

Donald Trump was going to fight for the working class, and, boy, was he right.

President Trump tapped into the American people's hopes in a way that few leaders before him ever have. And that is why I was so inspired in just the first couple of weeks on the job as a U.S. Senator to be in that Rotunda for President Trump's inauguration when he talked about ushering in the golden age of America. It was so encouraging and inspiring to real people in real places like my hometown.

I feel like I am living through some of the best parts of our history, and I stand with President Trump in his commitment to put those working families first. He is removing the "kick me" sign from the backs of our workers and our producers. He is doing what the voters elected him to do, and he is keeping his campaign promises.

He is putting our attention on the issues that matter most to working Americans, like being able to afford a home, a car, groceries, education, and healthcare.

He is standing up against global companies that are selling out to our enemies, and he is bringing back a country that builds and makes things. Just last month, so important to Indiana, we heard that Honda is going to build their new Honda Civic in Indiana, not in Mexico. And last week, GM said that they would increase truck production just a few miles from my hometown in Fort Wayne. Our steel mills are roaring back to life. Our tech companies are hiring in America again.

And Eli Lilly, also based in Indiana, plans to invest \$27 billion in American manufacturing. So far in just 10 weeks, President Trump has announced \$6 trillion in new investment in the United States of America. That type of investment is helping to bring back the American dream for hard-working Americans.

On election day this past November, I took what ended up being a long and nostalgic walk with my dog Marshall. He is named after Thomas Riley Marshall, the 28th Vice President of the United States, who is also from my small hometown.

In fact, his Vice Presidential statue is right outside the west door as you enter this Chamber. In fact, on election day, we walked right past his home, which today is a museum in his honor to his history. When I was in elementary school, we would go to field trips to the museum, and the teachers would say: Look what this guy did coming from a small town like this. If you work hard and dream big, maybe you can do something like that too.

I went on this dogwalk with Marsh, and we walked past the museum, we walked past the courthouse and the town square in my hometown. We walked past the hot dog stand that was where I had my first job as a teenager, and then we ended up in that trailer park that I mentioned earlier where I grew up.

I have driven past it many times, but it was the first time that I have actually gone through alone and walked through and down this street since I was a kid. It was just a couple of hours before the news would call my race and name me the Senator-elect for the great State of Indiana, so this was rather an emotional experience for me. As memories of my childhood flooded back, I realized how incredible of a life and opportunity that I have been given.

But as we were walking down that street, I noticed a mom sitting on the steps of her trailer, smoking a cigarette, watching her two boys in the yard who would have been about the same age as my brother and I would have been when we lived in that trailer park too. As I watched them, I couldn't help but wonder if those boys would be able to achieve what I did or if the deck was so stacked against them today that that kind of opportunity for them was way out of reach.

Later that evening as the results from election night poured in, it became apparent to me that America decided to turn the page to a new chapter for this great country. And as someone who has lived the American dream, I have got great news for those boys and their mom: The golden age of America is here.

It has only been 5 months since election day when I took that walk, and we have already seen a major shift for hard-working Americans. For too long, Washington has not cared about people like those boys and that mom, but I do. And I know that all of you do, and I know that President Trump does too.

As leaders in this country, we have a duty to fight for those boys and those moms like her for their American dream.

To my Republican colleagues and my colleagues across the aisle, we must stand together more than ever before to fight for those working families.

It is going to take everyone in this Chamber working together to do it. There is so much in this fight that we can all agree on as Republicans and Democrats, and now is the time for leadership of both parties to step up for American workers and families.

We are kicking off a new era of peace and prosperity like we have never seen before. Again, Indiana, thank you for this incredible opportunity. To my colleagues, it is a privilege to serve with you. I am so excited about what lies ahead.

I yield the floor.

(Applause.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

TRIBUTE TO JIM BANKS

Mr. YOUNG. Mr. President, I am thrilled to be in the audience for my colleague's maiden speech.

Senator BANKS just delivered inspired words. And he gave a speech from his heart as well as his head, and those are always the best received.

It is really—he has an amazing life story. He is a great public servant. I

know his family is very proud of him. I know his hometown in Northeastern Indiana are very proud of him, people throughout the great State of Indiana and really beyond, and I am proud of him.

I have known Senator BANKS for a lot of years, and we have long been friends. And it is really remarkable what he has done up to this point in his professional career and what he is going to do.

I want to thank JIM and his family for taking this step. It is not always easy serving in a public capacity. I want to welcome him formally to the U.S. Senate in front of the world, and I know Amanda is watching. Amanda, thank you so much for your service to this country. Sometimes it is like being the preacher's wife. You are not always given the credit that you are due. But certainly my colleagues here understand the sacrifices that are made as your husband serves the State of Indiana.

So I am glad you are here, JIM. We have a lot in common. We are both IU basketball fans. We both have a degree from Indiana University. We are both veterans. We both have three beautiful daughters, and one of yours is here. Lillian, thank you for visiting and being part of this important moment.

So I will just tell the world and to certainly my colleagues that JIM BANKS is committed, committed to making our economy work for everyone. JIM BANKS is committed to making sure that we satisfy our responsibilities of keeping the American people safe and secure by taking care of our warfighters and giving them all they need.

And, JIM, if you are up to it, and I think you are, we are going to do some amazing things together on behalf of the people of Indiana. We are going to have to right some wrongs from the past—you alluded to that—rethink some preconceived notions that require rethinking, and offer solutions. And we will work together on that and drive those solutions to outcomes.

More on that later, but I am just so appreciative to have you here, and I thank you for your words.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MORENO). The majority leader.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I, too, just want to welcome, officially—now that he has delivered his maiden speech—Senator BANKS from the great State of Indiana. Like his colleague Senator YOUNG, I, too, have had the opportunity to observe, and one thing I really appreciate about Senator BANKS is he obviously served his country as a Member of the House of Representatives; he served his country in the military; he was deployed abroad.

He is a veteran, and he is passionate about serving causes that are greater than himself. And that is a family passion, a partnership he and Amanda have and his girls. And I am just grateful that they are willing to roll up

their sleeves and go to work again on behalf of our great country.

I am not a Hoosier, but my favorite movie, at least top five, is "Hoosiers," and I also had the opportunity to travel a couple of times with Senator BANKS in his great State and had the opportunity to welcome him to ours for something he enjoys as passionately as I do, and that is pheasant hunting.

But you have been a great addition already to the U.S. Senate. You are a great leader for Indiana, and we look forward to working with you.

So welcome, and thanks so much for serving.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

TENNESSEE STORMS

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, in recent days, Middle and West Tennesseans have faced severe storms that have truly upended the lives of many of our communities and our citizens. Over 4 days, parts of our State saw more than 12 inches of rainfall. This has caused rising rivers, flash floods, and it has forced people out of their homes and their businesses.

At the same time, we have seen devastating tornadoes that have destroyed homes, businesses, and entire communities. In Selmer, TN, one tornado reached winds of 160 miles per hour, leaving a path of destruction. In the words of one survivor, the storms have left the town "unrecognizable."

As a result of this devastation, we have lost the lives of 10 Tennesseans. My heart goes out to every single one of their families as our State mourns this loss and as the communities gather to grieve the loss of their citizens.

Right now, Tennessee remains in a state of emergency. Over the weekend in Nashville, I visited the State Emergency Operations Center and received an update from the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency, FEMA, Tennessee Department of Transportation, Tennessee Highway Patrol, and other agencies on our State's emergency response. I also had the opportunity to visit with nonprofits that are meeting the needs on the ground of our citizens.

I do want to say thank you to all of the first responders and the volunteers and the emergency teams who are working around the clock to meet the needs of so many.

With water still rising in our State, power lines down, and many roads blocked completely, it is imperative that Tennesseans listen to local authorities and take every precaution to keep themselves safe. My team is working closely with State and Federal and local agencies, and we are ready to assist anyone who has endured these awful, awful storms.

In the face of any crisis, Tennesseans always come together. As we start to pick up the pieces from these storms, I know you will see that volunteer spirit alive and well in Tennessee.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. President, since Inauguration Day, President Trump has been hard at

work addressing one of the biggest threats that our Nation faces; that is, our \$36 trillion debt. Unlike the last administration, the Trump administration has been very vocal. They are choosing to save the taxpayer money, and I will have to say that so far, they have had a tremendous amount of success.

Now, I know some of my colleagues want to complain about DOGE, and they are not fond of the Department of Government Efficiency. I think it is worthy to note that DOGE so far has identified more than \$140 billion in potential savings for the American people. They have found this by going into each Department, working with the Secretaries of the different Departments, the heads of the Agencies, and they are reviewing unused Federal leases, Federal contracts, and they are saving billions. They are even able to find savings in some of these anti-American DEI programs.

Every American should be celebrating this effort that saves them money. Government has not one penny to spend until the taxpayer sends the money. Every dollar is taxpayer money; it is not Federal money. The Federal Government does not create this; it is taxpayer money. So taxpayers should be celebrating the elimination of waste, fraud, and abuse.

It is essential that we go through this process, that we right-size government, that we utilize technology, and that we ensure that this country remains free, independent, sovereign, and solvent. Yet, for weeks, we have seen our colleagues on the other side of the aisle choose to stand up and attack President Trump's efforts to rein in Federal spending and to make government transparent and accountable to the people. Again, it is an issue of, who is paying the bill for this? It is the American people. And if you are paying the bill, you want to know what it is that you are paying for.

This has been so interesting to me to see my colleagues on the other side of the aisle object to DOGE and object to saving Federal money, object to wise stewardship of Federal resources, and then to attack, attack, attack. Many of these attacks are disconnected from reality.

Recently, the Democrats have landed on a new line, and we have heard them repeat this over and over. Now their new line is that Republicans and the Trump administration are using DOGE to cut Social Security benefits for our Nation's seniors. Well, nothing could be further from the truth. It is Republicans and President Trump that are seeking to save—to save—Social Security.

Last month in this very Chamber, the Senate Democratic leader claimed that "the goal of Trump and Elon Musk is to destroy Social Security from within." Well, nothing could be further from the truth.

To help our Democrat colleagues to understand this issue, I have pulled to-

gether a fact sheet that makes one thing clear: While eliminating wasteful spending, improper payments, and fraud in the system, Republicans are protecting Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid for the beneficiaries for which it is intended.

See, our colleagues across the aisle have this completely backward, and they have been pushing these talking points off to the mainstream media, to some of the leftists that are out protesting.

If you accept the status quo on Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security, basically what you are saying is: Hey, I am OK if you waste money. I am OK if you make improper payments. I am OK if you allow fraud and deception. I am OK if you let the trust fund run dry. I am OK if you cut benefits.

In essence, that is what they are saying because they are accepting the status quo.

But repeatedly we remind people that it is Republicans who are trying to save Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid because we are rooting out waste, fraud, abuse, and making certain those benefits should go to the people who deserve them.

But this shouldn't come as a surprise to anybody. We have been saying: Let's preserve these programs, and let's make them stronger. Let's make certain that scammers and fraudsters don't have access to taxpayer money.

Just last month, the President said:

I'm not going to touch Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid. Now, we're going to get fraud out of there. . . . Everybody wants us to get the fraud out, and therefore you'll make it better.

That is exactly what we are doing. By eliminating waste and fraud, the administration is strengthening these essential programs.

For example, DOGE confirmed that 1.3 million individuals who secured fraudulent Social Security numbers also received Medicare benefits. That is stealing money from individuals who are entitled, rightfully, to the benefits.

So if you have 1.3 million individuals who have fraudulent Social Security numbers and they have also signed up for Medicare, they should be removed from the program because they are not entitled to be on that program.

DOGE also sifted out 10 million cases where Social Security number holders were over the age of 120. Now, this should raise alarms. I don't know how many—if any—Americans are 120 years of age or older, but we do know that there are 10 million cases where there are Social Security number holders that are over 120 years old.

The right thing to do is to find out. If you have people who say they are 150, 165, 200 years, even one that is listed as 300 years old, we need to be investigating this and find out who is getting the check and who is cashing that check because that person is not entitled to that check—which, by the way, is paid with taxpayer money.

When I talk with Tennesseans, they want to make certain that people who