investors are demanding more, and more specific, disclosures by firms of climate-related risks. At present, disclosures in annual and quarterly financial reports tend to be qualitative. Firms likely will be asked to quantify these risks in future.

The Climate Disclosure Standards Board, an international consortium of businesses and NGOs, has published guidance on accounting for climate risk in financial statements, and some firms are beginning to provide more detailed estimates and sensitivity analyses. European firms appear to be further along in this process than U.S. firms, and surveys indicate institutional investors in Europe place a heavier weight on this type of information than investors in the U.S. currently. Legislation was introduced recently in the U.S. Congress to require the SEC to provide rules for these types of disclosure, and the SEC has sought public input on climate-related disclosures. The Federal Housing Finance Agency also has published a Request For Information for public input on this topic and collected numerous responses.

To cast a light on the challenges of quantitative disclosure, we consider a thought experiment. While climate change is likely to increase mortgage default risk, current default models generally do not incorporate a view of future climate impacts on mortgage defaults. We trace some of the steps risk managers and modelers may have to take to incorporate this type of information for the case of flood risk. Given the current state of climate science and the lack of substantial historical data on generally-accepted climate risk metrics, it may not be possible at present to provide risk estimates with the level of accuracy that is achievable in measures of interest rate and credit risk.

CONCLUSION

Climate change is real. Under even the most optimistic scenario, global warming and its impacts on weather are projected to get worse over the course of the 21st century.

The physical destruction caused by flooding and other extreme weather events is likely to necessitate changes in the way we currently insure against these risks. The U.S. employs a complex and sophisticated system for allocating risks among homeowners, insurers, lenders, servicers, GSEs, governments, and private investors. There already are signs that this system may have difficulty adapting to climate-triggered changes in these various risks.

Strategies are available both for mitigating climate change and for adapting to the unavoidable component of that change. However, these strategies are costly and require a high degree of adoption and cooperation that does not currently exist.

Firms will be pressed by regulators and investors to provide more quantitative estimates of the climate-related risks they face. In considering the example of estimating the impact of increased flooding on mortgage default risk, it is apparent that better and more standardized predictors of environmental risks will be needed.

April 4, 2025

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—SENATE

S2319

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
JOINT COMMITTEE ON TAXATION,
Washington, DC, April 3, 2025.

DEAR SENATOR WHITEHOUSE, SENATOR WYDEN, MR. NEAL AND MR. BOYLE: This letter is in response to your request for revenue estimates to extend permanently the individual tax provisions, the higher estate and gift tax exemptions, and certain business tax provisions contained in Public Law 115-97. In addition, we are including the change in outlays for debt service costs from the revenue effects of a permanent extension of the tax provisions contained in Public Law 115-97 as provided by the Congressional Budget Office.

You requested that the estimates of the business tax provisions are applied retroactively to the year the changes took effect. The following are three examples of the retroactive application of the business tax provisions.

1. Under present law, the computation of adjusted taxable income for purposes of the limitation on business interest without regard to any deduction allowable for depreciation, amortization, or depletion applies to taxable years beginning before January 1, 2022. For purposes of this estimate, we assume the proposal would allow the computa-

tion of adjusted taxable income without regard to any deduction allowable for depreciation, amortization, or depletion for taxable years beginning after December 31, 2021.

2. Under present law, bonus depreciation is available through 2026 (2027 for longer production period property and certain aircraft). Specifically, qualified property acquired and placed in service after September 27, 2017, and before January 1, 2023 (January 1, 2024, for longer production period property and certain aircraft), are eligible for 100-percent bonus depreciation. The 100-percent allowance is phased down by 20 percent per calendar year for qualified property acquired after September 27, 2017, and placed in service after December 31, 2022 (after December 31, 2023, for longer production period property and certain aircraft). Thus, to be eligible for bonus depreciation, qualified property must be placed in service before January 1, 2027 (January 1, 2028, for longer production period property and certain aircraft). For purposes of this estimate, we assume the proposal permanently extends 100-percent bonus depreciation for qualified property acquired after September 27, 2017 and the 100-percent allowance is not phased down for property placed in service after December 31,

2022 (after December 31, 2023, for longer production period property and certain aircraft).

3. Under present law, in the case of a taxpayer's specified research or experimental expenditures incurred in tax years beginning after December 31, 2021, such amounts are required to be capitalized and amortized ratably over a five-year period, beginning with the midpoint of the taxable year in which such amounts were paid or incurred. Specified research or experimental expenditures that are attributable to research that is conducted outside of the United States are required to be capitalized and amortized ratably over a 15-year period, beginning with the midpoint of the taxable year in which such expenditures were paid or incurred. The proposal delays permanently the date domestic research or experimental expenditures generally must be capitalized and amortized.

I hope this information is helpful to you. If we can be of further assistance in this matter, please let me know.

Sincerely,

THOMAS A. BARTHOLD

ESTIMATED REVENUE EFFECTS OF A PERMANENT EXTENSION OF CERTAIN EXPIRING TAX PROVISIONS IN PUBLIC LAW 115-97 AND ASSOCIATED CHANGE IN OUTLAYS FOR DEBT SERVICE COSTS

Fiscal Years 2025-2035—millions of dollars

Provision	Effective	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2025-30	2025-35
I. Individual Tax Provisions														
A. Simplification and Reform of Rates, Standard Deductions, and Exemptions														
1. 10%, 12%, 22%, 24%, 32%, 35%, and 37% income tax rate brackets [1].	tyba 12/31/25	---	-142,731	-214,837	-224,986	-232,903	-241,416	-250,716	-260,721	-270,565	-281,143	-292,831	-1,056,873	-2,412,849
2. Modify standard deduction (\$12,000 for singles, \$24,000 for married filing jointly, \$18,000 for HoH) [1].	tyba 12/31/25	---	-73,165	-125,375	-130,083	-135,151	-140,046	-145,584	-151,024	-156,687	-162,666	-168,596	-603,820	-1,386,377
3. Repeal of deduction for personal exemptions [1].	tyba 12/31/25	---	133,675	196,465	202,908	210,466	217,565	224,016	230,559	238,439	245,645	254,113	961,079	2,153,851
B. Treatment of Business Income of Individuals, Trusts, and Estates														
1. Qualified business income deduction	tyba 12/31/25	-6,970	-43,943	-73,961	-80,249	-81,609	-83,471	-85,751	-88,399	-91,312	-94,911	-98,950	-370,204	-829,528
2. Limitation on excess business losses of non-corporate taxpayers.	tyba 12/31/28	---	---	---	---	3,363	5,032	3,009	2,461	2,084	1,827	1,092	8,395	18,868
C. Reform of the Child Tax Credit														
1. Child tax credit:														
a. Modification of child tax credit: \$2,000 not indexed; refundable up to \$1,400 indexed down to nearest \$100 base year 2018; \$2,500 refundability threshold not indexed; \$500 other dependents not indexed; phase outs \$200K/\$400K not indexed [1].	tyba 12/31/25	---	-39,154	-82,268	-82,972	-83,162	-83,762	-83,785	-83,722	-83,911	-83,850	-83,962	-371,316	-790,548
b. Require valid Social Security number of each child to claim refundable and non-refundable portions of child credit, non-child dependents and any child without a valid Social Security number still receives \$500 non-refundable credit [1].	tyba 12/31/25	---	388	1,258	1,417	1,544	1,648	1,745	1,813	1,915	2,042	2,198	6,265	15,978
D. Simplification and Reform of Deductions and Exclusions														
1. Repeal of itemized deductions for taxes not paid or accrued in a trade or business (except for up to \$10,000 in State and local taxes), interest on mortgage debt in excess of \$750K, interest on home equity debt, non-disaster casualty losses, and certain miscellaneous expenses [1].	generally tyba 12/31/25	---	63,536	105,298	107,786	114,733	121,668	128,965	136,309	143,310	150,561	156,638	513,021	1,228,804
2. Increase percentage limit for charitable contributions of cash to public charities.	cmi tyba 12/31/25	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
3. Repeal of overall limitation on itemized deductions.	tyba 12/31/25	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
4. Suspension of exclusion for employer-provided bicycle commuter fringe benefit [2].	tyba 12/31/25	---	14	16	17	19	20	22	24	26	29	31	86	218
5. Repeal exclusion for employer-provided qualified moving expense reimbursements (other than members of the Armed Forces) [3][4].	tyba 12/31/25	---	569	592	615	845	879	914	950	987	1,026	1,065	3,500	8,442
6. Repeal of deduction for moving expenses (other than members of the Armed Forces).	tyba 12/31/25	---	731	762	798	836	872	905	944	985	1,028	1,073	3,999	8,934
7. Limitation on wagering losses	tyba 12/31/25	---	1	5	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	7	23	54
E. Increase estate, gift, and GST tax exemption amount.	tyba 12/31/25	-50	-3,670	-19,297	-21,306	-22,197	-23,489	-24,958	-26,714	-28,663	-30,972	-33,596	-90,010	-234,912
F. Increase the individual AMT exemption amounts and phase-out thresholds.	tyba 12/31/25	---	-77,577	-138,849	-141,036	-148,659	-156,758	-164,942	-173,437	-182,273	-191,443	-200,699	-662,879	-1,575,673
G. ABLE accounts:														
1. Increase in contributions limit	tyba 12/31/25	---	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	-1	-1	-1	-1	-2	-2	-1	-8
2. Contributions eligible for Saver's credit	tyba 12/31/25	---	[5]	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-4	-9
3. Rollovers from qualified tuition programs permitted.	Da 12/31/25	---	[5]	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-2	-2	-2	-2	-4	-13
H. Other Items:														
1. Treatment of certain individuals performing services in the Sinai Peninsula of Egypt.	spo/a 12/31/25	---	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-4	-8
2. Exclusion from gross income of student loans discharged on account of death or disability [6].	dola 12/31/25	---	---	-44	-45	-46	-48	-49	-50	-51	-53	-54	-184	-441
Total of Individual Tax Provisions		-7,020	-181,317	-350,238	-367,134	-371,918	-381,304	-396,207	-411,006	-425,715	-442,880	-462,477	-1,658,931	-3,797,216
II. Business Tax Provisions														
1. Extend 100% bonus depreciation	ppisa 12/31/22	-30,965	-98,471	-56,189	-51,035	-36,315	-26,530	-20,440	-17,361	-16,009	-15,745	-15,734	-299,505	-384,884
2. Deduction percentages for GILTI and FDII	tyba 12/31/25	---	-7,466	-15,471	-16,825	-17,729	-16,983	-16,312	-17,289	-16,023	-17,244	-18,328	-74,504	-161,700

Estimate Included in Item D.1.
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3. Rate on modified taxable income and treatment of credits in the calculation of BEAT.	tyba 12/31/25	-1,756	-3,249	-3,393	-4,143	-4,583	-4,518	-4,344	4,283	-4,345	-3,742	-17,134	-38,366
4. Expensing of research and experimental expenditures.	tyba 12/31/21	-104,369	-3,994	-2,174	-2,038	-2,053	-2,134	-2,240	-2,343	-2,424	-2,481	-127,102	-138,724
5. Extension of allowance for depreciation, amortization, or depletion in determining the limitation on business interest.	tyba 12/31/21	-10,714	-6,430	-6,102	-5,563	-5,126	-5,363	-5,401	-5,797	-6,053	-6,253	-40,705	-69,572
6. Deductibility of employer meals	tyba 12/31/25	-3,257	-3,381	-3,509	-3,643	-3,782	-3,928	-4,079	-4,237	-4,399	-4,566	-17,572	-38,781
Total of Business Tax Provisions		-146,048	-88,714	-83,038	-9,431	-59,077	-52,695	-50,714	-50,782	-50,210	-51,104	-576,522	-832,027
NET TOTAL OF TAX PROVISIONS		-153,068	-438,952	-450,172	-441,349	-440,381	-448,902	-461,720	-476,497	-483,090	-513,581	-2,235,453	-4,629,243
Increase In Outlays For Debt Service Costs [7]		1,607	25,157	41,634	58,373	75,451	92,846	111,038	130,375	150,935	172,330	213,787	871,311
NET TOTAL INCLUDING INTEREST COSTS		-154,675	-464,109	-491,806	-499,722	-515,832	-541,748	-572,758	-606,872	-644,025	-685,911	-2,449,240	-5,500,564

Joint Committee on Taxation and Congressional Budget Office

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I yield the floor.
The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, the budget that we are debating really comes down to one simple idea: the massive transfer of wealth and resources from the poor and the middle class to the ultrawealthy.

What is being proposed in the Senate right now is stunning in its scope. We are talking about a piece of legislation that has such deep cuts to Medicaid—this is the program that insures 24 percent of American families. One-quarter of Americans get their health insurance from Medicaid. You don't know it as Medicaid because it is called something different in each State. In Connecticut, it is called HUSKY. In Wisconsin, it is called BadgerCare. But in every State, about a quarter of the population gets their insurance through a Medicaid-funded program. Most of those folks are working full time, but for one reason or another, that is where they get their insurance.

You are talking about kicking millions of people off of that program—and for what? For what? To rack up the biggest bill ever on the credit card of the middle class—an explosion in debt—but also to fund a tax cut for the fabulously wealthy.

This is the 2017 tax cut, which is essentially going to be mirrored, we believe, by this tax cut. The top 1 percent of earners got tax cuts 852 times bigger than working families in America. We don't know the final shape of this tax cut, but it won't look fundamentally different from that. This is a really bad time to be a working mom or dad in America.

This week, we are passing, apparently, a massive cut in healthcare benefits for working families in order to pad the pockets of the wealthy.

We are also dealing with the Trump tariff plan, which has been a "Keystone Cops"-like rollout that will ultimately raise prices for every single American.

Tariffs can work as part of a coordinated, thoughtful approach to trying to rebuild American industry, but they only work when you partner those tariffs together with industrial policy, incentives to help promote the industry that you are trying to punish when the products come from abroad.

I am not reflexively opposed to the use of tariffs, but this use of tariffs is bananas because it is not paired with any domestic industrial policy, meaning that you are just going to get the downside—the massive increase in costs for consumers—without the upside, which is job creation in the United States of America.

So before I get to the insult to middle-class families that will come through the budget, let's just talk about what is going to happen with these tariffs.

We know how it is going to work because we saw how tariffs worked in Trump's first term. Let me just take one specific example. In Trump's first

term, he proposed a 20-percent escalating tariff on washing machines. The idea was, you know, we want washing machines to be made in the United States instead of outside of the United States, but because he didn't pair that together with any more comprehensive help for the washing machine industry in the United States, it was only the downside.

It was only the downside not just because of the lack of a comprehensive policy but also because there were no checks on the corporations that saw the tariffs as a means to gouge consumers. You have to also partner tariffs together with some accountability for corporations—for the greedy corporations that get wide-eyed when they see the tariffs and realize, well, this is an opportunity to not just pass the tariff along but to jack up the price a little bit more and say it was all because of the tariffs.

Here is what happened on washing machines. So you have a 20-percent escalating tariff. We have the data. We saw what happened. The economic data tells us that the washing machine companies passed along the 20-percent tariff and then padded the price increase sometimes by 15 percent, sometimes by 50 percent. But it is worse than that. The price increase was not just for imported washing machines; they also increased the price of the domestic washing machines that weren't subject to the tariff. Why not? Why not? The Trump administration won't hold us accountable for that. Nobody really looks to see whether the washing machine was made in America or not. We will just raise the price on everything.

What do you buy when you buy a washing machine as well? A dryer. So guess what happens. Even though dryers weren't subject to the tariff, the price got jacked up on the dryers as well. Dryers went up by 50 percent sometimes in cost—15 percent, 20 percent. All of a sudden, prices went up for everything.

Now, Trump collected a bunch of money in tariffs—\$80 billion—but that was literally just middle-class people paying the additional amount to the company and the company passing it along to the government. So it was just a tax. It was just a tax.

OK. Maybe you could live with that if it revitalized the domestic washing machine industry, if there were tens of thousands of people going back to jobs in that industry, but that didn't happen. I think there were one or two domestic washing machine factories that opened up, and Trump, of course, made a big deal. Do you know how many jobs it was in total? Less than 2,000 jobs. Less than 2,000 jobs were created for a tariff that jacked up costs for every American and resulted in \$80 billion of middle-class taxes being collected by the government. That works out to about \$800,000 per job.

So that is what is coming at scale, not just on washing machines but on virtually every consumer product: a

big price increase, little to no domestic job creation, all the pain on the middle class.

Tariffs can work, but this is not the way that they work.

So this week, Senate Republicans, instead of trying to help consumers deal with the impact of these tariffs—I mean, we are talking about huge price increases coming for American families, and this week, we could be sitting here, voting for bills that cancel the tariffs or try to help middle-class families in another way. We are doing exactly the opposite. Instead of helping families deal with the impact of the tariffs, instead of holding the greedy corporations in check as they get ready to gouge consumers, we are debating a bill that would cut almost \$1 trillion out of Medicaid—the program that provides insurance for a quarter of Americans. That will result in raising healthcare costs for tens of millions of Americans.

We are also talking about giving a massive tax break to the billionaire CEOs of the companies that are going to be doing the price gouging and to the companies themselves. That is outrageous. That is outrageous.

If you were a regular, ordinary American, what you are being told is that you are going to have to pay huge new price increases on everything you buy. You are going to have your healthcare disappear, and corporate profits and take-home pay for CEOs are going to skyrocket. Who is asking for that? What American is asking for prices to go up, my healthcare to be cut, and billionaires to get a big tax break?

Let's start talking about these tax cuts, OK? They are at the center of this bill. Everything in the Trump administration is about a simple story: How do I help my Mar-a-Lago billionaire friends?

So this is the old tax cut because we don't know all of the details of the new one. If you look at sort of the poorest Americans versus the richest Americans, the tax cut is 852 times bigger.

But here is a back-of-the-napkin analysis of what this new tax cut is likely to look like, if it is, basically, formed like the old one. Instead of taking the poorest Americans versus the richest Americans—instead—let's just look at, sort of, the bottom 60 percent of income earners in this country. That is roughly about everybody who makes \$90,000 or less. So that is a lot of your neighbors. Right? I mean, \$90,000 is an income that is familiar to a lot of Americans.

So under this new tax cut, if it looks like the old one—and that is the signal that we get—households in the top 1 percent are going to get an average tax cut that is 120 times bigger than the tax cut given to people who are making \$90,000 or less. So that is 152 times bigger than the very poor.

But let's take somebody who is making \$60,000. The richest 1 percent are going to get a tax cut that is 120 times bigger. How is that fair?

OK, now, you would say: Well, that is because they make a lot more money; so, of course, they are going to get a bigger tax cut.

But let's do the math a different way.

As a share of after-tax income, the tax cuts for the top are still more than triple the total value of the tax cut received for people with incomes in the bottom 60 percent. So even when you adjust for the fact that they are making more money, they are still getting a tax cut whose value is three times bigger than folks who are making a middle income in this country.

And why? Does anybody believe in trickle-down economics anymore? It has been completely discredited.

Again, we have the 2017 tax cuts as evidence. Donald Trump touted out a big promise. He said: These tax cuts for corporations and billionaires and millionaires, they will trickle down to everybody else, and I will tell you the number. The average worker will get a \$4,000 salary increase.

That was the promise. The money will trickle down. The corporations will be so generous—so generous—that they will take their giant tax cut, bigger than they even asked for—Senator WHITEHOUSE just showed you the chart where corporations have gone from providing 30 percent of American tax revenue down to 10 percent of American tax revenue—what a great deal for corporations.

OK. That is a nice chart. That makes sense if the corporations are taking their lower tax liability and turning it around into wages. Instead, they are not. They are keeping it for themselves, for their executives, for their top shareholders.

The analysis shows that that promised \$4,000 salary increase as a result of the tax cuts, it wasn't \$4,000. It wasn't \$2,000. It wasn't \$1,000. It wasn't \$100. It was zero because all of that money—virtually all of this money—ended up getting gobbled up by the corporations, mainly for stock buybacks. It didn't go to increased compensation for their employees.

So it is not to raise wages. I guess it is just to make rich people richer.

From 2017, when that tax cut passed—that first Trump tax cut passed—until 2023, Elon Musk's wealth grew by 1,222 percent. I don't even know what that looks like. Jeff Bezos' grew by 96 percent, Zuckerberg's by 50 percent, and Rupert Murdoch's by 50. I use those names because those were the billionaires who were at Trump's inauguration, cheerleading him into office because they know that another big tax cut for their company and for them personally is coming.

I will admit to you, median income overall grew from 2017 to 2023. So everybody in the country was making more in 2023 than they were making in 2017. But median income was not growing by 50 percent, 96 percent, or 1,222 percent.

So this is a massive tax cut, the vast majority of it going to the very, very wealthy.

But what makes it even harder to understand is what Senator WHITEHOUSE laid out for you. Most of this is just going on your credit card. Most of this is just being borrowed. And that has a consequence—the national debt potentially doubling as a result of this massive tax cut for the very, very wealthy.

It is just so heartbreaking, the hypocrisy. I mean, I could string together a 24-hour-long video of my Republican colleagues talking ad nauseam about the danger of debt, the rising deficit.

We can't spend money on kids. We can't spend money on climate. We can't spend money on schools. We can't help people go to college. No, no, no, we can't do any of that. We can't do any of that because of the deficit.

Yet when it comes to a billionaire tax cut, a corporate tax cut, we are going to potentially double the debt. Nobody is caring about the debt. In fact, they are rigging the rules of the Senate. They are breaking the rules of the Senate just so they can get away with a massive increase in debt and deficit.

But somewhere along the line, they said: Well, do you know what? We can't borrow the whole thing. We have got to make it look like we are cutting some spending. So let's cut some spending to make it at least look like it is not all borrowed. But let's make sure that the spending we are cutting only hurts poor people and the middle class because God forbid we can cut spending that helps the rich or the affluent. God forbid we take away some of the tax breaks that help them.

So where are the cuts coming? Medicaid. Eighty percent of the cuts are Medicaid—\$880 billion in the House bill, a similar amount, cutting Medicaid.

Medicaid, as I said, is the program that insures 24 percent of Americans. At least two-thirds of those are working—working full time. They just don't have health insurance through their employer. So they have to get it through Medicaid.

So when Republicans decided that they couldn't borrow the whole thing—like, we will double the national debt, but we are not going to triple the national debt—they targeted the cuts to hurt the middle class and poor people.

So I just want to end by telling you what this means in realtime. I don't actually know what it means to give billionaires another \$50,000 in tax breaks. I really don't know what that means. I don't know what that life is like. I don't know what it is like to have seven houses and four yachts. I don't know what a billionaire does with an extra \$50,000. I can't actually explain that to you. I don't understand that kind of rapacious greed.

What I do know is what happens to poor people, the people who live in my neighborhood in the south end of Hartford, when they lose their Medicaid.

Linda lives in Sherman, CT, a small town in western Connecticut. Following the economic downturn in 2008,

Linda had trouble finding work. And that was tough for her because she is a cancer survivor. She had high healthcare expenses, and she needed work.

She was underemployed. She worked in plant nurseries and agriculture. Her husband, at the same time, lost his job as an auto mechanic. They lost their healthcare insurance.

But then, when the Affordable Care Act passed, Medicaid was expanded. More people were made eligible for Medicaid, and in 2010, she was able to sign up for Medicaid.

She said:

I had so much anxiety [all the time] about how to pay for healthcare. We were going through all of our money, and we [just] thought, "this isn't right, people shouldn't have to worry about [just] being basically healthy."

But once she got healthcare, she was able to restart her life. Linda went back to school because now she had healthcare. She got a new degree. She found a job teaching agriculture at a local high school. But that program didn't provide healthcare. So she still needed that Medicaid.

"Medicaid," she says, just "provides such a baseline for society. It [allowed me to maintain] my health so that I was able to continue working."

The Medicaid cuts that they are talking about will destroy Medicaid expansion. In fact, some States will automatically cancel the Medicaid expansion program when these cuts are made, meaning that people like Linda all across the country are going to lose their healthcare. For what? For a massive tax cut for the wealthy.

Emily Granelli is a worker at one of Connecticut's biggest behavioral health and substance abuse providers. So every day she is talking to people who rely on Medicaid so that they can get help for their mental health disorder or their substance abuse disorder. And let's be honest. We all have somebody in our life who has a serious mental illness or has struggled with substance abuse. So you know these people.

She wrote me a letter talking about the fact that the conversations in their therapy groups in the last month have fundamentally changed. They are actually not doing therapy any longer for mental illness or substance abuse. They are now doing therapy for the anxiety all these people have knowing they are about to lose their health insurance.

One case manager told me—she writes that she was working with a client to find housing. The client now just wants to stop looking because she feels like there is no point because she is going to lose her Medicaid. Republicans are going to strip her Medicaid from her. She won't be able to get her medication and services. She feels hopeless.

A clinician told me about an hourlong session she had the day before. Seventy-five percent of it was focused on the client's fear of losing her

benefits and what that would mean for her and all the other clients. She shared with me that if there was a way for her to leave the country right now, she would.

At this provider, 35 percent of their clients would likely lose access to mental illness and substance abuse services if these cuts go through.

What are we doing? Why are we doing this? Why are we choosing—why are my colleagues choosing—to destroy healthcare for millions of Americans in order to pass a tax cut that basically helps corporations and billionaires and millionaires? It is fundamentally immoral.

I have to believe, like in 2017, when Republicans were trying to destroy the Affordable Care Act, which insured 20 million Americans, that there are a handful of Republicans who know that this isn't right, who maybe aren't ready to stop it today—tonight's vote isn't the final vote—but might be willing to stand up to this thievery before it is too late.

The people of this country who are getting killed by higher prices that are coming because of the tariffs and are going to be hurt by these Medicaid cuts and are going to be furious when the rich become richer at their expense, they are counting on just a small handful of my Republican colleagues to realize right from wrong.

I yield the floor.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Would the Senator care to engage in a brief colloquy?

I ask unanimous consent that we be allowed to do so.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island is recognized.

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I was here for your point about mental health and addiction recovery care. As you will recall, you and I and others worked together to get the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act passed.

That was a very bipartisan effort because the scourge of the opioid epidemic fell across all Americans. It was one of my happier and prouder moments when that bill actually got passed and then when the Appropriations Committee came behind the CARA bill and put funding in. But the bulk of the programs that we put together in CARA—bipartisan programs—were funded through Medicare, Medicaid. That is how you get reimbursement for those programs.

So doesn't it seem peculiar that our colleagues on the other side who were so instrumental in pushing through that Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act to help their constituents at home and who at the time showed so much sensitivity to the needs of people going through addiction recovery, through all of the stages—from initial detox to in-house treatment, to sober living, and on to medication-assisted treatment sometimes, and then recovery support—all of that seemed to bind us together. What on Earth could be the madness that inspires them to tear

all that down now, when they built it within the last decade with us?

Mr. MURPHY. Thank you, Senator WHITEHOUSE, first of all, for all the work you have put into passing that legislation, which has given access to millions of people across the country who are struggling with addiction and recovery access to services.

Again, I said what I said in my underlying remarks. There is not a single Member of the Senate who doesn't have a close family member or a friend who has struggled or is struggling with addiction. This is a nonpartisan, apolitical problem. Addiction doesn't care if you are left, right, Republican, or Democrat.

We did come together around funding these programs. So it is hard to understand—it is heartbreaking—that I am telling you the story of one of Connecticut's biggest addiction treatment providers, and they are telling us that if these cuts go through fully, one-third of their clients will lose access to some or all of their services.

And to your point in your initial speech, Senator WHITEHOUSE, I mean, maybe I could understand if we were deciding to cut funding for addiction treatment because we had some other really important priority that helped regular people—like if we said: Do you know what? There is a housing crisis in this country. Right now, we are going to have to borrow money from addiction treatment in order to make sure that people get housed. Or, you know, our schools are underfunded and teachers need to be paid more. And, OK, it is really hard to cut funding from addiction treatment centers, but at least we will get better education for our kids. That is not what we are doing. We are cutting funds for people struggling with addiction who get served by programs that we agree are important in order to fund a tax cut for corporations and super, superrich people. That is why this is fundamentally immoral.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. And if the Senator would yield on that very point.

Mr. MURPHY. I would.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. There is a doctrine or a principle that is kind of a tedious economic term, "marginal utility of money." What it means, in very plain terms, is that if you make \$60,000 a year, your last thousand dollars of income is a big deal to you. That thousand dollars makes an enormous difference in the quality of your life.

You take that same thousand dollars, and you give it to somebody who is making \$60 billion a year, and they don't even know it is there.

Mr. MURPHY. Right.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. The marginal utility of that money in the billionaire's or megamillionaire's life is near zero—near zero.

So if you are actually looking at the human side of the financial equation, are we not taking extremely important dollars that make an enormous difference in the lives of normal, regular people, scooping them up by the tril-

ions—according to the graphs I showed—and delivering them to a crop of big corporations that already pay taxes too low and megamillionaires and billionaires who won't even notice the money. It won't change a thing in their lives. They can still buy a \$90,000 purse for their wife. They can still buy the ninth house. They can still buy the 190-foot yacht, with its crew of 30 or 40 or 50, or whatever it is. Where is the benefit?

You know, we talk about this as being a transfer of wealth from the poor or the middle class to the very rich, but it is really an evaporation of wealth because it is not going to make a difference to people who already have more money than they can spend for the rest of their lives. They couldn't spend it if they wanted to for the rest of their lives. So this additional thing, it is more like a trophy.

It reminds me of when I was growing up. People were talking about F.D.R., recalling his Presidency, and talking about J.F.K. while he was President and shortly thereafter. I was alive during J.F.K.'s life. People used to say: Well, you know, the good thing about electing those rich people is that they are too rich to steal. You don't have to worry about them. They are too rich to steal.

F.D.R. never stole a nickel, as best I can tell. J.F.K. never stole a nickel, as best I can tell.

This crop of creepy billionaires—what happened to "too rich to steal," Senator MURPHY.

Mr. MURPHY. It is thievery masked by a bogus economic argument that says the money will eventually find its way down to everybody else. That is not true. That has never been true. In fact, the opposite is often true.

The billionaire class is sometimes referred to as sort of citizens of everywhere, right. They are global citizens. They globe-trot from homes in the United States and Europe and the islands. But that is also where their money ends up going as well.

It used to be that the richest guy in your community was investing only in your community, but today, when we pad the pockets of the uberwealthy, that money either does not get spent or it ultimately gets delivered to investments that flow into economies all over the world. These tax cuts don't end up back in America. To the extent the money gets spent anywhere, it gets spent in international index funds.

So the theory of the case—which has always been cover for simply delivering more and more excessive resources to the very, very wealthy—has never worked, but it works even less now when, in a global international economy, the very, very wealthy have options to invest in the United States or, often, for higher returns, invest somewhere else.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. And if I can reclaim my time for a moment and ask the Senator another question, it looks to me a bit like, as they are destroying

Medicaid—which, as you pointed out, serves a quarter of American households and is essential to most households because it is granny's nursing home care, it is your sister's or wife's childbirth delivery in the hospital, or it is your colleague or friend or family member's opioid recovery treatment—swept away for unnecessary and unfair tax cuts to billionaires and big corporations.

But then you move just beyond this immediate budget bill and you look over at what Elon Musk and his little “Muskrats” are doing to Social Security and what they are saying about Social Security, and it looks like not only do they want to gut Medicaid through this budget reconciliation bill, but they also are trying to wreck the administration and operations of Social Security, trying to clear out the workforce that makes it work, sending their creeps in to probe into the data systems that support it. Who knows what damage has been done to the data systems or what extraction of data has been done. We don't know. They have never answered questions. They lie and say it is a Ponzi scheme. They refer to it as riddled with fraud when there is almost no fraud at all—1 percent at best.

So they are trying to discredit Social Security, they are trying to undermine its operations, and they are talking about an interruption in benefits—in fact, talking kindly about interruption in benefits with the Secretary of Commerce saying: If we had an interruption in benefits, my mother, who is a Social Security recipient, wouldn't even notice.

Well, yes. She is living in her billionaire son's house. Of course she wouldn't notice. Duh.

But the people who would complain about losing their check, they are probably fraudsters, and so it would actually be beneficial to have an interruption in benefits because that is where we can root out some of the fraud—like there is fraud. Again, feeding the lie that there is fraud.

What conclusions do you reach when you see this pattern of activity targeting Social Security, even if an attack on it is not in this bill per se?

Mr. MURPHY. I thank the Senator for the question. Listen, I read it as just a different kind of thievery.

So what we are talking about here is this massive thievery from Medicaid recipients so that we can pass along this big tax break for folks that don't need it. But my sense is that the billionaire and investment and Wall Street class is really upset that there are still a few remaining government programs that they haven't gotten their hands on, that they haven't operationalized in a way to make themselves money.

They have had their eyes on Social Security for decades. I remember George Bush proposing privatizing Social Security, which is essentially just taking that big lump of money and

handing it to the investment managers so that they can skim some money off the top.

They also looked at schools the same way, I think, Senator WHITEHOUSE. They have been discrediting public education to the point where now they don't think the Department of Education needs to exist. And why? Why? Because they ultimately want to do the same thing for our public schools. They want to privatize our elementary schools, our middle schools, and our high schools so that they can have private equity funds owning the schools, providing some form of education but just seeing our kids as a source of profit.

So you can tell me if I am wrong about this, but my sense is that the theft happens in all sorts of different ways: sometimes in just a transfer—Medicaid recipients losing, billionaires winning—but sometimes by taking government programs and turning them—instead of something that tries to work for the common good, as a program that just gets turned into a vehicle for profit for the very, very wealthy.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Particularly when there is so much money to be made. So much flows through Social Security. If you take it over by wrecking it and then sending in your private-equity friends and tech bros to get it operational again and then let them slice off a share for themselves by privatizing either it or its operations, you have created a massive new revenue stream for the superrich.

So with that, I see that there are a few colleagues on the other side who have come over. It may be that it is their turn.

Senator MURPHY, are you OK to yield the floor?

Mr. MURPHY. Sure.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, we are gathered here to talk about the budget. We are going to be voting on a budget resolution shortly, and I am concerned.

I am concerned that there is so much enthusiasm among conservatives and Republicans for cutting waste and cutting fraud and “quit spending \$2 million on sex changes in Guatemala and \$3 million on girl-centric climate change in Brazil, \$4.8 million on social media influencers in Ukraine.” I am excited by eliminating all of that waste. I have been calling for it for years.

But I will tell you what worries me. What worries me is that so many things in Washington are smoke and mirrors. On the one hand, it appears as if all of this great savings is happening, but on the other hand, the resolution before us will increase the debt by \$5 trillion. So which is it? Are we cutting spending or are we expanding the debt?

If we expand the debt at \$5 trillion, that will be an expansion of the debt equal to or exceeding everything that happened in the Biden years.

Now, which is it?

I thought we had an election. I thought we had an election. And the other side was complaining loudly that, oh, my goodness, there is going to be too much cutting in spending, and our side is saying, no, no, no.

I am looking at the numbers. The budget resolution is going to add \$5 trillion over about a 2-year period. So they are going to add more than \$2 trillion a year to the debt. In what world is that conservative?

They say there is a difference between the parties, and yet, when you look at the numbers, when you look at the fact that this budget resolution is going to borrow \$5 trillion, you scratch your head and say: What is up here? Is there somebody not really being honest with us? They are going to borrow \$5 trillion, and yet they will say: Well, the spending is coming down, and we have put these numbers in the budget that will reduce spending.

If so, why are we borrowing \$5 trillion?

The reason they are going to ask the Republicans and the Democrats—but it will be mostly Republicans voting for this debt—the reason they are asking for it is because they are anticipating that is what they will need. They are also anticipating that—you know, it is kind of embarrassing, really, to talk about debt. It is extremely embarrassing for Republicans, who say they are conservative, to be adding \$5 trillion in debt and voting for it, so they don't want to do it very often. Let's try to spread it out over a long time. Let's try to get through the 2026 election. Let's try to get to 2027 before we have to have this embarrassment brought back in front of us.

But the embarrassment and the shame are coming much quicker. We are going to get to the end of September 30—that is the end of the fiscal year for our Federal Government—and the American people at that time will be told—hopefully someone in the media notices this—that the deficit for this year will be over \$2 trillion. The estimates are that there will be about \$2.2 trillion. And we are going to borrow \$5 trillion.

Now, some would argue: Yeah, but we need to give them a chance. We need to give them a chance because the spending number actually looks like they might reduce spending.

But here is the problem. The spending number is lower, but this bill also adds \$325 billion in new spending: \$150 billion for the military-industrial complex and another \$175 billion for the border. But that is new money.

How much money did we spend last year? A little over \$7 trillion. But that is not enough, according to all the people here on my side today that are going to vote for this budget. They want more than last year. Well, if last year was \$7.1 trillion, that must mean they are going to want \$300 billion more than that. But the number in the bill says—no—\$6.5 trillion. So they are saying we are going to spend less.

You know what, I have seen the way this place operates, and I don't trust either party. Why? Because I have seen the deficit and the debt grow and triple since I have been here. It is \$36 trillion. Now, I voted against every last penny of it. I voted against the spending bills. I have voted to balance the budget. I have introduced budgets that balance over 5 years.

But you know the one thing that would happen even if I had my way and I could introduce and my budget would be accepted? There would have to be some debt accumulation. So what I am offering today is, let's accumulate some debt, let's raise the debt ceiling. I have never voted for this before, but I am willing to vote for 3 months, about \$500 billion, to raise the debt ceiling. Why? Because it has to happen.

Why don't I want to give them \$5 trillion? Because then you are just turning your back, and they are going to do whatever they always do. What does the swamp always do? Take your money, borrow money. Spend and borrow. It continues unabated.

But if you wanted to keep your Congress on a leash, if you wanted to have leverage, if you wanted to have leverage to say: Well, what if you are not being honest with me? What if in 3 months the deficit is over \$2 trillion, and what if in 3 months the spending levels aren't \$6.5 trillion but, in actuality, \$7.4 trillion? How would we then rebuke you? How would we stop you? How would we stop the spending?

Well, the way we would stop the spending is by not giving you any more borrowing.

So what I am proposing today is an amendment that will raise the debt ceiling by \$500 billion. To me, that is an extraordinary amount of money, but your government spends it so darn fast that that is about 3 months' worth of spending.

But there is nothing conservative about raising the debt ceiling \$5 trillion. It boggles the mind to try to comprehend how anyone who is self-describing themselves as conservative would vote to increase the debt by \$5 trillion. It makes utterly no sense.

But it also is free rein for the spenders because they have got \$5 trillion they can spend. In recent years, on occasion, they haven't even put a number in there. Probably the only reason we are getting a number is because the rules of the budget require a number. But what they have been doing, both parties, is they have been just saying: Well, why don't we just borrow money for 2 years or 3 years. And many people argue—many on the other side of the aisle will say: We shouldn't even have these votes at all. Why have a debt ceiling at all? Let's just let it spin out of control.

Has anybody ever seen the Debt Clock? Go to the debtclock.org and watch the number spinning wildly out of control.

Now, some will say deficits don't matter. This was the Cheney family.

Dick Cheney famously said deficits don't matter. But the thing is, they really do because you have to pay interest on the debt. We are paying about a trillion dollars in interest. So the largest item in our spending now—bigger than our military—is actually the interest. Over the next 10 years, we are going to pay about \$14 trillion in interest. I think it is actually probably worse than that. That is what the estimates are now. But it is literally out of control.

You say to yourself: How would we rein in spending?

You have to look at everything. Every item we spend money on has to be looked at. You have to look across the board at everything.

But what we have is the current administration says we are not going to look at Social Security, despite what the other side says about Social Security. Nothing is going to happen to Social Security. They are not going to fix it. They are not going to make it better. They are not going to reduce anything. Social Security is going to be untouched. So is Medicare. But then there are reports and complaints saying: Well, we shouldn't touch Medicaid either. And then people say: Food stamps—we can't touch food stamps.

Well, Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and food stamps comprise all the money that comes into our government. They are about \$5 trillion worth. That is about what we pay in taxes.

So the government brings in about \$5 trillion and spends \$7 trillion. That is about a \$2 trillion overdraft. We are \$2 trillion in the hole every year, and we are up to about \$36 trillion, \$37 trillion total.

But how would we actually get there if you are taking off the table Medicare, Social Security, Medicaid, and food stamps? Those four items are about \$5 trillion—pretty close to it. So if you take all the entitlements off the table, what are you left with?

People love and they get excited about the terrible foreign aid. I do too. I think it is the lowest hanging fruit. It is the most egregious, the spending. It is the easiest to cut. But I forced a vote on that 2 weeks ago, and we got no Democratic votes. In fact, I don't think there is a Democrat in Congress who will vote to cut 1 penny. I would like to do that sometime: introduce a bill to cut a penny or cut a dollar to see if they would.

Let's cut \$1 from the \$2 million that they spend doing sex-change surgery in Guatemala with U.S. tax dollars. Will the Democrats support a bill to cut \$1? Probably not.

Even if they admitted the program was egregious or horrible or out of normalcy, they would probably insist the money be spent somewhere else. And that is sort of the debate we have over time.

I have a bill called Bonuses for Cost-Cutters, which says that if you are in charge of a budget for government—let's say you are in charge of \$12 mil-

lion at the Department of Energy. If you save \$1 million, you would actually get a personal bonus for the Federal employee as an incentive.

When I put this forward, the main complaint that usually comes from across the aisle is they are OK with giving Federal workers bonuses for saving money, but they insist that the money not go back to the Treasury. This is the big debate that is going on also.

What Elon Musk has done and DOGE has done is absolutely commendable, and we need more of it. The whole place is rotten. It needs to be shaken up, and we need to look for waste. But there is going to be another debate: Is that waste going to come back, and are we going to vote on it? Are we going to codify it? Are we going to make it real by lowering our numbers?

But the only way we would have any leverage on either party is by only giving them a little taste of the money. Don't give them so much money they are wallowing in it and it comes out as fast as the Federal Reserve can print it. Give them about 3 months' worth. Let's see how they do in 3 months. If the spending totals that are in the bill come forward in 3 months and those are the spending totals that Congress approves, I would be pretty satisfied with that.

In fact, I have told them the bill, on large—I am for continuing the tax cuts. I am for keeping the tax cuts permanent. I voted for them in 2017. I am for reducing spending, which, on the surface, some of the numbers look better, but I am just not for borrowing \$5 trillion.

If we are doing a good job, if we are doing a better job, why are we borrowing \$5 trillion? Something doesn't add up. Something is fishy. If we are going to do such a good job and if we have transformed government and if we are different than the other side of the aisle and we really are for less spending and less debt, why are we borrowing more money than we have ever borrowed at one time in the history of the country? This will set a record. I believe \$5 trillion will be the most that has ever been borrowed in one fell swoop.

This will be a vote—and I think an ignominious one—in which professed conservatives stand up, stand forward, and vote for more debt than Congress has ever voted for at one period of time. It just disappoints me. I am so disappointed. But I am also disappointed because I think that within a few months, when the American people see this—particularly when Republicans at home see: Oh, my goodness, I heard all this good news about cutting foreign aid and cutting all this crazy spending around the world, but the deficit is still \$2 trillion this year. And then they are going to scratch their heads. And maybe they give the Republicans another 6 months and look. And then they are going to find that another trillion has been borrowed in another 6 months. And they are going to

find we are 2 years into a new Republican administration, with a Republican majority in the Senate and a Republican majority in the House, and we are going to borrow \$5 trillion. Something doesn't add up here.

Someone needs to stand up and say something. Someone needs to give conservatives, if we have conservatives in this body, an alternative. That is what my amendment will be. My amendment will be an alternative.

Instead of borrowing \$5 trillion, sticking our head in the sand, and saying, "No, please be nice to us, and do what you promised and spend less money," no, we give them 3 months, and we say: Prove to us that you will, for the first time, adhere to your word.

And it isn't just a couple of individual people. This is the history of the institution. Occasionally, through the last several decades, there have been people who have come forward, and they have put forth rules. It was Gramm-Rudman-Hollings. There were different rules that said: You have to pay as you go. So if somebody brought up \$300 billion in new spending, you would have to cut \$300 billion from somewhere else.

But do you know what has happened? These things have been evaded time and time again.

Why are people like me cynical of the process? Why do people like me not believe them when they say they are going to cut spending? Because they always go back on their word. They exempt themselves from rules they create.

Gramm-Rudman-Hollings, pay-as-you-go would have been effective, but it has been evaded by Congress 60, 70 times now. So I say: Trust but verify.

I say: Trust. Accept your colleagues if they say they are really going to do this. But give them 3 months for the borrowing. Don't give them 2 years for the borrowing. Don't give 5 trillion. Don't put yourself on record.

Today, if this is passed, or tomorrow morning early, if this is passed, Republicans who vote for this will be on record as being more fiscally liberal than their counterparts. They will vote to borrow more money than the Democrats have ever borrowed. So there really is a disconnect here. Something is not as it appears. There is a smoke and mirrors.

There is this great enthusiasm across the land for what is happening. I share that. I share President Trump's desire to balance the budget. I am pleased with his Cabinet. I am superpleased with having Elon Musk and DOGE and these young people looking for waste. I am for all of that and more. But if it is going to be reflected in something, we have to borrow less. If we are still borrowing the same amount, maybe it isn't real. Maybe we are just talking about things, and we are not actually doing them.

It is hard to cut spending. Everybody wants something. Everybody wants something from government. But there

is no such thing as something for nothing. It has to come from somewhere. Most people know this in their daily lives. If you work, you get something for work, and you feel good about yourself because you worked for something.

You can't simply just hand out money to people. You can't print out money like it grows on trees.

But, I can tell you, there is an absolute historical record of abuse by both parties. But what saddens me, in particular for Republicans, is Republicans will go on record today to increase the debt more than the Democrats ever had. The new world's record for accumulation of debt, the new world record for expanding debt in our country will belong to the Republican Party with this.

This is a sad day. I will vote against this bill and object to it unless we get rid of this enormous amount of borrowing. If we get rid of the \$5 trillion and adopt my amendment, I will vote for the bill.

The bill would borrow, if my amendment were passed, \$500 billion. Is it enough? No. We would have to do it again. We would come back in 3 months. But this is the idea of trust but verify.

If the promises are real and if the big spenders in both parties are doing a good job, when they come back and prove to us that they have actually done something they have never done in the past—they have changed their ways, and they are not going to keep adding massive debts, year after year—then we give them another 3 months. If they do a great job, maybe we give them 6 months. But we don't give big spenders in Washington who have a terrible history with the debt—we don't give them no leash at all, no controls at all, \$5 trillion here. Spend it however you want. We don't do that, at least we profess not to on our side.

So my amendment will give all Members of the body a chance to say: Do you want continued oversight of your government by looking at the debt ceiling periodically or do you just want to wash your hands?

I say if we wash our hands, we speed up the demise of our country. I think now is an inflection point.

The stock market in the last 2 days lost over \$6 trillion. We live in perilous times, and I think the people who just keep going on their merry way saying: We will just do the same thing, and we will tell the people it is a little different than the other side, and maybe they will vote for us this time; maybe they won't—I don't think it is going to happen. I think the people are frustrated. I think the people are annoyed. I think the people are frankly worried who are trying to save or getting closer to retirement or looking at their retirement nest egg and saying: Oh, my goodness, look at what has happened to us. Where are we going?

Part of that message is an indictment of tariffs, and I think millions of investors think tariffs are a bad idea.

But part of it is an indictment over our massive accumulation of debt, the fact that we are spending \$7 trillion and bringing in \$5 trillion.

I hope the body will consider my amendment. Maybe I will be shocked. Maybe we will get enough votes from both sides of the aisle to actually have a shorter leash and have more perspective and more concern and oversight for what our spending would be.

So I recommend a "yes" vote on my amendment, which will change the debt ceiling from \$5 trillion to \$500 billion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I appreciate the remarks that have just been given by my colleague from Kentucky. I think the main message we need to hear there, and what I am going to talk about, is that the problem we have in America is not that our taxes are too high or too low, but that our spending is too high.

And Republicans, today, I am confident, will be unified in delivering, as President Trump calls it, "one big beautiful bill" for the American people.

What does this bill include? The fiscal year 2025 budget resolution fulfills promises to secure America's borders, increase our national defense, unleash our energy potential, and finally start to get our house in order.

I agree completely with my colleague: We have got to reduce our spending. And this bill contains a target with a minimum floor of \$2 trillion in spending reduction in our Federal budget.

Importantly, it also lays the groundwork to make permanent and build on the 2017 Trump tax cuts so that American families can keep more of their hard-earned money to stop financing Washington's spending problem.

Our conference is united in preventing an over \$4 trillion tax hike on American families and businesses and delivering additional tax relief to those who have suffered for 4 years now under inflation.

We are united in making this proven tax policy permanent to provide the certainty that businesses need to make long-term investments that drive growth and stability for our families as they save and plan for the future.

We are also unified in our resolve to restore fiscal sanity and know that the best way to do so isn't to tax hard-working Americans more. It is to spend less.

While many tend to focus on the policy disagreements that occur—as they should in these Halls—the reality is that Republicans are completely unified in delivering on President Trump's agenda, a major portion of which is to restore the economic prosperity experienced under his Presidency.

Let's just look back for a minute about the bill that we are trying to extend and make permanent now.

Most Americans don't pay attention to the minutia of tax policy, but if you

ask them, the majority will tell you that they would rather keep more of their money than let the government spend it. And that is exactly what the 2017 tax cuts did.

Those Trump tax cuts lowered tax rates for the overwhelming majority of Americans, simplified the Tax Code, and encouraged companies to do business in the United States instead of abroad.

In addition to lowering rates across the board, it provided targeted tax relief to the middle-class working families by doubling the standard deduction and the child tax credit, and to small businesses by providing a new 20-percent deduction, enabling America's entrepreneurs to create new jobs, increase workers' wages, and reinvest in their business.

The majority of the benefits from the Trump tax cuts, contrary to what you have heard all day from the other side, flow to working middle-class families, the bottom 50 percent of earners receiving the largest reduction in average tax rates at 17.3 percent.

Contrary to the claims that you have heard all day on the floor today that benefits were only for billionaires and corporations, the Trump tax cuts actually made the Tax Code even more progressive, meaning that the highest income earners today pay a greater share of all taxes than they did before. And if we can extend this tax cut, that will continue to be the case.

The generational reforms we made in 2017 were designed to strengthen investment, boost economic growth, increase take-home pay, reduce poverty, and make America strong. And they worked. Not only did taxpayers keep more of their hard-earned money, but a growing economy powered median household income to an all-time high. The labor market improved, workers saw record wage growth, and the unemployment rate fell dramatically to 3.5 percent, the lowest in 50 years. The lowest income workers experienced the largest wage growth. There was a capital formation explosion in the United States and corporation inversions—corporations leaving America—stopped and became a thing of the past, as companies came back home to America and became the place to form capital and do business again.

All Americans reap the benefits of a booming economy. Extending this current, proven tax policy and building on it is the best way to restore economic prosperity and opportunity for working families, many of whom are struggling to recover from the historic inflation of the last 4 years.

Tonight, I expect we will hear once again the politics of fear, as my Democrat colleagues claim all sorts of dire things that will happen, including that we are just going to cut taxes for the wealthy so that we can do our own projects and benefit the wealthy and corporations.

This attack has been used for nearly a decade, and it is just as false now as

it has been in the past. Americans should not be scared by these falsehoods. What they should be alarmed by is what my colleagues and I committed to preventing: the largest tax hike in history that will occur if we do not extend the current Trump tax cuts.

This chart shows, of all these dollars of tax relief that we are talking about, contrary to the argument that they go to the wealthy, \$2.6 trillion of this tax hike goes to people in households making less than \$400,000 a year. And the vast majority of that goes to people making in the middle, lower, and upper middle-income categories.

Families of four making \$80,000 will see a \$1,700 tax hike if we don't extend this tax relief. And 20 million small businesses will see their rates go up to 43.4 percent. The child tax credit will be cut in half. The standard deduction will be cut in half. The lowest income earners in America are the ones who are benefitting the most from this legislation today.

Republicans are united in our efforts to make this work. Now, one of the things we are focusing on is making the tax cuts permanent. Not only are we focused on extending these policies, but we are committing to make this growth in our economy permanent so we don't have to face these dire consequences in the future.

Permanent tax policies promote stability and lead to more pronounced economic effects than temporary ones. Making these tax cuts permanent will provide businesses with the certainty and the stability they need to make the long-term investments that drive growth, accelerate productivity, and increase prosperity across all segments of our economy.

Studies find that a permanent extension of the TCJA would increase long-run GDP by 1.1 percent and increase after-tax income for all Americans of all income levels.

Making the small business deduction alone permanent is estimated to create 1.2 million jobs annually over the first 10 years, increasing to 2.4 million jobs in the long run.

The President's Council of Economic Advisers just released an analysis that says extending the Trump tax cuts, combined with other pro-growth economic policies that we are pursuing now, would boost the level of short-run GDP growth by 3.3 to 3.8 percent and long-run real GDP growth by 2.6 to 3.6 percent.

Now what does that mean?

It means we are going to see that it will raise annual real wages by \$2,100 to \$3,300 per worker, increase real annual take-home pay for median-income households with two children by roughly \$4,000 to \$5,000, save over 4 million full-time equivalent jobs from being destroyed, and facilitate \$100 billion of investment in distressed communities.

The analysis also projects that extending these tax cuts, "together with full suite of the Trump Administration policies—such as deregulation, which

the CEA previously estimated would add 0.1 to 0.2 percentage points to real GDP growth over a decade—is expected to result in 3.0 percent annual real GDP growth rates over the next 10 years."

Now, what does that mean? According to CEA, that 3.0 percent growth in our GDP will result in \$4.1 trillion of additional revenue to the Treasury to help deal with our national debt—\$4.1 trillion.

To unleash that growth, the best way to make these tax cuts permanent is by using a current policy baseline. This is the scoring method that more accurately reflects reality.

The average American easily understands that there is a difference between a tax increase and a spending cut. However, there is an inherent bias in Congress's scoring process, where tax policy is treated differently than spending policy.

If tax rates are scheduled to increase, like they are right now if we don't act, preventing that tax hike is counted as a "cost" in uncollected future revenue. But many spending programs are assumed to be extended beyond their expiration. So the spending just continues and continues unabated, which the budget rules say don't have any "cost."

That is what we are trying to fix today in this bill. In fact, there is \$2.5 trillion in spending that is automatically extended by our budget rules over the next 10 years, under a current policy baseline, that they currently use.

Even the Obama White House has used a current policy baseline for tax policy. They recognized that there is a difference between increasing taxes and cutting spending. In 2013, the Obama White House stated that a "current policy baseline is the appropriate reference point since it measures changes relative to the status quo, rather than the mix of expiring provisions and policy changes that would likely never be implemented."

Interpreted, what they said was exactly what I have been saying. President Obama and his team said: You can't say that just keeping the tax rates where they are and not raising them is the same as spending more money.

We need to level the playing field and sever the connection that creates a tax-and-spend budgeting process in Congress, and that is another thing we are going to do today.

Critics who have been strangely silent over the years as trillions of dollars in spending has been automatically extended under a current policy baseline now take offense to correcting that bias toward forcing Federal spending.

As applied to only the tax policy, those critics assert that we will be increasing the deficit by using a current policy baseline or we are using this baseline to hide the cost.

Let me be very clear: We are not hiding the score that JCT and CBO would

assign to the bill under a current law baseline. In fact, I like to see that score. It shows the amount of tax increase that my colleagues on the other side are trying to push onto the American people.

But let's be fully transparent: Both an estimate based on the current policy and one based on the current law will be released when we consider this bill on the Senate floor, and then Americans can see what kind of savings have been given to them by not raising their taxes.

Under our current existing tax regime, the revenue to the GDP ratio this year will be about 17.1 percent, meaning we will raise taxes for the Federal Treasury under our current tax policy of about 17.1 percent of GDP on a current policy baseline. It will also be about the same next year if we don't let the taxes go up, meaning that the revenue will not appreciably change.

Yet my colleagues on the other side say it is going to spike a hole in the deficit because—why? Because they won't get their hands on that \$4 trillion of new tax revenue out of the American people. This would not increase debt relative to GDP; it would simply prevent a tax increase.

And we need to be honest about what those tax increases would and would not do. Those who say we should let taxes go back up say: Wow. Then we can use it to pay down the national debt some more. Every tax increase that Congress has adopted for as long as I can remember was not used to pay down the national debt. It was used by Congress to spend more money.

We have to take that pressure off of spending as well. Congress does not have a revenue problem; it has a spending problem. Senate Republicans are united in our desire to take concrete steps to address our deficit and get our fiscal house in order.

Because the bill we are debating today is within the confines of reconciliation, the scores and numbers that will be discussing don't reflect that full fiscal picture. In order to have an honest discussion of what needs to be done, there is an acknowledgement that needs to be made that other factors are also at play that can generate economic growth and reductions in spending.

What am I talking about? Economic growth. As I indicated in one of the charts we just had up, the estimates from the CEA are, if we make the tax cuts policy permanent, the confidence it will give our economy and the boost that it will give our economy in tax incentive policy will grow the economy by as much as \$4 trillion of new revenue to the Federal Treasury.

The President is also directing impacts in the government through his efforts and the Department of Government Efficiency to aggressively cut waste, fraud, and abuse from our government programs. Spending on Federal Government programs has ballooned in recent years. We have a

responsibility to evaluate these spending increases and ensure that these programs work effectively and efficiently for everyone.

The President has also undertaken and will likely pursue more deregulation. Deregulation has had as big an impact on revenues as economic growth as tax policy has in the past, and we should recognize that.

The bottom line is that in addition to the action that Congress can take, there are activities that the President is currently engaged in that will impact our fiscal policy by either reducing spending or increasing revenue, and we should also take those into consideration.

Congress must begin the process of restoring fiscal sanity by achieving deficit reduction and spending reforms as the best way to achieve that goal. In contrast, imposing the largest tax increase in our country's history would be counterproductive by easing the gliding path and making it easier for more spending.

We will have a very robust debate in the weeks ahead about the best way to deliver on President Trump's agenda, and I look forward to those discussions. The budget resolution unlocks the process for us to strengthen our national security, secure our borders, permanently extend the Trump tax cuts, and provide additional middle-class tax relief.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. President, the Trump administration is corrupt. It is easily the single most corrupt and lawless administration in American history. And it would be exceedingly difficult to debate that simple proposition because notwithstanding all of the whataboutism we occasionally hear, there is really no denying it.

The self-dealing by unelected billionaires like Elon Musk; the Presidential meme coins; the quid pro quos; the dismissal of corruption cases in exchange for help on the President's policy agenda; the dismissal of national security personnel, not on the basis of national security but on the word of rightwing cranks; the deportation of someone to a maximum security prison in another country on the basis of a clerical error; the mass illegal firings; the reckless use of commercial apps for classified information; the scorning of court orders; the phony math to hide the deficit-exploding impact of tax cuts for billionaires; the attacks on Social Security, calling it a Ponzi scheme, when people making those attacks are the conmen who want to raid the hard-earned retirement funds belonging to our Nation's seniors and veterans.

The swamp is full. It is overflowing. And Donald Trump is standing right in the middle of it up to his ears in the filth.

And it is plainly obvious to anyone who is watching that the President simply doesn't care about anyone but

himself—not you, not your families, certainly not the American people. He is in it for himself.

While your retirement savings are being wiped out, he is playing the back nine at his country club: Oh, caddy, caddy, would you hand me a No. 6?

Now, the Trump administration's abundant corruption doesn't happen in a vacuum. His corrupt self-dealing doesn't just boost his own bottom line and that of his wealthy donors. It hurts everyday Americans; it hurts Californians; it hurts all of us.

So let me give you some examples. Days before Donald Trump was sworn in, he took one of the most obviously corrupt actions of his political career, and that is saying quite a lot. The President took to Twitter to announce that he was launching his own cryptocurrency—a meme coin. He would maintain a vast ownership of the stock in it, but anyone in the world could buy in, from a Chinese national under indictment in the United States to any Sultan in the Middle East looking to buy influence. And, predictably, the meme coin just skyrocketed. On paper, it appears to have made billions on it.

It is possible he made more in 1 day from this joke cryptocurrency than he had made in his entire life up to that point. You might recall a press conference he had when a reporter asked him at the beginning of his Presidency: Are you going to continue to traffic in this coin, in this currency that is making a lot of money?

The President's question is: Well, how much is it making me?

And when the reporter said: "It is making you a lot," the President was delighted. He turned to—presumably off camera, Elon Musk, a billionaire—and said: That may not be much to these guys. And there was great laughter to be had.

The corruption is out in the open. And the thing about this new "currency" is that it is a message to anyone who wants to curry favor with the President, whether it is foreign governments, oligarchs, or wealthy Wall Street billionaires. It gives them a chance to literally buy Donald Trump's favor—directly, corruptly, and unmistakably.

Who does that ultimately hurt? Short answer is everyone else. So maybe a billionaire is buying a bigger tax break, but that means hard-working Americans are going to have to pay for it. Or maybe it is someone under indictment for fraud who can now get their case dismissed by Donald Trump's DOJ for the right price in the meme coin. That hurts every American because it just invites all kinds of further corruption. The President's kids are in the crypto business, and there are even more opportunities for graft.

In other parts of the world where there are long traditions of such corruption, they would be called princelings. There is a name for them. They are called princelings. Congratulations, America, we now have our own

princelings, and they are called Eric and Don, Jr. Now, as it turns out, it is not just by buying Donald Trump's meme coin or the crypto investments that may help the Justice Department to drop your case or get the Justice Department to go after your enemies. Since Donald Trump's first day in office, he has methodically and meticulously purged the Department of Justice of anyone who is not blindly loyal to him—not loyal to the rule of law, mind you, not loyal to their oath, but loyal to the person of Donald Trump. That is and will be the only standard in this Department.

It is not a coincidence that the top three lawyers running the Justice Department, including Attorney General Pam Bondi, are all—former Trump criminal defense lawyers. Their client was and always will be the multiply indicted and convicted felon who occupies the Oval Office.

So how does this hurt everyday Americans? Well, it does so in a few ways. First, it means that the Department's resources will be focused on all the wrong things. The DOJ should be focused on keeping Americans safe. It should be focused on cracking down on violent criminals and addressing the fentanyl crisis. It should be hunting down fraudsters who scam Americans. But instead, they are focused on retribution, on going after Trump's enemies, on helping those who are loyal to him, and wasting countless hours and resources in the process.

But also, Trump is using the DOJ now to protect his friends and allies. You don't have to look any further than the case in New York. The mayor of New York, Eric Adams, indicted on serious corruption charges; a mayor who then had seen the writing on the wall, pursues a kind of quid pro quo with the President. He goes down to Mar-a-Lago, and the quid pro quo eventually becomes as plain as day. It is out in the open.

The President's own border czar does a joint interview sitting next to the mayor on "FOX and Friends" on their couch to lay out the stark quid pro quo in exquisite detail. All that was left unsaid by Trump's border czar were the words "or else." The mayor would get his case dismissed and, in exchange, he would pursue the President's policy agenda when it comes to immigration.

If the mayor was guilty of serious corruption of bribery, of providing political favors to foreign nations in exchange for lavish gifts—and even the Trump DOJ doesn't deny the evidence against him—that that doesn't matter. It just doesn't matter, not if he is a political ally of the President.

Who does that hurt? Well, it hurts New Yorkers. It invites more corruption in the city of New York.

But this trend, of course, hurts everyone. A big corporation screwing over consumers can seemingly prevent investigation or prosecution now by kissing the ring. Just takes a trip to Mar-a-Lago. A corrupt politician can

continue to leverage public resources for their own gain, knowing they may never be held accountable for their actions.

You can even storm this building—and they did. You can storm right into this Chamber—and they did. You can trample American democracy, you can beat police officers in the name of this President, and not only will your prosecution be dropped, but you will be pardoned and celebrated. And beyond that, the public servants who prosecuted you will be removed, replaced, or demoted. They will be purged. By using the Justice Department as a shield to protect his friends and a sword to go after his enemies, it is the American people who will lose.

Now, just down the street from the DOJ at the Food and Drug Administration, there is something less talked about but also quite sinister going on. Elon Musk, among his many companies, owns one called Neuralink. This is a company that is aiming, essentially, to implant computers into people's brains.

While I am not personally one to want an Elon-sponsored device shoved into my cortex, I do believe in responsible innovation, and I even celebrate it. Unfortunately, for responsible innovation, within weeks of entering office, Elon and DOGE fired the entire team at the FDA's Office of Neurological and Physical Medicine Devices. You guessed it. The office in charge of reviewing his product—gone. That sent a pretty clear message through the Agency: Get on board with Elon or you are out.

It feels like par for the course for Elon, but it is really unprecedented in this country. Especially damaging is the fact that this also occurs at a time when they are massively laying off people at the FDA—huge cuts in the folks that make sure our medicine and food are safe.

Not only does that mean lifesaving medicine doesn't get reviewed and deployed faster to the American people, it means that dangerous stuff gets into circulation much longer before it can be stopped—or maybe if it just gets to slip through with a wink and a nod and a big enough contribution to the Trump meme coin.

If you thought Elon stopped at the FDA, well, I have some more news for you. DOGE has pulled the exact same move at other Agencies providing oversight over him or with which he has contracts: the FAA, where Elon Musk has desires for contracts for his Starlink satellite system; the Consumer Finance Protection Bureau, where Elon's companies face a significant threat of oversight—or at least they did before he made that Agency largely go away; or NASA, where Elon's SpaceX has billions in contracts; the Pentagon, more contracts for Elon; and now, FDA.

You can't find more corrupt self-dealing than that, not in our history. You may be able to find it in other coun-

tries, but until this administration, you couldn't find it here.

Now, in the category of good news, I guess if you are really wealthy, there is some good news for you at the IRS. And that is Donald Trump and his buddy Elon are gutting the IRS, tearing apart the Agency that ensures that rich folks pay their fair share in taxes so they can't and don't scam the system. Well, by firing thousands of IRS employees, thousands of tax collections of rich folks will never occur, and billions of dollars that could be used to help our communities will never materialize. They are gutting it so they can say it doesn't work, and then they can gut it even further, all to award their billionaire friends.

But it is worse than that. Much like the DOJ, it seems clear the Trump team has every intent of weaponizing the IRS to go after their enemies. They can order audits against people who speak out, protect those from audits who toe the line.

Those attacks won't be just on Big Business but also prominent political enemies. They could come for anyone—anyone—who dares to speak out. A small business that sells a product they don't like, a nonprofit that supports a cause they don't like, they get an audit. But the President's wealthy buddies, no, they do really well.

But this gutting of the IRS, this tax giveaway to people by gutting the IRS, this isn't the biggest con. This isn't the biggest con, not by a long shot because the biggest con—the biggest con—involves trillions of dollars. And that, of course, is the tax cut. How they pay for it and how they don't.

Donald Trump, who solicited untold sums from billionaires in the form of campaign contributions and seems to enrich himself, delivers in a way that those donors could hardly imagine. Massive tax cuts for the wealthiest among us paid for by cutting Medicaid and other vital services and by borrowing a ton of money from your kids and grandkids, sinking the Nation further into debt—tax cuts for billionaires and more.

Well, if you are one of them, that is great news. That means time to buy another yacht or maybe another vacation home; more money to invest in the stock market, and they may need to given what the Trump tariffs are doing in the market right now.

But that is what their contributions bought them—a few billion here and a few billion there. Pretty soon, we are talking about serious money for these wealthy donors in large corporations. But the thing is these tax cuts aren't free. They are using this phony math they call the current policy baseline. It is a phony math that says if you spent \$3,000 on a vacation last year, you can spend another \$3,000 this year, and it won't cost anything because it is the current baseline in your family.

But the reality is, these tax cuts aren't free. Somebody is going to pay for them. Well, it won't be the really

wealthy who will pay for them. Everyone else is going to pay for them. Working Americans are going to see their costs skyrocket. They are going to see their retirement accounts plummet and their Social Security and Medicaid ripped apart to give more money to billionaires.

Here is the thing: They don't even pretend anymore. They are happy to admit that their multitrillion-dollar check that they are about to write to billionaires will be paid for by everyone else, not just in dollars but in the programs that you rely on, the programs you have paid into your whole life: Medicaid is on the chopping block. Social Security offices are closing. Phone lines are unanswered. They want it to slowly die on the vine. Food assistance is going by way of the dodo bird, and the list goes on and on and on. Life will get harder and harder; that is, of course, unless you are a multibillionaire who wrote a big check to Donald Trump, which, if he doesn't bring about a global recession, just might turn out to be a pretty damned good investment.

During his campaign, Donald Trump promised his wealthy donors that he would make them even richer by cutting their taxes. He invited many of them to his inauguration. Some even got to stand on the stage with him as he was sworn in. This is whom Donald Trump is for. He is for them. He is for the really, really rich. That is whom he represents. We are for you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. MOODY). The Senator from Vermont.

MR. SANDERS. Madam President, let me say a few words about where we are as a nation, what this budget resolution does, and why I am strongly opposed to it.

As you may know, we have more income and wealth inequality in our country today than we have ever had in the history of America. Three people on top own more wealth than the bottom half of American society. The top 1 percent owns more wealth than the bottom 90 percent. CEOs now make about 300 times more than their workers. In other words, the very rich are becoming much richer, and working families are struggling.

So what does this budget resolution do to address this very serious crisis? Does it help working people? Does it help low-income people?

No, not really. It actually makes income and wealth inequality much worse by providing massive tax breaks to the billionaires and the richest people in this country, driving up the national debt and making those on top very, very happy.

In America today—the richest country in the history of the world—we have 60 percent of our people living paycheck to paycheck, struggling every week to put food on the table, to pay the rent, to deal with childcare, to take care of healthcare. Real wages—real inflation, accounted-for wages—for

the average American worker have been stagnant for the last 50 years. This is why the huge increase in worker productivity. Today, all across this country, you have workers working for 11, 12, 13 bucks an hour—working for starvation wages. Some of them are actually sleeping in their cars.

Now, how does this budget resolution address the crises facing working families?

Well, at a time when many workers are struggling to find affordable housing, what this budget will do is cut back on housing programs, making it harder for working people to get decent housing. It will cut funding for low-income and affordable housing. So it makes life more difficult for millions of working families.

This is a time when 22 percent of our seniors are trying to survive on less than \$15,000 a year. That is really quite shocking. It is something we don't talk about. It is something that we don't deal with here in Congress. Can you imagine a senior citizen trying to survive on \$15,000 a year when seniors need additional healthcare, when seniors need to keep their homes warmer—there are all kinds of issues—trying to get by on \$15,000 a year? Twenty-two percent of seniors are in that position. Half of seniors are trying to get by on \$30,000 a year or less.

So how does this legislation—this budget—help seniors? What does it do for seniors?

Well, it makes a bad situation much worse. This legislation—this budget—will make it much harder for seniors to receive the care they desperately need in nursing homes. In Vermont—and, I expect, in most States in this country—we have a major nursing home crisis. Nursing homes are shutting down. It is harder and harder for people to get into nursing homes. Well, when you cut Medicaid by \$880 billion, you are going to make it much, much harder for seniors to access nursing homes because two out of three seniors are dependent upon Medicaid to get into nursing homes.

This legislation would also cut back on nutrition programs for seniors at a time when many seniors are having a hard time affording the food that they need. Maybe worst of all, at a moment when Mr. Musk and his billionaire friends are laying off thousands of workers at the Social Security Administration and closing down Social Security offices all over the country, making it harder for people with disabilities and older people to get the benefits that they have paid into for their whole lives, this bill does nothing to address that crisis.

We, right now, embarrassingly, have the highest rate of childhood poverty of almost any major country on Earth. It is a little bit embarrassing for the richest country on the face of the Earth. We have more income and wealth inequality than any other country. We are seeing significant growth in the number of billionaires we have,

but in terms of our kids, we have the highest rate of childhood poverty of almost any major Nation.

Now, how would this budget impact our children?

Well, it would make a bad situation even worse by throwing millions of kids off the healthcare that they have. That is what happens when you cut Medicaid by hundreds and hundreds of billions of dollars. This budget would cut nutrition programs that one out of every five children depends upon. Amazingly, sadly, in America, a lot of kids go to school hungry, and this legislation would cut nutrition programs. Furthermore, for working families, this legislation would do nothing to address the outrageously high cost of childcare in America. By the way, it would make devastating cuts to education, I think, significantly in working-class communities.

It is no secret to anybody that our current healthcare system is far and away the most expensive in the world. We spend about twice as much per capita on healthcare as almost any other nation. Most Americans understand and deal with the reality every day that our healthcare system is dysfunctional. It takes forever to get a deal with the insurance companies and get your claims processed. It is extremely cruel that a significant number of people who are struggling with cancer end up going bankrupt because they cannot afford the outrageous costs of the hospital care that they have received.

So what does this budget do to address our broken and dysfunctional healthcare system?

Well, it is hard to believe, but it makes a terrible situation even worse. By cutting Medicaid by up to \$880 billion, this legislation could force as many as 36 million Americans off the healthcare that they currently have. Now, right now, we have got 85 million Americans who are uninsured or underinsured. That number would soar. So you have low-income, working people who don't have a lot of money. What happens when they get sick? We lose 60,000 people a year right now, despite Medicaid, who don't go through a doctor when they should because they can't afford to. This budget would make that situation much, much worse.

At a time when we have a massive crisis in primary healthcare—not enough doctors, not enough nurses, not enough mental health counselors, not enough primary care facilities where people can get into a doctor when they need to—by cutting Medicaid, this legislation would make access to community health centers, which is something I have worked on for a very long time—it would make it harder for people to access community health centers because community health centers are highly dependent on Medicaid for their funding.

Virtually every scientist who has studied the issue has made it clear that climate change is an existential threat

to our planet. I understand that the current President of the United States thinks that it is a hoax originating in China, but that is not what 99.5 percent of the scientists who have studied the issue believe. As we look around and see year after year it is becoming warmer—and over the last 10 years, the warmest on record—and we see the terrible flooding and drought and extreme weather disturbances taking place in our country and all over the world, the American people understand that climate change is all too real, and it is having devastating impacts on our lives.

So what does this legislation do to address the extraordinary crisis that we face in terms of climate change?

Well, it is hard to believe, but it makes a bad situation even worse by opening up vast swaths of public land to big oil companies so they can “drill, baby, drill,” and it opens up public lands to more and more oil companies. Brilliant. We face an existential threat, and this legislation makes that threat even worse.

Well, it seems to me that, instead of passing this absurd budget proposal, we should move in exactly the opposite direction that this proposal takes us. Instead of making life more difficult for the working class of our country, instead of rewarding the billionaire campaign contributors who fund many, many campaigns around here, maybe, just maybe, we should represent the needs of our constituents—the working families of this country.

One of the ways that we could do it is by raising the minimum wage to a living wage. I know that is, around here, a very radical idea. Imagine that—that we raise the minimum wage—which is, today, at the Federal level, \$7.25 an hour. So we are going to be offering an amendment to raise the minimum wage to a living wage of \$17 an hour.

Maybe, instead of making it harder for working families to find affordable housing, maybe, just maybe, we should build millions of units of low-income, affordable housing. Maybe, just maybe, instead of making it harder for families to access childcare, we should make it easier and more affordable. Instead of cutting Medicaid by \$880 billion—maybe instead of doing that—we should do what virtually every other major nation on Earth does, and that is understand that healthcare is a human right—that every man, woman, and child is entitled to healthcare as a human being. We can do that by passing a Medicare for All, single-payer program. The function of a healthcare system should not be to make the insurance companies and the drug companies much wealthier. It should be to provide quality healthcare in a cost-effective way to all of our people.

So there you go. What we have is a budget proposal in front of us which makes bad situations much worse and does virtually nothing to protect the needs of working families, but what it does do, of course, is reward wealthy

campaign contributors by providing over \$1 trillion in tax breaks to the top 1 percent.

You know, I am going to vote against this proposal. That is for sure. I wish my Republican friends the best of luck when they go home—if they dare to hold town meetings—and explain to their constituents why they think, at a time of massive income and wealth inequality, it is a great idea to give tax breaks to billionaires and cut Medicaid and education and other programs that working families desperately need. I do wish them the very best of luck as they go forward in that way.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. CASSIDY. Madam President, our country has had some pretty severe economic challenges as of late. I am not talking about the recent stock market losses; although those are quite important for someone with a 401(k). I am talking about how real Americans, average Americans, feel as if the American dream of homeownership, of buying a new car or truck, of buying their child a car, or affording a student loan is just slipping out of their grasp. We saw this fear during the Biden administration when inflation was so high that the Federal Reserve increased interest rates. As these interest rates rose, so did consumer interest rates on all sorts of things, directly impacting the ability of a family to realize the American dream.

This speech is about how we preserve that ability of Americans to achieve that dream and how what we are doing today—tonight, in this Congress—directly impacts that.

Now, it may seem pretty distant to someone who is watching from home, but it does directly impact that. How much money the Federal Government borrows, how much this budget resolution leads to increased indebtedness sounds abstract, but it impacts your ability to buy that home, to buy that car, to attend that school.

Some of the process discussions that normally wouldn't matter to you if you are outside of Congress are actually extremely important to this discussion as to how much we are going to borrow and how much we are going to enable Americans in Louisiana—the State I am privileged to represent—and elsewhere achieve their dream.

Let me explain.

As our country borrows more money—so we pass something, and our debt explodes, and as our country has to borrow money to pay for that debt, it begins to compete with businesses, with individuals, with families as they also go out and try and borrow money. Now, the Federal Government is always going to get the first amount, and it is going to be the others who have to pay more to compete. Paying more means you pay more for your mortgage; you pay more for your car note; you pay more for your student loan interest rate.

The only way to keep this from happening is for the Federal Government to live within its means. I think the inflation over the last 4 years is one of the principal reasons the American people tossed Joe Biden out and put Donald Trump back into the White House. The Biden administration did not live within its means. It borrowed a lot of money and drove up interest rates. The American people couldn't afford that which they expected to be able to buy. They voted for change.

Now, President Trump understands this. When he spoke to Congress last month, he spoke of the renewal of the American dream. In that speech about renewing the American dream, he spoke about having a balanced budget. He understands; he desires; he sees the connection between living within our means and making it good for fellow Americans.

By the way, I agree with him. I agree that balancing the Federal budget is key to preserving that dream.

So why is this important now? Our country, right now—not tomorrow, right now—is \$36 trillion in debt—36 trillion with a “t.” And if we do nothing, if all we do is status quo, continue on the wrong path, it is estimated we will add \$21 trillion to that indebtedness over the next 10 years.

What about today? We are going to vote on the budget resolution tonight. If we vote on that budget resolution and it leads to a reconciliation bill which is not paid for, we will add another \$5 to \$11 trillion on top of that \$36 trillion, plus \$21 trillion. We could end up with \$65 to almost \$70 trillion of indebtedness 10 years from now if we don't do that right.

I am a doctor. I am going to borrow a term from medicine. I am going to adapt it, if you will. That would be congressional malpractice. We do not want to be guilty of congressional malpractice.

At some point, the problem begins to build upon itself. Currently, a fifth of tax revenue is used to pay interest on the debt. Twenty percent of all the money the Federal Government gets is right now being used to pay interest on the debt. That is more than we spend on national defense.

I am going to repeat that one. Right now, we are paying more—paying back people who lent us money—than we are paying to protect our country and to pay the troops who are doing so.

There is a historian, Niall Ferguson, who says that, when a country is spending more on debt service than on defending itself, that is the mark of a country in decline.

The current Treasury Secretary, Scott Bessent, made a similar point in a FOX News op-ed. He wrote that “America's next security crisis is lurking in our pocketbooks”; that “our escalating debt crisis hurts national security in three key ways: it diminishes our financial ‘surge capacity,’ it robs

our private sector of capital for productive investment, and it imperils America's preeminent role in international financial markets.'"

Scott Bessent is now Secretary Bessent, and he is right. The debt is a threat to our national security and to the economic security of the American family.

By the way, families know this. You might be in Caddo Parish, LA; you might be in Covington, LA. But they have learned to live within their means, and we should learn something from those Louisiana families.

Let's discuss the budget resolution before us. To be sure, this resolution only sets up a discussion of a reconciliation bill, and the reconciliation bill is where we actually establish how much is spent and where it should be spent. Nevertheless, this budget resolution points in a direction and establishes certain parameters.

At this point, I am going to discuss a little bit about process. There has been a lot of debate in Washington about using current policy versus current law as baseline in this budget resolution. Current policy has never been used as baseline involving this much money and in a reconciliation bill.

I am going to show a chart here. In this chart—these are the years over here. This is 2025 going all the way out to 2055. And this is how much our debt is as a percent of our tax revenue. You can see that, if this is what the Congressional Budget Office says is our current trajectory, that, in 2055, we will have a debt-to-GDP ratio of about 156 percent; that, under what we are looking at, could increase that to 211 to 230 percent.

So if this is the trajectory we are on, which is not great, but if all we do is what we are doing today, without any effort to offset it, we would increase this 210 to 230 percent.

Now, somewhere around 174 percent, the economists say we are in trouble. To borrow a gastroenterological term—I am a gastroenterologist—we are in deep doo-doo. And then that is what we have to worry about.

I have discussed this extensively with my Senate colleagues. I am pleased to say there is a commitment from President Trump and the White House to work with Senators to go through the budget line by line to see where there could be savings.

The White House and Congress have committed to working together to decrease the regulatory hassle that keeps a business from starting a new venture, to create more jobs, to hire more people, to give them better salaries. Let's cut that redtape and allow those businesses and those workers to achieve their potential. In doing so, it increases revenue. When people are making more money, they pay more taxes.

Clearly, the President is working hard now to make the government work more efficiently—again, which saves us money. I have been assured that there is a commitment in other

ways to pay for the eventual reconciliation bill.

Now, I am not saying that I think that it is better that we use current policy as baseline. It has never been done before in a study like this. I think it establishes a dangerous precedent. It might be within the rules to do so, but it doesn't mean it is wise to do so.

As a conservative, I know sometimes that even if you can open Pandora's box, it is better not to. Put differently, just because you can, doesn't mean you should. But it appears we are going to do that.

Also, using current policy as baseline should not suggest to us that the current Tax Code is perfect. I would say far from it.

According to publicly available information, Jeff Bezos—the second richest man in the world—got a child tax credit several years ago. Tax credits for children are supposed to go to middle income and lower income families, not to the second richest man in the world. I hope, as we go through this, we can modify that. Let the dollars go where they are needed, not to someone who is obviously wealthier than any of us put together.

All that said, this vote is not taking place in a vacuum. It is taking place when the stock market has had two successive days of greater than a 1,500-point decline. This kind of crash in the stock market creates uncertainty, which makes companies less likely to invest, which makes it less likely that new jobs will be created. And creating new, good-paying jobs is essential to that individual, that family enjoying the American dream.

Upon consideration and given the commitment from leadership, I would say that not passing this budget resolution could increase the uncertainty in the economy, and that is something I do not wish to do. And given the commitment from leadership to pay for this bill by a variety of mechanisms, whether it is from within the reconciliation vehicle or outside of that process, and, once more, the need to reestablish confidence among those creating jobs, I will vote for this budget resolution.

As we move on from this budget resolution to the reconciliation bill, I will look to make sure that we are truly paying for it and addressing the national debt. To that end, let me kind of mention something as an aside—no, not as an aside, as directly impacting this conversation.

I encourage the use of America's abundance as a way to increase the possibility of Americans achieving the American dream and as a way to also help pay for the government we now have.

One example, I applaud President Trump for advocating greater exploration of oil and gas on Federal lands. This creates great paying jobs, it is a tax base for communities, and it generates significant revenue for the Federal Government, not by raising taxes, and it doesn't cut benefits, but by ex-

ploiting, if you will, in a positive way, the resources we have to produce that which is essential to live in a modern life.

I have also proposed in other settings other solutions that can address our Nation's indebtedness without raising taxes or cutting benefits. Again, I have spoken to these in the past. I will speak to them in the future.

I want America to be great for all Americans; that we can all live to the limits of our God-given gifts. Creating opportunity is part of this. My hope, my expectation, is that through this process we are currently in we will create more opportunity for every American to express his or her God-given gifts and to achieve the American dream.

With that, I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

MR. MARKEY. Madam President, Social Security is under attack. Donald Trump, Elon Musk, and DOGE are revving up their chain saw and coming after America's earned Social Security benefits. They are cutting staff, slashing services, closing offices, and lying about the program.

Ten days from now, the DOGE chain saw is threatening to cut phone services at the Social Security Administration—cutting the phone services at the Social Security Administration—jeopardizing benefits that seniors earned through a lifetime of work.

In 2023, do you know how many people died waiting for their Social Security benefits? It was 30,000—30,000 Americans. What do we think now about doing away with 1-800 phone service, and what will that do to wait times that are already too long?

Yesterday, I just decided to get on and to dial 1-800 to just see how long it would take for a U.S. Senator to be able to connect with the Social Security Administration. It was a half hour, it was an hour, and then they just said there is at least a 2-hour wait. Well, for Grandma and Grandpa, we just don't want them waiting a couple of hours or more in order to get the information they need about—for most of them or a lot of them—the only check in their life, the only thing that gives them the capacity to be able to pay for the groceries, the rent, or even for phone service.

But at the Social Security Administration, over the last 8 weeks, it is now: 1-800, dial the number, and then just wait.

So the administration is then forcing people to, instead of being able to use the phone, they are saying: Get online, Grandma.

And then Grandma is saying: Oh, do you know what? I forgot to take that computer course 30 years ago, and I am 88 now.

But they are saying: You have got to learn to go online, Grandma, for those Social Security benefits because we are cutting off the phone service—or drive. Just get out there in the car.

Some of the Social Security offices are a couple of hundred miles away from people.

But that is the plan. We are 10 days away from that being put into place. And that is even if the field offices are still open for Social Security, because they are planning on cutting the field offices, as well, just for people to be able to access their earned benefits.

Why is this happening? Well, because of the lie that Social Security is rife with fraud. That is a lie—a lie just like claims of fraud made by President Trump when he said someone was listed in the Social Security system at age 360.

Let me say that again. He claims someone was 360 years old—older not just than the entire Social Security Program, but older than the United States of America because that person would have had to have been born in 1659. Yet Trump and Musk are lying in order to undermine, in order to discredit the entire Social Security infrastructure in our country.

A Federal judge called DOGE's fraud-finding mission at the Social Security Administration "a fishing expedition . . . based on little more than suspicion," with no evidence at all that had been presented by the Trump administration that there was massive fraud inside the Social Security Administration.

And we heard at the State of the Union Address, as he is up there talking about people 200 years, 300 years old—and it turns out that none of it was true. Trump was using the State of the Union Address just to lie to the American people about Social Security.

Now, why would he do that? Why would he lie to seniors in our country? Why would he lie to people with disabilities? Because, very simply, the Republican Party, from 1935 on, opposed the Social Security system from being put into place in the first place. They harbor an ancient animosity toward Social Security. They actually didn't support putting Medicare on the books. They harbor an ancient animosity toward all of these programs, and now they feel that their time has come to undermine and to discredit them.

Instead of giving Americans a level playing field, the administration is hurling curveballs at Grandma, curveballs at Grandpa. And we are already seeing the effects on Social Security benefits.

Recently, a young woman contacted my office because her disability case, which had already been delayed by previous Social Security cuts, is now halted—halted, a woman with disabilities. This woman was homeless and had a young child to care for while she struggled to afford a place to live without benefits.

My office is contacted on a daily basis by people just like that, by senior citizens who are terrified that they will lose the earned benefits they rely on to eat and to keep a roof over their heads.

So instead of helping millions of Americans navigate life's transitions, this administration is implementing a roadmap to ruin the Social Security Administration.

What is that roadmap? It is very simple. First, lie about fraud in the program, with no evidence, to undermine the public confidence in the Social Security system. Second, use those lies as an excuse to hallow out Social Security and to cut benefits.

Third, raise the retirement age and privatize Social Security, handing your benefits over to Wall Street, making the billionaires richer and our seniors poorer.

Can you imagine if the Republican playbook had been put in place during the George W. Bush administration, which was to put all of this money out into the market? There would be seniors all across our Nation having a Pepto Bismol moment in the marketplace, wondering what was happening to their life savings.

So that was the program that they tried to put in place during George W. Bush's administration. It still is the plan, but we should not, in fact, fall for that because we can't trust the markets to guarantee the returns which seniors are going to need in order to have a predictable and safe retirement.

Social Security isn't a budget line; it is a lifeline. And for too many of the people who are advocating for privatization, "GOP" really stands for "get old people." That is the plan. If you kick them in the heart, you are going to break your toe.

It is a lifeline. One in five people in Massachusetts relies upon Social Security benefits to put food on their table, to buy groceries, and to pay their bills.

Here is an astounding number: 22 million Americans are dependent upon Social Security to the extent to which they would be thrown into poverty if they just missed 1 month's check, and that includes about 16 million seniors, 268,000 of whom live in my home State of Massachusetts.

If you need a reminder why our seniors should never rely on Wall Street for a secure retirement, take a look at the stock market this week. Trump called Wednesday "Liberation Day," but it should really be called "Obliteration Day." We are seeing the stock market absolutely obliterated over the past 2 days, thanks to Donald Trump. Today, the Dow dropped 2,200 points. It was the worst day for the market since 2020. And now the market has lost more than 10 percent of its total value over the past 2 days. Grandma and Grandpa should not be trusting the casino of Wall Street for their retirement benefits. That is why we set up the Social Security system in 1935.

Donald Trump has instituted a reckless trade war, and seniors are seeing their 401(k)s and retirements evaporate, on top of his efforts to slash their healthcare and Social Security benefits. The only thing the Trump administration and Senate Republicans are

offering our seniors is social insecurity.

Madam President, Social Security isn't rife with fraud. It is not a Ponzi scheme, as Elon Musk called it. It isn't something that can just be turned off. Social Security is a promise we made to current and future generations, who would be absolutely broke if we did not fulfill our promises to them.

Republicans and DOGE are taking a sledgehammer to the benefits that are a lifeline, a true lifeline, for people with disabilities and that seniors have worked hard their whole lives in order to earn. Social Security is not an entitlement; it is an earned benefit. And Republicans haven't been able to destroy Social Security yet. There is a reason why it is called the third rail of American politics. And we are not going to allow Musk and Trump or their billionaire buddies to succeed in destroying Social Security with their lies and their cuts and their cruelty. We will not neglect the promise we made, and we will preserve security and dignified retirement for everyone.

The loudest voices in this fight are those of countless Americans who simply want the government to honor its promise to retirees, to seniors, and to people with disabilities.

This is not an administration that works for the American people. Trump is not going to take from the American people all at once. He is going to do it inch by inch at a time, and Trump and his billionaire enablers will, inch by inch, steal from the workers to give tax breaks to the rich, steal from seniors to give tax breaks to the rich, steal from children to give tax breaks to the rich, steal from those who are sick to give tax breaks for the rich—to loot all the programs that have been put on the books in order to ensure that our society is so much better than it was in 1935.

And I will tell you this: In 1900, the average age of death—life expectancy—was 48 years of age. We had gone from the Garden of Eden to 1900. Life expectancy was 48 years of age. In 1900, 20 percent of all children died before the age of 5.

Then the progressive movement put programs on the books—Social Security, vaccines, Medicare, Medicaid, Head Start—in order to make sure that everyone was able to enjoy the full benefits of our society. That is what this ancient animosity of people like Donald Trump want to rid the society of.

So I just want to say: Democrats will always be here, always fighting against these callous cuts and heartless efforts by Trump and Musk and the Senate Republicans. And we are going to do it on vote after vote, all night and into the morning, in order to make sure the American people understand who is on their side.

With that, Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mr. SCHIFF. Madam President, this week, Donald Trump spent his time doing three things: golfing at Mar-a-Lago; announcing his latest set of tariffs that will cost families \$3,800 more a year and that are so chaotic and far-reaching that they included retaliatory tariffs on a remote island inhabited only by penguins—I kid you not; and third, advocating for cuts that would destroy the services and benefits millions rely on for their healthcare and retirement savings.

Today, with the stock market in the tank and the Nation's economy in freefall, we are expected to vote on this failed businessman's latest "brilliant" financial plan for the Nation.

So let's talk about his budget. At its very core, this bill will give massive tax cuts to billionaires and make middle-class families pay for it—tax cuts that billionaires simply don't need. And only the billionaires and Republicans in DC apparently support this.

But wait. The bill that we will pass in the dead of night accomplishes other partisan fantasies as well. It takes away healthcare and goes after the heart of Social Security. It is the same old playbook: Billionaires win, and families lose. And lest we forget, it is the exact same playbook that they ran in 2017.

So how exactly is this a win for billionaires? Two-thirds of all of the benefits in this bill go to the superwealthy and corporations—two-thirds. Over the next 30 years, this bill would spend \$25 trillion—that is trillion with a "t"—on tax cuts for the wealthy and big corporations. It would add \$37 trillion to the debt—\$37 trillion. That will double the Nation's debt—double it.

It will also, by the way, hand tens of millions of dollars to Elon Musk just in the next few years. So he makes out like a bandit. But if you are a family earning—I don't know—\$30,000 a year, struggling to get by, or maybe \$50,000 or \$75,000 a year, you will be lucky to see any tax relief from this plan. But if you are in the top 0.1 percent, you will get an extra \$300,000 a year, at the very least. For every dollar that would go to people waiting tables or teaching at a preschool, someone in the top 0.1 percent would get over \$52,000. That is \$52,000 for every dollar that someone waiting tables or teaching at a preschool will get.

To pass this bill will mean that the top 5 percent of earners will get nearly half of all the tax benefits. That is just not right, not fair, not wise, not sound, not sustainable. Life is already too hard for working families without taking more from them to make the rich even richer.

So how is this bill a loser for families? It is a loser because it would raise costs by more than \$1,000 on low-income Americans across the board, from healthcare, to groceries, to housing—families who are already hurting and are going to be hurting more, big-time, because of Donald Trump's massive tariff tax—tariffs that are raising the

costs of everything they buy, from coffee, to the eggs they have for breakfast, to the clothes they dress their kids in before school, to the gas they use to drive to work, to the materials their small businesses import, to the meals they have when they arrive at home or the sandwich they grab in between jobs.

These families are getting punched right in the gut, and Donald Trump knows it and knows that this budget would amplify their pain because, beyond exploding costs for working Americans, it will also decimate Medicaid, threatening healthcare for nearly 80 million Americans. That is two in three nursing home residents, two in five children, and one in three Americans in rural communities.

But even if someone isn't on Medicaid, they will still feel the costs; they will still feel the pain. Medicaid is the largest insurer in the Nation, so when it goes down, so will the care that so many families rely on.

Now, whether you are on Medicaid or you are not, it is your local hospital that may close. Clinics will close. Doctors will have to move or shutter their practices. Care that used to be maybe one town away will now be an entire county away and a very long drive, especially for Americans in rural areas who already cannot afford the cost of living.

This bill would be the equivalent of an atomic bomb on the care and the caregivers they rely upon—caregivers like Sabrina Bishop, a California home-care provider. She serves three clients around San Diego. Two are disabled veterans and one receives care from California's In-Home Supportive Services, all of which—all of which—are funded through California's Medicaid provider Medi-Cal. Bathing them, medication management, cleaning, laundry, food preparation—she does it all.

She lives with her client Mike. He is at the end stage of dementia and unable to communicate. He can't dial 9-1-1. If he sees any medication bottles, he will just take them. If he sees a car door open, he might just get in no matter whose car it is.

Here is what she told me: "My work means he has someone to help him"—that he can live safely and with dignity in his twilight years.

Many of the folks who rely on funding from Medicaid don't have a family who can help with around-the-clock care. Without the services that she provides, which are funded by Medicaid, those people won't get their medications on time or be bathed or fed. You are talking about a person's most basic needs.

If funding were to get cut more, Sabrina says she thinks many caregivers will just decide they can't afford to do the work they love anymore. There is already a major shortage of care providers. Thousands of people who need care are stuck on waiting lists.

Republicans, in this bill, want to make things so much worse—so much worse. Seniors and disabled individuals will be trapped in their homes without anyone to look after them or be institutionalized at greater cost, if indeed they can even find a skilled nursing facility that is still open.

When asked what she wants Members of Congress to understand about her situation, Sabrina said:

Don't be so quick to cut funding for Medicaid. You yourself may end up needing a caregiver. You may be diagnosed with a terminal disease at your next doctor's appointment. You may have a car accident and can no longer take care of yourself.

But without Sabrina and the countless others who do the lifesaving work that she does, there may be no one to call. That is what we are talking about here. Yet that is what this administration and this Congress seems intent on doing: to deny this care to give Elon Musk, Donald Trump, and all of their billionaire friends even more money. And that—that is a disgrace.

What about Social Security? On that one, DOGE is starting the dirty work already. We are already seeing the cuts and the clawbacks, Elon and his bros heading into the Social Security Administration and firing the staff that make sure you get your check on time. They have plans to close 26 Social Security offices this year alone. They are cutting phone services and pointing seniors to online options that are often unreliable and inaccessible and, if we are being honest, something that not all seniors are able to do. But this is their plan. They are taking a program focused on helping seniors and then turning around and removing all the tools seniors use to get the help they need. And they are not hiding it; they are celebrating it.

Donald Trump's "co-President" Elon Musk went on Joe Rogan to say that Social Security was "the biggest Ponzi scheme of all time."

Billionaire Secretary of Commerce Howard Lutnick said that his mother-in-law wouldn't even notice or care if her check didn't arrive, that only fraudsters would complain if their check didn't arrive on time or at all.

Donald Trump himself stood in front of Congress and delivered an address so riddled with false claims about Social Security that it was impossible to disguise his true intention, and that is to sow broad mistrust so they can come for it all, so they can slash it and leave seniors in the lurch, so they can privatize it.

That is their plan for much of the Federal Government. First, they cut the staff. Then, they cut the services. Finally, they say: It doesn't work. It doesn't work. Privatize it. Let the billionaires run it. Put it in the market.

What could possibly go wrong? Have you seen the market lately? Leaving your hard-earned benefits to the whims of the stock market that Donald Trump has so recently destroyed, plunging millions of seniors into poverty—that is their plan, all for a few more bucks in their pockets.

It is up to each of us to stop them, to protect Social Security and Medicaid.

But I want to talk for a moment not to my colleagues here in this fancy building but to you at home. Whether you are in California or anywhere else in the country, I want to talk to you.

Right now, I am standing on the floor of the U.S. Senate. In just a few hours, we will be voting on a budget resolution that sets the framework for government funding. Now, that may sound wonky or unimportant, complex, and complicated, but I want to cut through the noise and speak to you about exactly what this will do.

In the simplest terms, it will make your life more expensive, make your healthcare more inaccessible, and sow the seeds to slowly destroy or privatize Social Security. It will do these things because Donald Trump and Elon Musk do not care about you. They don't care about you. They care about Donald Trump and Elon Musk. They care about their billionaire buddies. They care about their bank accounts. They don't care about you or whether you can afford a home or you can't afford a home, whether you have the money to take vacation days that you have saved up, whether you can afford to take your kid to the hospital, whether you have to drive 2 or 3 hours to the nearest hospital. They don't care. They don't care if you are paying \$6 for eggs, \$5 for a gallon of gas, or, depending on where you live, maybe a lot, lot more.

They may say they care about those things, but this—this—their bill we are about to vote on—says otherwise. This bill in my hand is evidence that they don't care about you. They couldn't care less about you.

Now, it is easy to feel hopeless and powerless right now. That is their goal. That is how they want you to feel. They want you to look at the remnants of your retirement savings and the closing of hospitals and the decimation of small businesses and the decimation of schools and they want you to feel discouraged, to look at the wreckage and say, "Well, I guess they are right; maybe none of it does work," because they want to break it all in pieces. When they tear things down that you rely on instead of building them up, they want to turn to you and say, "See, none of this is working. Medicaid isn't working, and Social Security isn't working."

Because they broke it, because they are breaking it. And then comes the final step. That is when they sell it all for parts, where they sell off the Social Security you paid into for your whole life, when they destroy the healthcare that you and your family rely on so you are forced to pay for private insurance that costs more and helps you less. That is their plan, and you are watching it unfold in real time.

That is the thing with Donald Trump. He has broken every promise he has made. Lower prices? Nope. Stock market growth? Hard opposite. Your 401(k), if you are lucky enough to

have one? Destroyed. A new golden era? Don't make me laugh. Protecting your hard-earned benefits? They are on the chopping block right now.

Donald Trump has broken every single promise he has made except one; the promise he made from a gold-plated Mar-a-Lago podium where he told a room full of the richest people in America:

You're all people that have a lot of money. You're rich as hell. We're gonna give you tax cuts.

Well, it turns out those tax cuts are arriving right on schedule, and we will be footing the bill. But you can do something about it. You are not powerless. Make your voices heard.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Madam President, I get a lot of questions from my constituents. Delawareans raise a lot of issues, whether they are stopping me at the Wawa, talking to me on the train, knocking on my door. They ask me about three things more than anything in the last few months.

They are concerned about Elon Musk having huge access to their personally identifying information. They are concerned about the richest man on Earth, whom they didn't elect, getting into their data. They are concerned about Trump's tariff tax and how the tariffs he has just imposed are yanking up prices for everything in our country. And they are also deeply concerned about Social Security.

I am going to focus for a few minutes about the alarm I am hearing from Delawareans that the Trump administration, Elon Musk, and Republicans in Congress are going after our Social Security net—the social safety net—the Social Security benefits that so many rely on for stability and security in their lives, as part of the bill that is moving on this floor tonight to help pay for tax cuts for billionaires that are buddies of Elon Musk.

Ask American seniors what they think of Social Security, and they will tell you it is an earned benefit. It is a vital lifeline. It is the thing that keeps them out of poverty, pays for their medication, helps them afford rent, helps them live decently and safely. Seventy million Americans get Social Security benefits every month. Four out of ten rely on it for the majority of their income.

A few quick examples. Arleen reached out to my office. Arleen is a Delawarean whose husband died in January, and she relies on Social Security to keep paying her bills.

Senator, what is going to happen?

Ian, a disabled adult who is able to work a few hours a week but requires assistance from his mother due to his intellectual disabilities, without Social Security and the disability benefits, his whole livelihood is at risk.

Kathleen reached out to tell me what she thinks of Social Security. She said:

I am a 64-year-old disabled woman. I'm concerned about my Social Security dis-

ability. I am totally dependent on that check and I'm terrified of what's going on with DOGE.

Cheryl Ann wrote my office saying:

I am 68 . . . and still work to keep from falling behind in my bills. Since COVID, prices have [gone] up, and with all these new tariffs [or] taxes, seniors [can't] make ends meet. . . . I [want] to retire but [I am afraid that] with Trump messing with Social Security and [Medicaid], how can I?

A simple question: What happens to Arleen, Ian, Kathleen, and Cheryl Ann if Republicans are successful in further undermining the stability and reliability of Social Security? What happens to millions like them for whom this program is what keeps them able to afford their medications, keeps food on the table, keeps a roof over their heads?

I told you what Delawareans think of Social Security, but if you ask Elon Musk, he will be clear. He has called it a Ponzi scheme. Maybe you don't know Mr. Ponzi. A Ponzi scheme is a fraud. It is something that is fake. It is a Jenga puzzle that comes tumbling down when you pull one of the key pieces. A Ponzi scheme is a fraud.

Already, the DOGE boys are slashing the workforce at Social Security. They are making it harder for seniors to get the benefits they earned. They are cutting the budget, firing employees, closing offices, and these needless cuts will just make it harder for seniors to get answers to their questions and to get their checks, forcing those seniors who live in rural areas or who are disabled like the few I just cited, to struggle to access what they earned.

Doing all of this in the name of cutting waste and fraud is compelling because where there is waste and fraud, we should go after it, but there are tiny amounts of fraud in this program. Don't take my word for it. Listen to Lee Dudek, the Trump administration's chosen Acting Social Security Commissioner.

Lee Dudek, the Trump administration's Acting Social Security Commissioner, at a press conference just last month, estimated that of all the Social Security payments every year 0.00625 percent, less than 1/10 of 1 percent, are fraudulent. That is actually—I am sorry—less than 1/100 of 1 percent.

To give you some context, if you think about the entire world, the landmass of the world that is covered by Delaware is 0.003 percent. Delaware is pretty small, and the world is pretty big. That gives you a sense just how small the fraud is in this program that is treasured by Americans.

DOGE's favorite talking point about dead people collecting Social Security has been debunked more times than I can count. They claim there are people 200, 300 years old still getting benefits. Trump even said—President Trump said the same thing right here in the Capitol in his address to Congress as he read out the names of folks 200, 250, 300 years old.

There is only one problem. It is not true that they are getting benefits.

The badly outdated Social Security computer system has a problem with birth dates, and it automatically adds a reference point in certain date errors that is 150 years ago. So, yes, there are names on a register of people who were born, allegedly, a long time ago. But for the last decade, the Social Security Administration automatically stops payments to anyone over 115 years old—automatically. The checks aren't going out to people whose birth date is reported as 200 or 250 years old.

An independent inspector general looked at this question and said "almost none of the number-holders discussed in the report currently receive SSA payments." So if the fraud doesn't exist, why do they keep talking about it? Well, they have to find ways to pay for tax breaks for billionaires.

House Republicans have made plans. They want to cut \$2 trillion in spending to pay for their massive reconciliation bill that we will soon turn to, and you can't do that without touching Medicaid and Social Security.

Let me conclude. Social Security is not a giveaway. It is not riddled with waste, fraud, and abuse, and Democrats are united in protecting Medicaid and Social Security. We need to strengthen Social Security, not cut it, and I stand with my colleagues and every Democrat in this body in saying: Hands off of Social Security, President Trump and Elon Musk.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. SCHATZ. Madam President, leave Social Security alone. Leave Social Security alone. Donald Trump wants to gut the most successful anti-poverty program in American history.

Over the past 3 months, his administration has made sweeping cuts to Social Security in ways that are already being felt across the country. Wait times have doubled to as many as 4 or 5 hours. Local field offices are closing. Websites are crashing, and people are understandably panicked about getting checks or missing payments altogether.

But according to Commerce Secretary Lutnick, there is nothing to worry about:

Let's say Social Security didn't send out their checks this month. My mother-in-law who is 94, she wouldn't call and complain. She just wouldn't. She'd think something got messed up, and she'd get it next month.

"She wouldn't complain." Well, when your son-in-law is a billionaire, a missed check is not a very big deal, but when you are a senior on the island of Oahu, where the average rent far exceeds the average benefit—I want you to understand that the average benefit is about \$1,900. The average rent is more than \$2,000.

Three hundred thousand people in the State of Hawaii depend on Social Security, and the vast majority of them, Social Security is either all of their income or most of their income.

The idea that we are going to balance the budget on the backs of seniors who

have paid into an earned benefit is immoral. It is wrong. I speak on behalf of all of my constituents who depend on it. It is not just the 300,000, it is all of the family members. It is all of the family members.

I speak on behalf of my mother- and father-in-law, George and Ping Kwok. George Kwok worked all his life in a kitchen. Sometimes he was an employee. He eventually ended up owning a place called "Kwok's Chop Suey." He sold it, and bought a home for his mom and helped to send his daughter to college.

Then he started to get blind, and he burned his hand in a fryer. So he was unable to work, and he took Social Security disability. He deserves that money. Leave Social Security alone.

Social Security cuts were always the third rail in American politics, even anyone on any side of the aisle with any sense of how to get elected knew not to touch that third rail, but they are grabbing this third rail with both hands.

I want to quote a couple of my constituents. One constituent wrote to me:

We are elderly and [we] are concerned about the potential of cutting Social Security checks. We paid into the system our entire working lives and fear we can't afford food, water bills, and medical care. What will happen with these cuts and the cost-of-living going up? What will be our safety net? We are afraid of what is to come.

Another wrote:

I worked for 36 years for the Federal Government, including 4 years as active duty Air Force in Vietnam. I contributed to Social Security with explicit understanding that I would get Social Security as a portion of my retirement. Cutting Social Security means I lose about a third of my retirement with no recourse.

I am 77 [years old] with health issues and [haven't] planned on getting another job. My wife was a flight attendant for Hawaiian Airlines for 50 years and also depends on Social Security for her retirement. It is completely unfair when she paid into Social Security for more than 50 years just to be abandoned when she is . . . [70 years old].

Another constituent:

I am a 73-year-old woman who, unlike Billionaire Commerce Secretary Lutnick's mother-in-law, cannot afford to miss or reduce my Social Security . . . payment. It is my sole income and I need it to pay rent and [to] buy food. I worked hard all my life and contributed my fair share of taxes toward social security. I'm not asking for a free ride—I earned my Social Security.

"I'm not asking for a free ride—I earned my Social Security." Leave Social Security alone.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAMER). The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to call out the threat that this Republican budget and the Trump administration poses to Social Security.

President Trump and Elon Musk's "move fast and break things" mentality is breaking Social Security, and it is obvious that they intend to dismantle Social Security, which will hurt the millions of Americans that

rely on it, that count on it, including more than 1 million Minnesotans.

Now one thing I have learned over the last 70-some-plus days is to believe these guys when they tell us what they mean to do. So when Musk recently called Social Security "the biggest Ponzi scheme of all time," I am sure that he meant it.

When he said entitlement spending is "the big one to eliminate," I believe him.

Then, you have Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, who recently said that if his 94-year-old mother-in-law happened to not receive her Social Security check 1 month, she would just wait for the next one.

Well, I have news for Secretary Lutnick. When people don't get their Social Security checks, they aren't just waiting for their next check; they could be waiting for their next meal. Secretary Lutnick is clearly not in touch with the reality that 22 million Americans, including more than 16 million seniors, would be living in poverty were it not for Social Security.

They don't have millions sitting in a bank account somewhere. They have a food shelf visit or missed rent or rationing their prescription medication ahead of them. So this is not just an inconvenience or a hassle for them, it is their security, their dignity, their health, and their well-being.

You know it is not just Musk and Lutnick that are out of touch. Acting Social Security Commissioner Leland Dudek threatened to shut down the entire Agency in a fit after a Federal judge informed him that DOGE is not allowed to root around in people's personal data.

And Frank Bisignano, a billionaire that is President Trump's pick to run the Social Security Administration, he has said that he is a "DOGE person," and I believe him. This is evidently just fine with Senate Republicans on the Finance Committee who all voted for him, and I have no doubt that the rest of the Republicans in the Senate will, too, because they seem unwilling or unable to stand up to Donald Trump.

I think they are just scared. Now President Trump understands that Americans love Social Security, and so he says, "Don't worry. My administration won't touch it."

Come on now. Americans understand. We can see what is happening, and as my mother used to say: I wasn't born yesterday.

We can see that President Trump and Elon Musk are crippling Social Security by making it nearly impossible for people to get their benefits.

They are closing field offices at the same time that they are limiting phone service. They are gutting the Agency and firing the employees that make Social Security work.

In Alexandria, MN, for example, they have fired half the staff. In Rochester, MN, they fired 40 percent of the staff.

Since Donald Trump took office, the number of calls for help with Social Security into my office has more than

doubled compared to what it was in the same timeframe last year. So my constituents are spending hours and hours on hold and waiting and waiting for office appointments.

Every time they get a message from Social Security, it is a different story and it is confusing and it is more than irritating. It is downright scary to them.

You can call this rank incompetence or the “don’t know, don’t care” attitude of this administration, but what it looks like to me is sabotage. If Republicans are trying to save Social Security, this is a pretty funny way to go about it.

Now, tonight, they are going to try and pass a budget resolution that relies on so-called cost savings from firing Social Security employees to help pay for trillions of dollars of tax breaks for billionaires and big corporations.

There is talk about rooting out waste and fraud. I am all for that. But understand, this Agency already spends less than 1 percent on administrative overhead, which is far lower than the administrative costs typically paid by private insurers.

When they say cutting costs, what that really means is that when a senior picks up the phone looking for assistance, there is not going to be anyone on the other end of the line.

They talk about getting at fraud. Well, listen to this: The Office of the Inspector General conducted a report in 2024, which found that less than 1 percent of Social Security payments were improper—less than 1 percent.

You know, if the Social Security Administration was a private sector company, those numbers would put its competitors to shame. What is really happening here is they are trying to make it harder for people to get what they are owed, and that is, in fact, a cut, and it is wrong.

Now, I think that Americans can see what is happening. Donald Trump has surrounded himself with billionaires who don’t know and really don’t care about regular people who are just trying to afford their lives. They can’t even imagine trying to live on \$2,000 a month, which is the average benefit for a retiree in Minnesota. I mean, they probably spend more than that on lunch.

This is not what we need in this country. We need this government to answer to the people, not the billionaires.

We don’t need more tax breaks for the wealthiest and most successful people, who are doing just fine, thank you very much. What we need to do is to make Social Security work better for people who have worked hard all their lives, paid in, and deserve a secure retirement.

My office has also received tens of thousands of messages from Minnesotans, and they want us to protect and to strengthen Social Security, not tear it down, and so that is what I am going to do.

Social Security is a universal benefit, and it is a promise that we have made to each other that after a lifetime of hard work, you won’t have to worry about a safe, decent, affordable place to call home, a good meal to eat, and the time and the space to enjoy your life.

When this budget resolution gets a vote later tonight, I will be thinking about Social Security and about the 73 million Americans who count on it, and I will be a hard no.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, throughout these 25 hours of debate, there has been one theme that no Member of this body should forget, that no American should forget because it is the heart of this bill. And what is the heart of the bill? Families lose, and billionaires win.

This bill features \$2 trillion in cuts to core programs in healthcare, housing, and education—the programs that help families stand on their feet and thrive and move into the middle class and succeed and their children succeed and the next generation.

But, no, my Republican colleagues say: Slash those programs because they are not the folks who power our campaigns. We don’t care about the families struggling to succeed. Well, no, what we care about are the billionaires, so we wrote this bill for billionaires.

Just how much? Well, that \$2 trillion funds tax breaks for the richest Americans. And then because that is not enough, this bill borrows \$37 trillion over 30 years to fund additional tax breaks—\$37 trillion in debt.

Cuts to programs for families to fund tax giveaways to the richest Americans—that is what this is about.

If you care about healthcare across America, if you know that Medicaid provides—well, in my State, about a third of our citizens have health insurance through Medicaid. Our rural clinics and our rural hospitals do far better. And why do they do far better with Medicaid? Because patients can pay bills because they have health insurance.

Medicaid is critical for programs for people to get out of their addiction. Medicaid is critical for seniors to be able to get nursing home care. Medicaid is essential for those with disabilities. It plays a huge role for our veterans. And they want to strike it down. They want to strike down Social Security, get rid of all the clerks that make Social Security work, that turn the gears and make sure the checks go out on time, because why should we worry about Social Security? Billionaires don’t need Social Security.

Strike out the lunch programs for schools. We know that kids learn far better when they have a full stomach. So programs like that matter, but not to the billionaires, not in this bill.

Mr. President, \$2 trillion in cuts for programs families depend on to fund

massive tax giveaways to the richest Americans.

Then, on top of all that, a gimmick—a gimmick to say to the American people: While we are adding \$37 trillion in debt, we will tell you we are adding nothing.

It is called current policy baseline. It is magic math. It is like this: You rent an apartment. The apartment costs you \$2,000 a month, \$24,000 for the year. You rent it for a year under contract.

Then you get to the end of the year and you say: I think I will sign a contract for a second year. You say: Oh, but that will cost nothing.

That is the magic math, when we know—everyone knows—it will still cost \$2,000 a month or more with inflation, more because the rent might go up. But the magic math from the Republican side says: No, no; it is zero. It is zero.

Extending new tax benefits that would have expired costs \$37 trillion, and Republicans say: Just pretend it away.

Now, what I would like to understand is why the party that has often run on fiscal responsibility has decided, first of all, to strike down the nonpartisan numbers that create an honest debate. That has been the rule, the direction, the bipartisan consensus since 1974. We will use honest numbers. We created a whole organization—the Congressional Budget Office—to make sure the numbers were fair so we could have an honest debate here and with the American people. But the magic math produced on this bill throws all that overboard. Fiscal responsibility overboard. Massive \$37 trillion in new debt from this bill.

Do you know what? Our entire national debt today is less than \$37 trillion. This one bill—this one bill—produces even more debt than has been piled up over the 249 years since the Declaration of Independence. If that isn’t fiscally irresponsible, I don’t know what is.

You know, you may ask: Don’t those folks who are struggling—the 1 out of 10 who are really trying to get on their feet—isn’t there something for them?

Well, the estimate is that they get the equivalent of \$6 a year.

Well, if you have a fancy cup of coffee at Starbucks—not where I go for coffee, but many do—it costs about \$6. This bill doesn’t give a cup of coffee a day to the bottom 10 percent. It doesn’t give a cup of coffee a week to the bottom 10 percent. It gives one cup per year. That is what you get out of this bill if you are in the bottom 10 percent, struggling to get on your feet. Don’t drink it all at once, just one little sip each day for 365 days because you in the bottom 10 percent are not a billionaire.

Going to cut your programs that get you on your feet—the fundamentals for families to thrive in healthcare and housing and education and good-paying jobs—to enrich the richest Americans.

This is perhaps the worst bill I have ever seen debated on the floor of the Senate.

So, colleagues across the aisle, turn back to your speeches and your election campaigns that said “I am for fiscal responsibility,” and come and join us and write a real bill in which families thrive and billionaires pay their fair share of taxes. That would be an advance for the United States of America. That would be good work on the floor of the Senate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I have a different view on this. To my good friend from Oregon, who has been a real gentleman to work with—and you have great staff, and I appreciate our ability to work together. But we have a little different view of what we are doing here tonight, so I am going to give you our side of the story. I have charts too. I never thought I would have a chart, but I have one.

We are trying to do sort of four things tonight: Start a process that we can make the tax cuts permanent; give money to the Department of Homeland Security to continue to secure our border; cut trillions of dollars of waste, which does exist; and support our military.

Now, the bill tonight, the resolution, opens up that process that will be done by the House and the Senate authorizing committees. So this doesn't do anything other than start the game, and it is time this game started.

Now, what is in this for you if you are not a billionaire? Which I am not. If we do nothing, if we do nothing, the 2017 President Trump tax cuts expire in December. None of them voted for it. They are going to expire, and what does that mean to you? Six million jobs will be lost. The average taxpayer would see a 22-percent tax hike if the tax cuts expire. A family of four making \$80,610—the median income in the United States—would see a \$1,695 tax increase if they expire this December. This is worth about 9 weeks of groceries. Forty million families would see their household child tax credit cut in half.

If any of you all are listening out there that is not a billionaire, you might want to keep listening. If this expires, you are going to get hit hard, and we don't want that.

Twenty-six million small businesses would be hit with a 43.4-percent top tax rate if section 199A of the small business deduction expires. Well, why do I know about that one? I can't walk 5 feet in South Carolina without somebody begging me to make sure that expensing and deductions and accelerated depreciation don't go away, because they run a business.

Our friends over there run the government. That is all they know. They are very good at making it bigger; not very good at making it efficient. There is no amount of money that is enough for these folks.

So if you are looking for that crowd over there to cut your taxes, you are

looking in the wrong direction. I have about a hundred years to prove that point.

The point I am trying to make is these tax cuts expiring matter to real people raising a family and trying to run a business, particularly small businesses. This would be devastating. We are not going to let that happen.

Now, if you are waiting for this crowd, our friends on the other side, to cut spending, you are going to die waiting.

Now, we have a chance as Republicans, if we pass this resolution tonight, to cut spending and make the tax cuts permanent without one Democratic vote. It is called reconciliation.

To my Republican friends who may be watching, four times in the last 100 years, the Republicans had the House, the Senate, and the White House. This doesn't happen a lot. But with that construct, through reconciliation, what we are starting here tonight if we get 50 plus 1, we can make the tax cut permanent and cut spending without one Democratic vote.

This is what they used—our Democratic friends—to pass ObamaCare, all the spending around infrastructure spending, the Inflation Reduction Act, which really didn't do much to reduce inflation. They have done this, and we are going to do it a different way. They did it to grow the government; we are going to do it in a way to get more money back to you. And we are going to look at the budget we have up here and see if we can find a way to save some money. Don't you think it is time that we looked at the budget up here like you look at your budget? We are going to do that.

We are going to secure our border. We don't talk enough about this. In this package, there is \$175 billion that will allow the Trump administration to finish the wall.

Now, President Trump said during the State of the Union Address: The Democrats said we needed new laws; we just really needed a new President.

We got a new President, and the flow has really almost stopped—one of the most amazing things that we don't talk enough about. But we want to make sure that it doesn't come back on again, so this bill gives the Department of Homeland Security, ICE, Tom Homan, \$175 billion to finish the wall and to find more detention bedspace—40,000 to 125,000—so we don't have to let people go.

Laken Riley was killed by an illegal immigrant. He was released because they had no bedspace. We don't ever want to do that again. We are going to build enough detention beds so we don't have to release anybody. I think most people like that.

We are going to hire more ICE agents to kick the gang members and the crooks out faster so we can get control of our country and our security.

This bill allows \$175 billion. That is enough for the entire 4 years—if Republicans stick together.

So, as a Republican, if you said you want to cut waste, you want to cut people's taxes, and you want to secure the border, your ship has come in.

What is near and dear to my heart, like most everybody here, including our Democratic friends, is supporting our military. Well, the budget agreement we reached a few years ago was terrible. The continuing resolution to fund the government through September is below that number. We are spending below inflation on our military.

In case you haven't missed it, the world is literally on fire. So this bill gives the Pentagon \$150 billion right now to help them upgrade their capability to deal with threats like Iran getting a nuclear weapon. This is good stuff, and the only thing standing between you and this good stuff is a vote tonight, continuing a process in the House and the Senate to make it a reality. But if we don't get it right tonight, all this dies. All of this opportunity dies if Republicans don't stick together. And you know what. We will.

All right. So now all this stuff about being the Budget chairman. What did I do? Well, I made a decision. Last time I checked, if you win an election, you get to make decisions. I am the Budget chairman. It has been a lot of fun. I have learned a lot, I can tell you that.

So in the 1974 Budget Control Act, when it comes to spending, you never have to offset it. Anything above \$50 million in spending, you can use current policy, which is a budget-scoring device that just assumes everything goes forever—no offsets.

It is my belief that when it comes to tax reductions, I, as the Budget chairman, can apply that same concept, called current policy, to the budget on this floor, and I will do that. I have done that.

Now, what does that mean? If we are able to do for taxes what we have done for spending, that means the tax cuts never expire again, and you don't have this cliff putting everybody at risk. That means if we pass what we have put together in the Budget Committee—and Senator MARSHALL is a member of the committee. We passed a really good proposal to make sure that these tax cuts that we are going to reauthorize stay in place so people throughout the country can count on some certainty when it comes to tax credits for their children, deductions, expensing for their businesses, and having lower rates.

I did it, I am proud to do it, and my Democratic friends who are hollering and screaming have done it, too, but it always relates to spending.

Judd Gregg, who is a good friend of ours—one of the smartest guys I have ever met—was on the Budget Committee. He and Kent Conrad were a great team.

There was a question: Can the farm bill be added to the baseline?

Here is what Judd Gregg said about a Democrat's ability to do that: The

chairman of the Budget Committee declared a new baseline under a new budget. The budget chairman has a right to do that.

The budget chairman changed the baseline to accommodate the farm bill. I am declaring current policy to make sure the tax cuts stay in place.

When there was an inquiry of a Parliamentarian about whose job it is to declare the baseline, this was what Judd Gregg asked: Who is the proper scorer of points of order relative to revenues and expenses?

Here is what was said:

The Senator is entitled to an answer under the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, Determinations and Points of Order, section 312.

Budget Committee Determinations.

For purposes of this title and title IV, the levels [for measuring] budget authority outlays, direct spending, new entitlement authority, and revenues for a fiscal year shall be determined on the basis of the estimates made by the Committee on the Budget of the House of Representatives or the Senate, as applicable.

That is us. That is me.

They asked that question in 2008, and that is what they said. Judd Gregg said it is the Budget Committee chairman's authority to determine the baseline, and that is what I did.

Ok. And even BERNIE agreed, so we don't need to overly dwell on that.

This is what the law says: Revenues and spending "shall be determined on the basis of estimates made by the Committee on the Budget of the House of Representatives or the Senate, as applicable."

That is us. We are elected officials. And wouldn't it be odd if you wrote a law and managed a law that nobody voted for? That makes like zero sense.

All right. So bottom line: Tax cuts are going to be permanent. It will help the economy.

And when it comes to estimating what happens around here, CBO—great people—JCT, Joint Committee on Taxation, they make estimates. The one thing they have been consistent about is being wrong when it comes to tax revenue. They have got it wrong, like, every time. So if history is any guide to what has happened in the past, we are going to get more revenue by cutting taxes. Why do I know that? Because it always happens.

What happens all the time too? When we get the new money, we spend it faster than we get it. That is going to stop. If you live in the real world, you get a pay raise; that is a great thing. But if you spend it all and then some, you go right back in debt.

So we are going to do two things. We are going to start a process that would allow the tax cuts to be permanent to give the economy certainty to grow, to create more revenue, to help the government do what it needs to do, and we are going to cut spending to make sure that we lower the amount we are spending—because we are spending too much—with the hope of one day doing this: balancing the budget.

I said it. I have not been struck dead yet.

Our goal, to the American people, is to create more revenue and lower spending to balance the budget like you do.

Now we don't do this in this resolution, but we start the process because we are \$30-some trillion in debt.

The only thing between the tax cuts being permanent, having money to secure the border, helping the military and—what is the other thing that we are going to do?—cutting spending, is a vote tonight. Sometime after midnight—before breakfast, I hope—we will have a vote in the U.S. Senate that would trigger a process to do these four things.

I am proud of the Budget Committee. We have worked hard. I am proud of Leader THUNE, who has pushed this process forward. I appreciate the cooperation to the extent they can do it on the other side. We have a philosophical difference. I totally understand that. But we have chosen a different path, and a major step along that path will occur later tonight.

And if we get this right, by Memorial Day, it is my fervent hope and prayer—and I just talked to President Trump—that we can pass "one big beautiful bill" that makes the 2017 tax cuts permanent and even more, tax on tips for all those people working out there as waiters and waitresses.

We have a chance here to look at the Federal budget, line by line, to make sure things end there that make no sense and are taken out to save you money. And, boy, we are going to have some fun tonight talking about those things.

And if you believe securing the border is a good thing and what we are doing is the right thing, by Memorial Day, we will have fully funded what President Trump needs for all 4 years. That will be amazing.

And if you are in the military, money is coming your way to help you do your job, to make sure the rest of us are safe, and we are going to fix the problem of the continuing resolution by giving the military less than inflation at a time when the world's literally on fire. So if we can get it right tonight, by Memorial Day, I am hoping and praying that the men and women in uniform will have \$150 billion that they desperately need to do their job and to stay safe.

This is the most important thing I have done yet in the Senate in my view. I have set in motion, along with my colleagues—and if there is ever a team sport, it is politics—the ability to do something that we haven't done before: make taxes and spending the same in terms of policy. Quit playing this game that the American people lose.

You will not lose a dollar revenue if we make these tax cuts permanent. You will get more money. But if you keep spending more and more, that doesn't matter. But if you get more revenue and you cut spending, one day we will be on a glide path to balance

this budget. It is my fervent desire to do that, and President Trump wants to do that. Let it be said that that starts tonight.

I yield the floor.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, it has been asserted this week that under section 312 of the Congressional Budget Act, the chair of the Budget Committee has the authority to instruct the Congressional Budget Office, known as CBO, and the Joint Committee on Taxation, known as JCT, to ignore budget law when developing cost estimates for legislation, including budget reconciliation bills. It has further been asserted these directed estimates are appropriate to use for budget enforcement purposes claiming that past Budget chairs have taken similar actions. This is false.

I would like to put some facts into the record. Section 257 of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act defines how CBO and JCT should construct the baseline. This is called the current law baseline. This act does not defer to some unlimited authority of the Budget chair, provide for multiple or competing baselines, or say the current law baseline should not be used for scoring reconciliation bills. For 40 years, Congress has used cost estimates based on section 257 of this act. Codifying the baseline established a standard budget enforcement regime, ensuring that CBO and the Office of Management and Budget use the same baseline definition when developing their respective economic forecasts and budget projections. There are some very specific instances when section 257 directs CBO to consult with the Budget Committees to determine whether a proposed law should continue in the baseline. Importantly, these instances are enumerated, and they do not apply to revenue provisions—which are treated as expiring as written in law. The section 257 current law baseline has applied to all reconciliation bills since its enactment.

Section 313 of the Congressional Budget Act—colloquially referred to as the Byrd Rule—is also in statute. The Byrd Rule provides strict guardrails on what is, or is not, appropriate for inclusion in a reconciliation bill. During adoption of the Byrd Rule in 1985, floor debate indicates it was understood that the Parliamentarian would advise on Byrd Rule violations, and the Senate would vote accordingly; a role for the Budget chair was not mentioned, even by the author and namesake of these constraints—Senator Robert C. Byrd.

Since the Byrd Rule's adoption, it has been long-accepted practice—accepted by both sides of the aisle—to rely on the Parliamentarian to advise the chair on reconciliation privilege and enforcement issues, including evaluating compliance with Byrd Rule tests that all hinge on the scores of the provisions. Section 312 authority has never been asserted to allow the Budget chair to dictate scores to enforce or manipulate the Byrd Rule. The Senate

has always relied exclusively on CBO and JCT scores when evaluating the Byrd Rule, and CBO and JCT have always relied on the section 257 current law baseline to produce those scores.

Reconciliation is one of the Senate's few privileged, fast-track mechanisms for passing legislation, particularly legislation of substantial size and scope. The Budget Act grants the Senate this targeted exception from its standard of open debate and cloture protections with an expectation that there will be limitations. The inappropriate assertion that broad authority under section 312 of the Congressional Budget Act allows a Budget chair to ignore budget law, upend multiple layers of procedure, and undermine the Parliamentarian's role, is a clear violation of the Byrd Rule and the Senate precedent around reconciliation limits.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, for the past 2 days, Democrats have turned the Senate into a tribunal, and Donald Trump's agenda is on trial.

I thank the close to 40 of my colleagues who came to the floor and made so many points about that.

So now, Donald Trump's agenda is on trial. It is time now for Republicans to answer. Tonight, Democrats will bring amendment after amendment to the floor, one right after the other, again and again and again. Our amendments will give Republicans the chance to join us in hitting the kill switch on Donald Trump's tariffs, on DOGE, on the attacks against Social Security and Medicare and Medicaid.

Now, Republicans are in the majority. The choice is theirs. They see what Americans see: Donald Trump's policies are a disaster. DOGE is a horror. Republicans could snuff it out instantly, tonight, if they wanted. Will Republicans join us tonight and stand up to Donald Trump before he craters the economy? Or will Republicans spend all night trying to defend the mess Donald Trump is making? And he made a lot more of it today.

Will Republicans defend Donald Trump's tariff tax—the Trump tariff tax—which would cost families \$5,000 a year? Will they defend Elon Musk as he takes a blowtorch to Social Security? Will they defend cutting Medicaid and imperil the healthcare of 70 million Americans, from newborn kids to seniors to rural communities and veterans?

Will Republicans spend all night—all night long—trying to explain to the American people why billionaires deserve a massive tax break, but working people don't deserve basic healthcare?

The choice is theirs. Donald Trump has betrayed the American people. Will Senate Republicans join him in this betrayal?

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, very soon the Senate is going to be voting on a

budget resolution that essentially accomplishes five objectives, but at least four. And one is to prevent a \$4 trillion tax increase on the American people at the end of the year. No. 1. No. 2, it rebuilds our military by investing in our military readiness in a way that will enable us to deal with and deter the threats that America deals with in a very dangerous world. It will restore energy dominance for our country, making energy more affordable to the American people—something that we saw a huge runup on during the Biden inflation days. Part of that, in a big way, was the cost of energy. Obviously, securing the border, and there are resources in there to make sure, over the course of the next 4 years of this administration, that they have what they need to ensure that our border is secure and that the American people are safe. And, finally, reducing spending.

Now, I know that is a sort of a novel concept around here. We have heard a lot about, you know, massive tax cuts for billionaires. That has been a recurring theme that we have heard from the Democrats. But the one thing you don't hear a lot about is the runup in Federal spending.

So tax revenues, as a general rule, have stayed very static as a percentage of our entire economy, around 17.1 percent, thereabouts. Government spending, as a percentage of our economy, has gone up and gone up dramatically. So just take a look at this chart. Basically, in the last 5 years, the runup that we have seen in spending has been about 54 percent from 2019 to 2024—a 54-percent increase in spending.

Now, what is ironic about that is government revenue has also been going up, right? Everybody said: Well, you are going to cut taxes. You are going to run these big deficits.

Well, what happened?

In 2017, we cut taxes on the American people. We unleashed the American economy. We reduced rates and accelerated cost recovery so people could recover their capital investments more quickly. And what did they do? They invested, and it created more—not less—revenue, a trillion and a half dollars more than was projected at the time by the Joint Committee on Taxation and the CBO—a trillion and a half dollars more of revenue than what was projected. I think you can say they missed it by a long shot.

Well, this time around, we have seen estimates—and Senator GRAHAM, Senator CRAPO, who were down here earlier today—suggesting that the Council of Economic Advisers' prediction is that you will see revenue increase by about \$4 trillion by making the 2017 tax law permanent.

So what we have, the reason we are running these big deficits, isn't because we tax too little. It is because we spend too much; that is the delta. Tax revenues have gone up and gone up consistently over time, particularly since 2017. What has gone up a lot faster, as I said, is government spending.

And so we have this deficit, and, you know, the way we are going to have to deal with that is to get more growth in the economy, generate more revenue, because when the economy is growing and expanding, people are creating jobs; people are working. They are taking realizations, and they are paying more taxes.

And that is what happens when you reduce taxes, and that is why it is so important that we extend and make permanent the 2017 tax law. This is what we are talking about here today. This is what this conversation, frankly, is all about.

Now, one of the things that has been interesting in this debate, because I heard lots of conversation from my colleagues on the other side about massive new tax cuts for billionaires—but let me tell you what, if you vote against this budget resolution, you will be voting for. You will be voting for a \$4 trillion tax increase on our economy and on the American people.

Of that \$4 trillion tax increase, \$2.6 trillion will fall on people who make less than \$400,000 a year—something that Joe Biden and, I think, pretty much every Senate Democrat pledged not to do.

Well, how does that happen? you ask. Well, here is what happens. In 2017, when we passed the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, one of the things of the features of that bill was a doubling of the child tax credit from \$1,000 to \$2,000. It also had a near doubling of the standard deduction, and it had a lowering of rates. It had multiple ways in which working families in this country would benefit.

If we don't extend the tax relief before the end of the year, \$2.6 trillion of that tax increase falls on people making less than \$400,000 a year.

Now, I have heard some—the Democrats' own Presidential candidate said last year:

We cannot, and I will not, raise taxes on anyone making less than \$400,000 a year.

That was Vice President Harris, who was running for President. President Biden made the same promise, as did the current Democrat leader.

And when the Democrats were considering their so-called Inflation Reduction Act—which, perhaps, more aptly could have been entitled the "Do Nothing About Inflation Act"—the Democrat leader repeatedly emphasized the Democrats would not be raising taxes on anyone making less than \$400,000 a year.

Well, that is it. That is what you are doing, because this tax increase is going to hit American families; \$2.6 trillion of it is going to hit families making less than \$400,000 a year.

So when you cut the child tax credit—let's say you have four kids in this country. Now, the child tax credit is a direct credit against tax liability, meaning it is a dollar-for-dollar reduction in tax liability if you have a tax liability that exceeds the amount of the credit. So let's say you have four kids, and today it is \$2,000. Well, if we

don't move to extend this tax relief by the end of the year, that \$1,000 is going to go from \$8,000 down to \$4,000; \$2,000 per child down to \$1,000 per child, and that family's taxes are going to go up by about \$4,000.

Now, if they don't have that big of a tax liability, there is a refundability component, and we can have a conversation about the merits of that. But that means they are going to be getting a payment or not, and probably not, because cutting that child tax credit back to \$1,000 is going to fall largely on people who have families in this country.

It is the same thing with the standard deduction. It will be cut nearly in half. Here is the thing about that. When we made that change back in 2017, fewer people started itemizing, and more people started taking the standard deduction because the standard deduction was about \$30,000 a year. Well, what happens if we don't extend this tax relief, that \$30,000 goes back down to \$15,000 a year—again, hitting working families, coupled, again, with what I said is higher rates. The rates will go back up.

So forget about the idea that you are not going to raise taxes on people making less than \$400,000 a year because you clearly are. That is just a fact. It is just simply a fact.

So what about small businesses? Well, businesses—small businesses—would pay, if we don't extend the current tax policy, \$600 billion more if these tax cuts expire, because pass-through businesses—and that is your LLCs, your subchapter S corporations, your sole proprietorships—pay at the individual rate. The rates would go back up and—and—we put a future in that bill called 199A. It was a 20-percent deduction for pass-through businesses. That also goes away. So small businesses are going to pay \$600 billion more throughout the course of this tax policy, if we don't do something to extend it.

So you lose 199A. You lose the lower rates that come with it if you are a small business, and you will see a lot less investment in our economy.

Now, as I mentioned, in 2017, two of the objectives in that, particularly on the business side, were to lower rates and to allow for faster cost recovery, and to grow the economy. And it did. It worked.

The economy, over the past 7 years, grew—if you can believe this—5.4 percent more than what CBO had projected in 2017, prior to the passage of the Tax Cuts and Job Act.

Well, what did that mean? It meant a 50-year low for unemployment, record-low poverty, high median household income, and a narrowing of the income disparity gap in this country.

(Ms. MURKOWSKI assumed the Chair.)

So what about deficits? As I said before, by any objective metric, revenues dramatically exceeded what was predicted in 2017 about what the effect of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act would be.

Revenues, as I mentioned—if you look at this chart again—on average are about 17 percent as a percentage of our economy. Unfortunately, spending as a percentage of our economy, which as recently as a decade ago was about 20 percent, is now 23 percent and growing to 24 to 25 percent. Part of that is all the new spending that was associated with things like, for example, the IRA, the so-called Inflation Reduction Act.

There were some provisions in there, some energy provisions, for example, that at the time were thought to cost about a little over \$200 billion. Today, they are actually over a trillion dollars. So CBO missed that one by about 400 percent.

As I said earlier, the Council of Economic Advisers projects a \$4.1 trillion increase in revenue from extending the 2017 law.

So could it be that the runup in deficits happened because of the last two Democrat reconciliation bills or perhaps some other things they have done along the way, like the \$250 billion in SNAP increase, almost, as I said, without any approval from Congress—something that my colleagues on the other side have talked about, how this executive branch has ignored the will of Congress. Well, that was a \$250 billion increase without approval from Congress.

Then you have the student loan forgiveness program. As you recall, student loans—that program was used as a pay-for back in a reconciliation bill the Democrats did back in 2010. When they did that, many of us predicted that they would go ahead and use it to forgive student loans. So now student loan forgiveness, which is subject to court action, resulted in several hundred billion dollars of additional spending not approved by the Congress. But that particular move got no pushback from anybody on this side of the aisle, not a peep—hundreds of billions of dollars of spending by use of Executive power.

What I concluded from all of this is that my colleagues on the other side talk a lot about misuse or abuse, if you will, of Executive power, but that is not the issue. It is how the Executive power is used.

If it is used in a way that you agree with, which it was in both of those examples I just mentioned, then you are fine with use of Executive power. As I said, I didn't hear a peep from people over here when that was done.

My colleagues—both Senator GRAM and Senator CRAPO—talked about the use of a current policy baseline. In 2012, the Obama White House came up with something called the alternative fiscal scenario when it came time to extend the Bush tax cuts. That was about a \$4 trillion use of the alternative fiscal scenario—translation: current policy baseline. There are 18 Democrats still here in the Senate today who voted for that, for use of that baseline.

I would simply say that when it comes to extending tax relief, there is

always a reluctance by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. When it comes to new spending, they embrace that idea. We have a different view. We have different views of government.

The use of reconciliation—which is what this is about; the budget resolution opens the door to reconciliation—is in many respects a great example of the contrast in how we view this.

The Democrats view reconciliation as a way to grow government, increase spending, new programs. The ARPA bill was about \$2 trillion in spending. The IRA was about a trillion dollars in spending. Both were used by the Democrats through a budget resolution and reconciliation to increase spending.

Republicans, a lot of times—and we did in 2017—used it to reduce taxes and to reform the Tax Code, which was desperately needed, but as a consequence of that, as I said, we got not less revenue but more—\$1.5 trillion more than was predicted at the time.

On the other side of the equation, when it comes to spending, the estimators—the so-called referees—tend to underestimate how much things are going to cost; for example, the so-called Inflation Reduction Act.

But the bottom line in all this is that we need to address a lot of concerns in this country, many of which are dealt with in this budget resolution and ultimately the budget reconciliation bill. But one of the most important ones is this number right here. The deficit will continue to grow over time as a result not of too little revenue, which continues to increase over time, but of dramatically increased spending. That is the issue.

My colleagues here on this side of the aisle believe that you get at that by bending the curve down on the spending side, and on the tax, regulatory, energy side, pro-growth policies—particularly making permanent the tax policy that was passed in 2017—will unleash investment in America, which will lead ultimately not only to better paying jobs, lower unemployment, hopefully a narrowing of the income disparity that we have in this country, but also, interestingly enough, to higher government revenues.

That is what this is all about—whether you want to vote for extending the tax policy and avoiding a \$4 trillion tax increase or whether you want to vote in favor of this resolution and make sure that the 2017 tax policy that was passed is extended permanently and that it unleashes the American economy in a way that will continue not only to create those better paying jobs but also make this deficit picture look a lot smaller by comparison, coupled with significant reductions in spending.

That is what we have to do. That is what this is about. I hope that all of our colleagues on this side of the aisle will vote yes tonight.

We are going to have a number of amendment votes, which always happens during a budget resolution—vote-

arama—and we look forward to getting that process underway. So let’s let the voting begin.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Madam President, I would now ask unanimous consent that the following amendments be in order; that the amendments be reported by number, with no amendments in order prior to a vote in relation to the amendments: No. 1, Sullivan No. 2035; No. 2, Merkley No. 1758; No. 3, Reed No. 1645; No. 4, Luján No. 1726; No. 5, Warner No. 1310; No. 6, Alsobrooks No. 1466; No. 7, Kelly No. 1737; No. 8, Murphy No. 1977; No. 9, King No. 1773; No. 10, Warren No. 1647; No. 11, Schumer No. 1884; No. 12, Padilla No. 1774; No. 13, Bennet No. 1646; and No. 14, Paul No. 1760.

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

Mr. THUNE. I yield back all time on the budget resolution.

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

The Senator from Alaska.

AMENDMENT NO. 2035 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1717

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam President, I call up my amendment No. 2035 and ask that it be reported by number.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Alaska [Mr. SULLIVAN] proposes an amendment numbered 2035 to amendment No. 1717.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to protecting Medicare and Medicaid)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____ . DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO PROTECTING MEDICARE AND MEDICAID.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to protecting the Medicaid program under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.), which may include strengthening and improving Medicaid for the most vulnerable populations, and extending the life of the Federal Hospital Insurance Trust Fund, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam President, my amendment says we are going to strengthen Medicaid and Medicare so that they are available for years to come because these are important programs. They are certainly important programs to the Alaskans I represent.

Madam President, this is the exact same amendment I offered in February. Nearly every Republican voted for it but not one Democrat.

My colleague and friend from Oregon, who is on the floor here, said my amendment back then was a ruse to kick people off the program. But to my colleague and friend from Oregon, if

that is true, here is my question: Why did he vote for the exact same amendment in 2017? That is right, 24 Democrats who voted against my amendment 2 months ago voted for the same amendment in 2017.

I ask unanimous consent that their names be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

DEMOCRAT SENATORS WHO SUPPORTED 2017 MEDICAID AMENDMENT

- 1. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI)
2. Michael Bennet (D-CO)
3. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT)
4. Maria Cantwell (D-WA)
5. Chris Coons (D-DE)
6. Catherine Cortez Masto (D-W)
7. Tammy Duckworth (D-IL)
8. Dick Durbin (D-IL)
9. Maggie Hassan (D-NH)
10. Martin Heinrich (D-NM)
11. Tim Kaine (D-VA)
12. Angus King (D-ME)
13. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN)
14. Chris Murphy (D-CT)
15. Patty Murray (D-WA)
16. Gary Peters (D-MI)
17. Jack Reed (D-RI)
18. Brian Schatz (D-HI)
19. Chuck Schumer (D-NY)
20. Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH)
21. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD)
22. Mark Warner (D-VA)
23. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI)
24. Ron Wyden (D-OR)

Mr. SULLIVAN. Talk about a ruse. This is the worst kind of partisanship, using people’s healthcare to fearmonger.

We should all want to weed out waste, fraud, and abuse in Medicaid and Medicare, and we must keep these programs going.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator’s time is expired.

Mr. SULLIVAN. We should do both.

I ask my colleagues to vote for this amendment. And all my colleagues who voted for this amendment in 2017 should simply vote for it again.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, once again, Senator SULLIVAN is out here saying that he is for protecting vulnerable people, but by not defining the vulnerable, the Sullivan amendment is code for States to cut benefits or kick people off their coverage altogether.

To me, the Sullivan amendment basically says that if somebody thinks you are not poor enough, you are not sick enough, or you are not disabled enough, we are not going to be there for you.

Here is the difference between now and 2017: We learned during the pandemic how important expanded Medicaid is to vulnerable people, and this language that my colleague from Alaska is offering doesn’t protect vulnerable people.

So I urge my colleagues strongly to oppose it.

I yield.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 2035

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on adoption of the amendment.

Mr. SULLIVAN. 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 senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 48, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 170 Leg.]

YEAS—51

Table with 3 columns: Name, Party, State. Lists yeas for Senators: Banks, Barrasso, Blackburn, Boozman, Britt, Budd, Capito, Cassidy, Collins, Cornyn, Cotton, Cramer, Crapo, Cruz, Daines, Ernst, Fischer, Graham, Grassley, Hagerty, Hawley, Hoeven, Husted, Hyde-Smith, Johnson, Justice, Kennedy, Lankford, Lummis, Marshall, McConnell, McCormick, Moody, Moran, Moreno, Mullin, Murkowski, Paul, Ricketts, Risch, Rounds, Schmitt, Scott (FL), Scott (SC), Sheehy, Sullivan, Thune, Tillis, Tuberville, Wicker, Young.

NAYS—48

Table with 3 columns: Name, Party, State. Lists nays for Senators: Alsobrooks, Baldwin, Bennet, Blumenthal, Blunt Rochester, Booker, Cantwell, Coons, Cortez Masto, Curtis, Duckworth, Durbin, Fetterman, Gallego, Gillibrand, Hassan, Heinrich, Hickenlooper, Hirono, Kaine, Kelly, Kim, King, Klobuchar, Lee, Luján, Markey, Merkley, Murphy, Ossoff, Padilla, Peters, Reed, Rosen, Sanders, Schatz, Schiff, Schumer, Shaheen, Slotkin, Smith, Van Hollen, Warner, Warnock, Warren, Welch, Whitehouse, Wyden.

NOT VOTING—1

Murray

The amendment (No. 2035) was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I would ask that moving forward for the duration of this bunch of votes be 10 minutes in duration and that Members would get in their seats.

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

Mr. THUNE. If Members would get in their seats, we could start.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

AMENDMENT NO. 1758 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1717

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, I call up my amendment No. 1758 and ask that it be reported by number.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment by number.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Oregon [Mr. MERKLEY] proposes an amendment numbered 1758 to amendment No. 1717.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To create a point of order against legislation that would create more debt over a 30-year period than has accumulated over the past 249 years)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. —. POINT OF ORDER AGAINST ADDING MORE TO OUR DEBT IN ONE BILL THAN HAS ACCUMULATED SINCE THE NATION'S FOUNDING.

(a) POINT OF ORDER.—It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider any bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, amendment between the Houses, or conference report that would cause the Federal debt held by the public at the conclusion of the 30-fiscal year period beginning with the budget year provided for in the most recently adopted concurrent resolution on the budget in the Senate to increase by more than the amount of the gross debt accrued since July 4, 1776, relative to the baseline of the Congressional Budget Office prepared in accordance with section 257 of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 907).

(b) WAIVER AND APPEAL.—Subsection (a) may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under subsection (a).

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, my colleagues, my good friend from South Carolina compared this bill with balancing the family budget. Well back in my neighborhood, balancing the budget means you only spend what you earn. It doesn't mean borrowing, and it doesn't mean borrowing \$37 trillion and sticking it to the next generation.

If you agree that we should work toward balancing our budget, then vote for my amendment. It creates a point of order for any reconciliation bill that by itself would create more debt on America, on the next generation than all the debt our Nation has run up between July 4, 1776, and today.

I reserve the balance of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, my good friend from Oregon, you never put a point of order in your own resolutions, and we are not going to do it either. If you are really serious about trying to control spending, you need to start controlling spending. So there are two things we are trying to do here: Set in motion controlling spending by looking at the budget with the eye of reducing spending, and we are trying to make the tax cuts permanent because every time we cut taxes, revenue goes up. We just spend too much.

So we got a novel idea. We are going to increase revenue by cutting your taxes. We are going to control spending, and that is why they don't like this because they don't like doing either one of those.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, what we don't like is \$37 trillion in new debt hoisted on the next generation. This is throwing fiscal responsibility overboard to the bottom of the sea. We have never had a more fiscally irresponsible bill on the floor of the Senate than this one.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 1758

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question occurs on the adoption of the amendment.

Mr. GRAHAM. 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. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 46, nays 53, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 171 Leg.]

YEAS—46

Alsobrooks	Hickenlooper	Sanders
Baldwin	Hirono	Schatz
Bennet	Kaine	Schiff
Blumenthal	Kelly	Schumer
Blunt Rochester	Kim	Shaheen
Booker	King	Slotkin
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Smith
Coons	Luján	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Markey	Warner
Duckworth	Merkley	Warnock
Durbin	Murphy	Warren
Fetterman	Ossoff	Welch
Gallego	Padilla	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Peters	Wyden
Hassan	Reed	
Heinrich	Rosen	

NAYS—53

Banks	Graham	Moreno
Barrasso	Grassley	Mullin
Blackburn	Hagerty	Murkowski
Boozman	Hawley	Paul
Britt	Hoeven	Ricketts
Budd	Husted	Risch
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Cassidy	Johnson	Schmitt
Collins	Justice	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Lankford	Sheehy
Cramer	Lee	Sullivan
Crapo	Lummis	Thune
Cruz	Marshall	Tillis
Curtis	McConnell	Tuberville
Daines	McCormick	Wicker
Ernst	Moody	Young
Fischer	Moran	

NOT VOTING—1

Murray

The amendment (No. 1758) was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MORENO). The Senator from Rhode Island.

AMENDMENT NO. 1645 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1717

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I call up my amendment No. 1645 and ask that it be reported by number.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Rhode Island [Mr. REED] proposes an amendment numbered 1645 to amendment No. 1717.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to preventing reduction in enrollment or benefits for individuals enrolled in Medicaid, including seniors, children, families, individuals with disabilities, veterans, and military families)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. —. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO HEALTHCARE COVERAGE, WHICH MAY INCLUDE LEGISLATION PROHIBITING REDUCTION IN ENROLLMENT OR BENEFITS FOR INDIVIDUALS ENROLLED IN MEDICAID.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the alloca-

tions of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to access to health care, which may include legislation to prevent reductions in enrollment or benefits for individuals enrolled in Medicaid, including seniors, children, families, individuals with disabilities, veterans, or military families, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, this amendment is cosponsored by Senator KAINE and 18 of my colleagues.

Our amendment would simply prevent any cuts in healthcare coverage for a Medicaid beneficiary, something we should be able to agree on, I hope.

We all have talked about the need to protect Medicaid. Now we have to stand up and do that. This vote is an opportunity to put our money and our votes where our words are. And the question is, Will you protect the nearly 80 million Americans who rely on Medicaid or do you vote for tax giveaways for the wealthiest at the expense of everyone else?

I would urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

I ask for order on the floor, please.

The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, we are going to see a lot of this tonight, but this is what I call the politics of fear. The argument is going to be made that we are going to hurt all kinds of people tonight in all kinds of different ways, but the reality is that is not going to happen.

The President has been clear, any reforms to Medicare or Medicaid must not reduce patient benefits. In fact, section 3003 of this budget resolution reaffirms that commitment. The budget resolution gives the Senate maximum flexibility to meet this goal, and there is no need for this amendment.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 1645

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question now occurs on adoption of the amendment.

Mr. REED. 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 senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 48, nays 51, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 172 Leg.]

YEAS—48

Alsobrooks	Blumenthal	Cantwell
Baldwin	Blunt Rochester	Collins
Bennet	Booker	Coons

Cortez Masto	Kim	Schatz
Duckworth	King	Schiff
Durbin	Klobuchar	Schumer
Fetterman	Lujan	Shaheen
Gallo	Markley	Slotkin
Gillibrand	Merkley	Smith
Hassan	Murphy	Van Hollen
Hawley	Ossoff	Warner
Heinrich	Padilla	Warnock
Hickenlooper	Peters	Warren
Hirono	Reed	Welch
Kaine	Rosen	Whitehouse
Kelly	Sanders	Wyden

Mr. LUJÁN. Mr. President, they don't want to listen because they are trying to get rid of the darn program. It is not a surprise. They want to eliminate SNAP, \$230 billion completely devastates it.

It is not about the inefficiencies as they claim. This is going to hurt our constituents, and there are hundreds of thousands of constituents in every one of your States that are going to get hurt. This is not right.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I rise in opposition to Amendment No. 1726. I appreciate the concerns of my colleague from New Mexico regarding the challenges facing Americans in rural areas and those in need of nutrition assistance. However, this amendment indicates there is not a single dollar—not a single dollar—to be saved from waste, fraud, or abuse in the programs with the Agriculture Committee's jurisdiction.

It is possible to identify common-sense savings within the Agriculture Committee's jurisdiction while ensuring our Federal nutrition programs and farm programs are well-targeted and continue to be responsive to those in need.

I urge my colleagues to vote no on the amendment.

Mr. LUJÁN. Mr. President, how much time do I have?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has no time left.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 1726

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question now occurs on adoption of the amendment.

Mr. LUJÁN. 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. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) and the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 47, nays 51, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 173 Leg.]

YEAS—47

Alsobrooks	Heinrich	Rosen
Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Sanders
Bennet	Hirono	Schatz
Blumenthal	Kaine	Schiff
Blunt Rochester	Kim	Schumer
Booker	King	Shaheen
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Slotkin
Collins	Lujan	Smith
Coons	Markley	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warner
Duckworth	Murkowski	Warnock
Durbin	Murphy	Warren
Fetterman	Ossoff	Welch
Gallo	Padilla	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Peters	Wyden
Hassan	Reed	

NAYS—51

Banks	Britt	Cornyn
Barrasso	Budd	Cotton
Blackburn	Capito	Cramer
Boozman	Cassidy	Crapo

Cruz	Justice	Ricketts
Curtis	Kennedy	Risch
Daines	Lankford	Rounds
Ernst	Lee	Schmitt
Fischer	Lummis	Scott (FL)
Graham	Marshall	Scott (SC)
Grassley	McConnell	Sheehy
Hagerty	McCormick	Sullivan
Hawley	Moody	Thune
Hoeben	Moran	Tillis
Husted	Moreno	Tuberville
Hyde-Smith	Mullin	Wicker
Johnson	Paul	Young

NOT VOTING—2

Kelly Murray

The amendment (No. 1726) was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

AMENDMENT NO. 1310 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1717

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I call up my amendment No. 1310 and ask that it be reported by number.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follow:

The Senator from Virginia [Mr. WARNER] proposes an amendment numbered 1310 to Amendment No. 1717.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to strengthening protections for members of the Armed Forces by prohibiting the use of any commercial messaging application to transmit information revealing the timing, sequencing, or weapons to be used during impending United States military operations in foreign countries that may endanger the lives of members of the Armed Forces)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____ DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO STRENGTHENING PROTECTIONS FOR MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES BY PROHIBITING THE USE OF ANY COMMERCIAL MESSAGING APPLICATION TO TRANSMIT INFORMATION REVEALING THE TIMING, SEQUENCING, OR WEAPONS TO BE USED DURING IMPENDING UNITED STATES MILITARY OPERATIONS IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES THAT MAY ENDANGER THE LIVES OF MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to strengthening protections for members of the Armed Forces, which may include legislation that would prohibit the use of any commercial messaging application to transmit information revealing the timing, sequencing, or weapons to be used during impending United States military operations in foreign countries that may endanger the lives of members of the Armed Forces, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, in a good-faith effort to try to move the evening along, I have such a no-brainer amendment that it should pass by voice. We all know we care about national security in this Chamber. My amendment simply says: Let's not send

NAYS—51

Banks	Graham	Moreno
Barrasso	Grassley	Mullin
Blackburn	Hagerty	Murkowski
Boozman	Hoeben	Paul
Britt	Husted	Ricketts
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Risch
Capito	Johnson	Rounds
Cassidy	Justice	Schmitt
Cornyn	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Cramer	Lee	Sheehy
Crapo	Lummis	Sullivan
Cruz	Marshall	Thune
Curtis	McConnell	Tillis
Daines	McCormick	Tuberville
Ernst	Moody	Wicker
Fischer	Moran	Young

NOT VOTING—1

Murray

The amendment (No. 1645) was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

AMENDMENT NO. 1726 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1717

Mr. LUJÁN. Mr. President, I call up my amendment No. 1726 and ask that it be reported by number.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New Mexico [Mr. LUJÁN] proposes an amendment numbered 1726 to amendment No. 1717.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To strike the provision relating to instructions to the Committee on Agriculture)

On page 45, strike lines 11 through 15.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. For the order of the Senate, please take your conversations off the floor.

I now recognize the Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. LUJÁN. Mr. President, the last time we voted on the budget resolution, I introduced an amendment to prevent \$1 billion in cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

My Republican colleagues said that \$1 billion in cuts wouldn't take benefits away from our constituents and that they were targeting "inefficiencies."

Well, this time around Republicans are attempting to pass legislation that would cut \$230 billion from SNAP. I am willing to work with all of my Republican colleagues to make SNAP more efficient, but what you are doing is completely gutting the program, probably trying to eliminate it.

Mr. President, 41.2 million Americans rely on SNAP to put food on their family's table. Forty percent of SNAP recipients are children. And the fact it is impossible—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator will yield. Can we please have order on the floor. Continue, please.

classified information over nonsecure commercial applications.

I reserve the balance of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. COTTON. Colleagues, there are a lot of problems in the world: male pattern baldness, lactose intolerance, flat feet. There is a time and place to address those problems, but it is not tonight, and it is not on this bill. Just like it is not the time and place to address Signal either.

I know the Democrats are angry about how the Trump administration talked about killing terrorists in Yemen. I think we should be angry about how the Biden administration refused to kill terrorists in Yemen. That is especially true since Avril Haines and other Biden administration officials used Signal to discuss sensitive matters.

So I suggest we simply commend the President for taking long-overdue action while we keep our eyes tonight on the problems we can solve by cutting taxes, securing our border, unleashing American energy, and rebuilding our military. That is what it will take to keep America safe and prosperous, not debating extraneous issues better left for another time.

I urge my colleagues to oppose the amendment and to pass this budget.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, how much time do I have left?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 38 seconds.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President and colleagues, let's not obfuscate. We all know that if any lying military officer or any lying CIA officer had tweeted so carelessly this classified information, they would be fired immediately.

Now, we can punt on this or we can send a message to the men and women of the intelligence community—who, frankly, need a little bucking up after the NSA Director got fired today—and the men and women of the military that we respect classified information and keep it valuably secret. Vote for this amendment. Thank you.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 1310

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question now occurs on adoption of the amendment.

Mr. COTTON. 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. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 46, nays 53, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 174 Leg.]

YEAS—46

Alsobrooks	Blunt	Rochester	Cortez Masto
Baldwin	Booker		Duckworth
Bennet	Cantwell		Durbin
Blumenthal	Coons		Fetterman

Gallego
Gillibrand
Hassan
Heinrich
Hickenlooper
Hirono
Kaine
Kelly
Kim
King
Klobuchar
Lujan

Markey
Merkley
Murphy
Ossoff
Padilla
Peters
Reed
Rosen
Sanders
Schatz
Schiff
Schumer

Shaheen
Slotkin
Smith
Van Hollen
Warner
Warnock
Warren
Welch
Whitehouse
Wyden

NAYS—53

Banks
Barrasso
Blackburn
Boozman
Britt
Budd
Capito
Cassidy
Collins
Cornyn
Cotton
Cramer
Crapo
Cruz
Curtis
Daines
Ernst
Fischer

Graham
Grassley
Hagerty
Hawley
Hoeven
Husted
Hyde-Smith
Johnson
Justice
Kennedy
Lankford
Lee
Lummis
Marshall
McConnell
McCormick
Moody
Moran

Moreno
Mullin
Murkowski
Paul
Ricketts
Risch
Rounds
Schmitt
Scott (FL)
Scott (SC)
Sheehy
Sullivan
Thune
Tillis
Tuberville
Wicker
Young

NOT VOTING—1

Murray

The amendment (No. 1310) was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

AMENDMENT NO. 1466 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1717

Ms. ALSOBROOKS. Mr. President, I call up my amendment No. 1466 and ask that it be reported by number.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment by number.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Maryland [Ms. ALSOBROOKS] proposes an amendment numbered 1466 to amendment No. 1717.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to prohibiting attacks on Federal employees by protecting legally binding collective bargaining agreements and the right to organize)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. —. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO PROHIBITING ATTACKS ON FEDERAL EMPLOYEES BY PROTECTING LEGALLY BINDING COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENTS AND THE RIGHT TO ORGANIZE.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to the Federal workforce, which may include preventing the President from improperly exempting Federal agencies, and components of Federal agencies, from the provisions of chapter 71 of title 5, United States Code, and chapter 10 of title I of the Foreign Service Act of 1980 (22 U.S.C. 4101 et seq.), by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

Ms. ALSOBROOKS. For months, the President has engaged in a callous witch hunt against Federal workers,

many of whom are Marylanders. Now this administration has begun attacking the very unions that represent the civil servants.

The President's latest Executive order guts the ability of Federal workers across the government to collectively bargain. And it is just the latest attempt by this administration to skirt the law, strip protections for workers, and drastically cut the Federal workforce that keeps Americans safe and healthy.

I predicted that this would happen when the Secretary of Labor and her Deputy came before the HELP Committee. I was asking pointedly whether they would honor legally binding Federal collective bargaining agreements, and both said they had to check with some people and could not say.

This administration clearly does not have even a basic understanding of the legally binding nature of collective bargaining agreements. And at their core, like so many others in this administration, they simply do not respect the law. That is why we cannot let this stand.

My amendment would prevent the President from improperly using the national security exemption as a means to carve away workforce protections for Federal workers. I am grateful to the many colleagues who have cosponsored this amendment, and we will not stop fighting for our Federal workers and their workforce protections.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. I rise in opposition to the amendment.

President Trump wants the national security workforce to work for our security instead of any other agenda.

Federal employees already enjoy more benefits and protections than the private sector. They don't need the ability to hold national security hostage to the union agenda.

In February, we learned that over 100 intelligence officers were using an official chat room to discuss obscene, pornographic, and sexually explicit topics. Tulsi Gabbard quickly fired them. If they were a union, she would not have been able to.

For the security of our Nation, support President Trump's reforms and oppose this amendment.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 1466

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on adoption of the amendment.

Ms. ALSOBROOKS. 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. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 48, nays 51, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 175 Leg.]

YEAS—48

Alsobrooks	Heinrich	Reed
Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Bennet	Hirono	Sanders
Blumenthal	Kaine	Schatz
Blunt Rochester	Kelly	Schiff
Booker	Kim	Schumer
Cantwell	King	Shaheen
Collins	Klobuchar	Slotkin
Coons	Lujan	Smith
Cortez Masto	Markey	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murkowski	Warnock
Fetterman	Murphy	Warren
Galleo	Ossoff	Welch
Gillibrand	Padilla	Whitehouse
Hassan	Peters	Wyden

NAYS—51

Banks	Graham	Moran
Barrasso	Grassley	Moreno
Blackburn	Hagerty	Mullin
Boozman	Hawley	Paul
Britt	Hoeben	Ricketts
Budd	Husted	Risch
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Cassidy	Johnson	Schmitt
Cornyn	Justice	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cramer	Lankford	Sheehy
Crapo	Lee	Sullivan
Cruz	Lummis	Thune
Curtis	Marshall	Tillis
Daines	McConnell	Tuberville
Ernst	McCormick	Wicker
Fischer	Moody	Young

NOT VOTING—1

Murray

The amendment (No. 1466) was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARSHALL). The Senator from Arizona.

AMENDMENT NO. 1737 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1717

Mr. KELLY. Mr. President, I call up my amendment No. 1737 and ask that it be reported by number.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Arizona [Mr. KELLY] proposes an amendment numbered 1737 to amendment No. 1717.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to legislation that does not increase tax breaks for the wealthy)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____ . DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO LEGISLATION THAT DOES NOT INCREASE TAX BREAKS FOR THE WEALTHY.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to legislation that does not reduce the average tax liability of taxpayers with income over \$100,000,000, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. KELLY. Mr. President, this budget Republicans wrote would hand out massive tax cuts to the richest Americans and biggest corporations, paid for by blowing up our national

debt and slashing programs that help working families, like cutting healthcare. Working families are struggling to make ends meet and get ahead, and the American people don't believe that any multimillionaire or billionaire or big corporation needs another tax handout. It is pretty simple.

So, before this budget to give the wealthiest more tax breaks moves forward, I think the American people deserve a debate about who in this country is so rich that they don't need this massive tax cut.

So here is my proposal to start:

Mr. President, can we agree that no one making more than \$100 million per year—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. KELLY.—should have lower taxes?

These folks could pay a little more, and they are still going to be rich. Do they really need a tax cut? I don't think so. Vote yes if you agree.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, the Democrats claim that the Republicans are gearing up for a so-called class war and that extending the 2017 tax cuts is a handout for the wealthy. We have heard this so many times. It is no more true now than it has been the last umpteen times.

The Trump tax cuts reduce taxes for an overwhelming majority of Americans, and middle-class households receive the largest proportional benefits of the cuts. Those tax cuts also made our Tax Code more progressive. The highest income earners paid a greater share of taxes than they did before 2017. On top of lower tax rates across the board, those tax cuts provided targeted middle-class tax relief by doubling both the standard deduction and the child tax credit.

If those cuts expire this year, the middle-class families will be hit the hardest. The average family of four making \$80,000 will see their taxes increase by \$1,700. In fact, more than \$2.6 trillion of the tax hike, which would result from failing to extend these cuts, would fall on households making less than \$400,000 and, primarily, lower and middle-income families.

While Democrats attempt to distract from these claims by saying they are tax cuts for the wealthy, the Republicans remain focused on preventing tax hikes on working families and investing in American jobs.

I encourage a "no" vote, and I would be glad to voice vote it if we could agree on that.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 1737

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question now occurs on adoption of the amendment.

The amendment (No. 1737) was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

AMENDMENT NO. 1977 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1717

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I call up my amendment No. 1977 and ask that it be reported by number.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows: The Senator from Connecticut [Mr. MURPHY] proposes an amendment numbered 1977 to amendment No. 1717.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to legislation that does not increase tax breaks for the wealthy)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____ . DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO LEGISLATION THAT DOES NOT INCREASE TAX BREAKS FOR THE WEALTHY.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to legislation that does not reduce the average tax liability of taxpayers with income over \$500,000,000, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, so we have learned that the Republicans think that it is essential to blow up the deficit and debt in order to allow people making \$100 million a year to get a tax cut.

But what about a half a billion dollars? Do you think it is fair to kick millions of people off their healthcare—that is what your Medicaid cuts are going to do—so that you can give a tax cut to somebody who makes \$500 million?

Just a little perspective: If you make a half a billion dollars, you have just enough to afford the essentials—a six-bedroom house, three vacation homes, five luxury cars, a yacht with a full staff, and—good news—you have just a little bit left over, \$499 million a year.

It is immoral to kick people off of their healthcare in order to give a handout to somebody who has that kind of wealth. This amendment gives the Republicans a chance to do the right thing: no blowing a giant hole in our budget, no more massive debt in order to help people who are making a half a billion dollars a year.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I could just say what I said the last time, but I want to give a few more statistics.

Just last year, the Joint Committee on Taxation reported that the top 0.01 percent of taxpayers paid an average Federal income tax rate of 30.6 percent in 2019, compared to 5.3 percent for those in the 50th and 90th percentiles and a negative 2.2 percent for those in the bottom 50 percent. It is indisputable that most of the Federal tax burden is paid by the high earners. The top 10 percent of filers paid 72 percent of Federal income taxes. The top 1 percent paid more in Federal income taxes

than the bottom 90 percent combined. In addition, the voluntary tax compliance remains high.

In other words, as I said before, the Trump tax cuts made the Tax Code more progressive, not less. The American people deserve more than empty platitudes about billionaires and tax hike proposals that even a complete Democrat Congress could not pass under President Biden.

I urge a “no” vote.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 1977

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question now occurs on the adoption of the amendment.

The amendment (No. 1977) was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

AMENDMENT NO. 1773 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1717

Mr. KING. Mr. President, I call up my amendment No. 1773 and ask that it be reported by number.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Maine [Mr. KING] proposes an amendment numbered 1773 to amendment No. 1717.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to legislation that does not increase tax breaks for the wealthy)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____ . DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO LEGISLATION THAT DOES NOT INCREASE TAX BREAKS FOR THE WEALTHY.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to legislation that does not reduce the average tax liability of taxpayers with income over \$1,000,000,000, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Mr. KING. Mr. President, I think I would title this amendment the “Are There No Limits?” amendment.

My amendment is that there should be no tax cuts for anyone earning—an individual earning—more than \$1 billion a year. There are 170 people who fit into that category in this country. That is 6,000 times the income of the average American family.

The Senator from Idaho is discussing how these tax programs work. We can discuss and debate that, but the question is, Do people who make \$1 billion a year need a tax cut? If you believe that people who make \$1 billion a year deserve and need a tax cut, signify by voting no.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I think it is pretty clear that, no matter what

the taxes are on the upper income brackets, it would be claimed that they aren’t high enough. But let me just give a few more statistics.

Most of the Federal tax burden is paid by higher earners. Indeed, the top 1 percent of taxpayers pays more Federal income taxes than the bottom 90 percent combined. The tax cuts that we are talking about make the code more progressive, as I have said, and the highest income earners pay a greater share of taxes than they did before 2017. Federal tax collections have been near all-time highs since the Trump taxes were enacted, and the voluntary compliance rate remains high and stable. Higher taxes serve as disincentives to work and save and invest.

The American people deserve better. We are committed to helping all hard-working taxpayers get ahead, and I will work with anybody who is ready to focus on helping protect our families in America.

I urge a “no” vote.

Mr. KING. Mr. President, do I have any time left?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 10 seconds remaining.

Mr. KING. Nobody is talking about raising the rates. The only question before us on this amendment is, Should the rates be cut for people making more than \$1 billion a year?

I urge a “yes” vote and will accept a voice vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has expired.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 1773

The question now occurs on the adoption of the amendment.

The amendment (No. 1773) was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

AMENDMENT NO. 1647 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1717

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I call up my amendment No. 1647 and ask that it be reported by number.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Massachusetts [Ms. WARREN] proposes an amendment numbered 1647 to amendment No. 1717.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to legislation that does not increase tax breaks for wealthy corporations)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____ . DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO LEGISLATION THAT DOES NOT INCREASE TAX BREAKS FOR WEALTHY CORPORATIONS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to legislation that does not reduce the average tax liability of corporations with income over \$1,000,000,000, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legisla-

tion would not increase the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, Trump and the Republicans can tell lies about what they are doing, but votes don’t lie. Republicans just voted to say that there is no billionaire rich enough that they don’t need a new tax break. So what about giant corporations? The year after Trump’s last tax giveaway, Amazon paid zero dollars in taxes. The typical Boston public school teacher paid about \$10,000.

Can we agree that no billionaire corporation—like Amazon, Tesla, or Exxon—that makes over \$1 billion a year in profits should get another tax handout? Yes or no?

I yield, and I reserve the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, again, my colleagues continue to argue that our now-wealthy companies are showered with an ever-increasing tax break and need to pay their fair share. I would point out that the TCJA that we are talking about in this legislation doesn’t even touch the tax rates either way with regard to corporations.

Leaving that aside, before these tax cuts back in 2017, the United States had a 35-percent corporate tax rate—one of the highest in the world. Companies were fleeing America to do their capital formation in different parts of the world. After we did what everyone in those days agreed was an important reform of our business tax system, we had an end to corporate inversions, and capital started flowing back into the United States with the investments from companies around the world. We saw the greatest and strongest economy that we have seen in our lifetimes develop with the growth in jobs, wages, benefits, and a reduction in unemployment, and the wealth of the average family in America reached all-time highs.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, Exxon paid nothing. A Boston public school teacher paid \$10,000 after those tax cuts. I will take that as a no.

I am ready for a vote, and I will accept a voice vote.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 1647

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question now occurs on adoption of the amendment.

The amendment (No. 1647) was rejected.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. THUNE. I ask unanimous consent that the following amendments be in order, that the amendments be reported by number, with no amendments in order prior to a vote in relation to the amendments: No. 1, number 2186, Ossoff; No. 2, number 2107, Hickenlooper; No. 3, number 1441, Booker; No. 4, number 2180, Hirono; No.

5, 1644, Kim; and No. 6, number 2126, Sanders.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Democratic leader.

AMENDMENT NO. 1884 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1717

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I call up my amendment No. 1884, and ask that it be reported by number.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment by number.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New York [Mr. SCHUMER] proposes an amendment numbered 1884 to amendment No. 1717.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to preventing Trump's tariffs from increasing the cost of groceries and everyday goods for families)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____ . DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO PREVENTING TARIFFS FROM INCREASING THE COST OF LIVING FOR FAMILIES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to tariffs, which may include rescinding tariffs imposed after January 20, 2025 (other than tariffs on any foreign country of concern) if the price of groceries, medicine, and other household goods increases, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, President Trump's tariff tax is one of the dumbest things he has done as President, and that is saying something.

Markets are plummeting. Six trillion dollars in values gone. The odds of a recession, JPMorgan says is 60 percent. The dumbest most avoidable recession in American history, but the Trump recession is headed our way, and Donald Trump, meanwhile, is golfing.

The families are panicking. Their costs for food and drugs and clothing and cars and gas, \$5,000. So my amendment would stop President Trump's tariffs from crushing families financially. It would rescind any tariffs put in place after January 20 that have increased the cost of groceries, medicines, and everyday goods, and it would leave in place tariffs on adversaries like China, Russia, and North Korea.

On behalf of Ms. KLOBUCHAR and myself, we are for this.

And one other thing: How stupid they are the way they did it, to set tariffs to tax penguins but not Putin. Yes. The Heard and McDonald Islands, which only have penguins on them, are taxed. Russia is not.

This is the worst, worst tariff imposition we have ever seen. It is going to create a recession. If you vote for it, it is going to be on your hands.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I guess I have to say that this legislation doesn't deal with tariffs. But I am interested that the minority leader wants to turn the discussion to tariffs because they don't like the way the discussion on taxes is going.

Some would want to distract us from these important issues that we are dealing with and try to shift this decision, but most importantly, none of President Trump's tariffs rely on any authorities made from any—either this or prior—reconciliation bill, nor are they contingent on anything happening in the one we are considering.

It also bears noting that any enforcement effort to open foreign markets for our farmers, workers, and businesses is backed by tariffs.

What President Trump has said is that the existing tariff efforts to open markets for our Americans are not moving fast enough, and he is seeking to create opportunities.

Under President Biden, there was literally no enforcement, in fact, no negotiations to open trade across this globe. We can and should have a debate about how we should engage in effective trade, but that is not this bill.

I encourage a "no" vote. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Do I have any time remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. SCHUMER. A "yes" vote means a recession, folks.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 1884

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question now occurs on adoption of the amendment.

Mr. PETERS. 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 bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 46, nays 53, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 176 Leg.]

YEAS—46

Table listing names of Senators who voted YEAS: Alsobrooks, Baldwin, Bennet, Blumenthal, Blunt Rochester, Booker, Cantwell, Coons, Cortez Masto, Duckworth, Durbin, Fetterman, Gallego, Gillibrand, Hassan, Heinrich, Hickenlooper, Hirono, Kaine, Kelly, Kim, King, Klobuchar, Luján, Markey, Merkley, Murphy, Ossoff, Padilla, Peters, Reed, Rosen, Sanders, Schatz, Schiff, Schumer, Shaheen, Slotkin, Smith, Van Hollen, Warner, Warnock, Warren, Welch, Whitehouse, Wyden.

NAYS—53

Table listing names of Senators who voted NAYS: Banks, Barrasso, Blackburn, Boozman, Britt, Budd.

Table listing names of Senators who were NOT VOTING: Capito, Cassidy, Collins, Cornyn, Cotton, Cramer, Crapo, Cruz, Curtis, Daines, Ernst, Fischer, Graham, Grassley, Hagerty, Hawley, Hoeven, Husted, Hyde-Smith, Johnson, Justice, Kennedy, Lankford, Lee, Lummis, Marshall, McConnell, McCormick, Moody, Moran, Moreno, Mullin, Murkowski, Paul, Ricketts, Risch, Rounds, Schmitt, Scott (FL), Scott (SC), Sheehy, Sullivan, Thune, Tillis, Tuberville, Wicker, Young.

NOT VOTING—1

Murray

The amendment (No. 1884) was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

AMENDMENT NO. 1774

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, I call up my amendment No. 1774, and ask that it be reported by number.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment by number.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from California [Mr. PADILLA] proposes an amendment numbered 1774 to amendment No. 1717.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: Reiterating the importance of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and its continued role in providing nonpartisan and long-term disaster relief to disaster survivors)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____ . DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to supporting the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the continued, central role of the Federal Emergency Management Agency in providing nonpartisan disaster relief, including long-term recovery assistance, to disaster survivors in all States, territories, and Tribal nations impacted by disasters by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, colleagues, this amendment would simply reaffirm the importance of FEMA and express support for its continued role in providing nonpartisan, long-term disaster relief to all impacted communities.

We have seen in recent years, whether it is wildfires in the West, ice storms in Texas, tornadoes in the Midwest, or hurricanes in the Southeast, Mother Nature does not distinguish between red States or blue States, neither should our disaster response and recovery efforts.

I know that many, many of our Republican colleagues represent States

that simply don't have the resources necessary to properly prepare for and respond to major disasters without the assistance of FEMA. So we must work together to protect it.

This amendment should unite all of us, and I urge all of us to support it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, this amendment asks us to believe a lie, and the lie is that FEMA provides nonpartisan disaster relief. Until a few months ago, many of us hoped and expected that that would be the case. Alas, it was not.

During a contentious election cycle and in the wake of catastrophic damage by hurricanes and amidst lawfare galore, FEMA officials directed its relief workers to avoid giving aid to Florida homes displaying Trump signs.

One FEMA official, speaking on a condition of remaining anonymous, said that it is a longstanding practice and an open secret to avoid White or conservative-dominated areas.

Several FEMA officials have been fired since the investigation is ongoing. My counterpart from Florida, Representative STEUBE, has reported 35 credible claims of widespread discrimination against conservatives. This kind of behavior is reprehensible, and it is un-American.

Look, the amendment is a clear attempt to paper over this egregious malpractice of a rogue and unaccountable Agency. President Trump was right when he said FEMA should not have the central role providing disaster relief. FEMA needs to get out of the way and let States handle disaster recovery. We are not going to paper over it. Not now, not ever.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 1774

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question now occurs on the adoption of the amendment.

Mr. PADILLA. 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 senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 48, nays 51, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 177 Leg.]

YEAS—48

Alsobrooks	Fetterman	Luján
Baldwin	Gallego	Markey
Bennet	Gillibrand	Merkley
Blumenthal	Hassan	Murkowski
Blunt Rochester	Heinrich	Murphy
Booker	Hickenlooper	Ossoff
Cantwell	Hirono	Padilla
Collins	Kaine	Peters
Coons	Kelly	Reed
Cortez Masto	Kim	Rosen
Duckworth	King	Sanders
Durbin	Klobuchar	Schatz

Schiff	Smith	Warren
Schumer	Van Hollen	Welch
Shaheen	Warner	Whitehouse
Slotkin	Warnock	Wyden

NAYS—51

Banks	Graham	Moran
Barrasso	Grassley	Moreno
Blackburn	Hagerty	Mullin
Boozman	Hawley	Paul
Britt	Hoeven	Ricketts
Budd	Husted	Risch
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Cassidy	Johnson	Schmitt
Cornyn	Justice	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cramer	Lankford	Sheehy
Crapo	Lee	Sullivan
Cruz	Lummis	Thune
Curtis	Marshall	Tillis
Daines	McConnell	Tuberville
Ernst	McCormick	Wicker
Fischer	Moody	Young

NOT VOTING—1

Murray

The amendment (No. 1774) was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

AMENDMENT NO. 1646 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1717

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I call up my amendment No. 1646 and ask that it be reported by number.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Colorado [Mr. BENNET] proposes an amendment numbered 1646 to amendment No. 1717.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To prevent any disruption in security assistance to Ukraine)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____ . DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO PRESERVATION OF SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO UKRAINE.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to preserving the delivery of assistance to Ukraine, which may include legislation that would prohibit any reduction in United States security assistance and intelligence-sharing with Ukraine or any other new restriction on vital assistance that would enable Ukraine to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity against continuing Russian aggression, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, with Russia rejecting President Trump's proposed 30-day cease-fire and continuing to attack Ukraine and with the administration briefly pausing military and intelligence assistance to Ukraine last month, the Senate must send an unequivocal message. The Ukrainian people did not ask for this war. They did not invite this war. They have fought with everything they have and with the American people's support. They have suffered 400,000 casual-

ties and caused more Russian casualties than in all the wars that Russia has had since World War II.

Those of us serving in this Chamber have a duty to the American people to demand moral and strategic clarity by making clear that any steps by this administration to cut off military and security assistance to Ukraine is unacceptable.

This is a simple question; it is not a partisan one. And the answer is clear: This fight is not just for Ukraine. It is for democracy. It is for freedom.

I urge my colleagues to stand with the Ukrainian people and vote yes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to oppose this amendment. We certainly need a cease-fire in the Ukraine war. We are closer and closer to having an agreement between President Trump and President Zelenskyy about a cease-fire, and it is quite obvious that President Putin is not at all interested in peace.

But this budget resolution is about \$150 billion of investment in our military for shipbuilding, missile defense, munitions, innovation, taking care of our troops, and more.

Passage of this amendment will make it harder to pass the budget, and for that reason, I hope we will reject the amendment, and I urge my colleagues to vote no.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 1646

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question now occurs on adoption of the amendment.

Mr. BENNET. 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 senior assistant executive clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 48, nays 51, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 178 Leg.]

YEAS—48

Alsobrooks	Heinrich	Reed
Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Bennet	Hirono	Sanders
Blumenthal	Kaine	Schatz
Blunt Rochester	Kelly	Schiff
Booker	Kim	Schumer
Cantwell	King	Shaheen
Collins	Klobuchar	Slotkin
Coons	Luján	Smith
Cortez Masto	Markey	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murkowski	Warnock
Fetterman	Murphy	Warren
Gallego	Ossoff	Welch
Gillibrand	Padilla	Whitehouse
Hassan	Peters	Wyden

NAYS—51

Banks	Cassidy	Daines
Barrasso	Cornyn	Ernst
Blackburn	Cotton	Fischer
Boozman	Cramer	Graham
Britt	Crapo	Grassley
Budd	Cruz	Hagerty
Capito	Curtis	Hawley