

care more about shuffling trillions—and, yes, that is “t,” trillions—at billionaires, Trump has said, in his own words—in his words—that he “couldn’t care less” about the pain his tariffs are already causing for Americans.

I am not kidding. He actually said that about automobile tariffs.

This is what happens when you only have billionaires in charge because, of course, Trump doesn’t care if the car prices go up by a couple thousand dollars. Of course, Elon Musk doesn’t care if your groceries are getting more expensive—at the same time Republicans are cutting nutrition programs, by the way. Of course, the richest people in the world don’t care if your nest egg is crushed or your small business shutters or your house gets foreclosed on or your kid can’t go to college. Billionaires are going to be fine. After all, they are still getting a tax cut.

But I wasn’t sent here to fight for billionaires. Actually, none of us were. We are here to fight for families back home, and they are already starting to get crushed by Trump’s tariffs. And they are bracing for impact if Trump doubles down in 90 days. Or who knows, maybe Trump changes his mind again tomorrow. It is anyone’s guess at this point, which is, by the way, the problem here.

Another thing, if this is about American manufacturing, tell us: Why are plants and new investments being canceled? Why has Trump been freezing and outright canceling grants that we passed to support chips manufacturing or clean energy, and more, killing American jobs?

Let’s keep in mind, these tariffs affect building and construction too. Trump is actually making it more expensive to build those factories in America.

And don’t forget, President Trump is still promising more tariffs. He said this week—this week—he wants to put tariffs on medicine.

I have got to tell you, one thing I have never heard—not in a single meeting, not once in my entire career as a Senator—is someone saying: Gee, I really wish my prescriptions were more expensive.

Drug costs are out of control. Families are already skipping meals or rationing doses. There are real stakes here, there is real damage already happening in this country because of Trump’s new taxes and this ongoing chaos. We here cannot ignore this harm, especially when the threat is still there.

When you are putting out a fire, you don’t say: Oh, great, it is smaller; I am done. You keep going until the fire is put out.

This fire—this fire—is still raging, and if we don’t act here, folks back home are the ones who are going to get burned. And before too long, in 90 days, we could see even more price increases come roaring back, because, let’s be real, Trump has no exit strategy. That much is already painfully clear.

It was clear when he announced tariffs that were calculated using ridiculous math. It was clear when he repeatedly doubled down on these threats against our allies. And it was clearer than ever when he backtracked on the most absurd tax hikes.

This does not have the hallmarks of a grand strategy, and it is all the more reason why Congress—us—needs to step in and put this mess to an end.

Trump’s trade war is all pain and no plan. We could be passing legislation right here to reject this chaos.

Here is what everyone—my colleagues, my constituents, the markets around the world—all need to understand: This chaos will not be over for good unless we here in Congress vote to end it, because whatever Trump tweets today, he can reverse tomorrow. Whatever deal he may strike one minute, he may rip up the next. We know this about him. He proves it at every opportunity.

We here in Congress, we are the off-ramp if Republicans decide to be. We are the check on Presidential power. We are the kill switch for Trump’s trade war.

And, by the way, we are about to be out of town for 2 weeks. I cannot understand why any Republican would want to leave this business unfinished, want to leave this economic timebomb ticking, want to hand over our constitutionally granted power to impose tariffs.

But I can tell you, for the next 2 weeks, I am going to be going across my home State of Washington raising this alarm. I am going to be meeting with families, small businesses—people who are paying the cost of Trump’s new tax increase and who are going to see their world turned upside down if we do not take action to stop this from getting worse.

And when we get back here in 2 weeks, you can bet your bottom dollar, I will lift those stories up as high as I can. I will call for action as loud as I can. I am going to keep a bright and burning spotlight on all of the chaos Trump has caused, and I will keep the pressure on all of our colleagues. I will not let Republicans off the hook on this.

We can put an end to this. The costs are just going to be adding up. The carnage is going to continue to pile higher.

How long do you want to wait? My vote—not one more second.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Alaska.

TARIFFS

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, yesterday was a day that really cap-

tured the attention of the world. We have all been talking about tariffs for a little bit, but yesterday was the day that really brought the focus to what was going on here in the United States.

At 12:01 in the morning on Wednesday, President Trump’s tariffs on the countries with which the United States has had the largest trade deficits went into effect, on top of the 10-percent tariff rates that had previously applied to all countries, which had been initiated on Saturday, April 5.

And then just hours later yesterday afternoon, the President announced a 90-day pause on lowering reciprocal tariffs to then 10 percent—at the same time announced that he was raising tariffs on China to 125 percent. Now today, it looks like that number is closer to 145 percent. To say this has been a dizzying week in Washington, DC, is probably an understatement.

Those of us who are following the markets, it has been somewhat headspinning. I am not going to comment here on the floor today about the negotiating tactics of President Trump. I think he is legendary and really world-renowned for his skills at that—his skills in bringing nations to the table.

We are seeing some of this play out literally as we speak; other countries that have approached the administration to have discussions about tariffs.

This is a unique kind of leverage, most certainly keeping those across the table off-balance. But bringing the world, potentially, to a—to the brink of a ruinous trade war certainly qualifies as a very unique point of leverage.

The effort to try to reshore manufacturing here in this country is important, it is admirable, and it is something that we all should be working toward. But I think there has been general agreement that the message from the administration has been decidedly mixed, which leads to further confusion among our trading partners and our allies. If nobody understands where the finish line is, it is hard to reach it.

I don’t want to focus my comments here this afternoon about these possible strategies and end results of these policies so much. But I want to focus more on the process of how these tariffs were imposed because I believe—I believe—it is yet another example of Congress is choosing to cede its powers to the executive branch.

If the global implications of these tariffs have shown us nothing else, it is that measures that are as important as the issue be considered by the 535 elected individuals that are in tune with the American people rather than vesting that with just one individual acting unilaterally. It is under article I section 8 of our U.S. States Constitution that clearly enumerates that Congress “shall have Power To Lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts, and Excises.” In other words, the power to levy tariffs rests with us here in Congress.

So why—why—have we seen the Executive take control over tariff rates?

And the answer lies in almost a century-long series of bills that we have seen here that Congress has voluntarily—voluntarily—enacted and laid down its authority for the Executive to pick up.

Following the disastrous Smoot-Hawley Act of 1930, which plunged our Nation deeper into the Great Depression, Congress passed the following legislation: First, it was the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act of 1934, which authorized the President to make limited tariff rates without congressional review on top of negotiating bilateral reciprocal trade agreements.

Then it was the Trade Expansion Act of 1962, which broadened the President's trade powers to include multilateral trade agreements while also allowing the President to unilaterally impose tariffs if imports could threaten national security.

Then the Trade Act of 1974, which allowed the President to protect U.S. workers by adjusting tariffs if foreign countries engaged in unfair trade practices.

And then just a few years later, it was the International Emergency Economic Powers Act of 1977, which gives the President authorities to address declared emergencies if “unusual and extraordinary” threats exist to national security, foreign policy, or to the economy. So powers include—you probably guessed it—the authority to “regulate” or “prohibit” imports.

So in his April 2 Executive order, President Trump declared a national emergency because of “a lack of reciprocity in our bilateral trade relationships” and our “trading partners’ economic policies that suppress domestic wages.”

He is authorized—he is authorized to do so under the National Emergencies Act of 1976. So I want to be clear about all of this. I know some people might not like it, but all of what he has done is clearly above board.

The President is clearly within his powers to impose tariffs on our allies like Mexico and Canada and the EU just as much as he is with our adversaries like China, Russia, and Iran.

President Trump, and President Biden before him, took this route because Congress has largely relegated tariff authority to the President through the laws that effectively cede to the Executive.

And, my friends, it is just one more example—just one more example—of Congress abdicating instead of legislating.

In my time here, I have seen a troubling pattern in both bodies where the party that controls the White House seems all too comfortable relinquishing authority to the President and then rubberstamping whatever policies the Executive wants enshrined into law. Both Democrats and Republicans in Congress have deferred to the Executive to call the shots, in my view, for far too long.

Now, we use the phrase around here a lot, “coequal branches of government.”

I use it all the time. But the reality is, Congress was created in article I—article I of the Constitution. We are given far more authority than the Executive.

All you need to do is look in your handy-dandy pocket Constitution. Ours is a lot longer, but look at the authorities that we have: Congress may impeach and remove a President and members of the judiciary; Congress can override a Presidential veto of legislation; Congress appropriates the money that funds the operation of all branches of government; and it is Congress that, again, needs to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts, and excises.

We also say a lot around here that “business loves certainty.” I would suggest the country's entire tariff regime being subject to the whims of one individual lends anything but certainty, and that is why—that is why—I have signed onto Senator GRASSLEY and Senator CANTWELL's legislation. They call it the Trade Review Act of 2025, and it would reclaim this branch's authority and duty to help manage tariffs as outlined in the U.S. Constitution.

The bill requires notice to the Congress of the imposition of—or increase in—any tariffs, requires notice to the Congress in 48 hours; and with that congressional notification, it has to include an explanation of the President's reasoning for imposing or raising the tariffs as well as providing an analysis of potential impact on American businesses and consumers.

I can tell you, the Alaskans that I am talking to back home would really like the last part of this, an analysis of: How is this going to impact us?

Another provision within the Grassley-Cantwell act is, within 60 days, Congress would pass a joint resolution for approval on the new tariff. Otherwise, all new tariffs on imports could expire on that deadline.

So what this act effectively would do would be to reaffirm Congress's role with regards to tariffs. It allows for a greater engagement, if you will, between the executive and the congressional branch; allows for the debate; allows for that engagement; allows for that understanding.

Again, I am hearing from folks all over back home because they are worried. We already pay high costs for just about everything in Alaska, but they are worried what it is going to mean for groceries, for cars, for furniture, electronics, coffee.

We had a visit with a group of high school students on the steps yesterday and they were from all over the State. You had some from Ketchikan all the way up to King Cove and out in the Y-K Delta. And the first question from one of the 16-year-olds in that group was: Can you tell me what is going on with tariffs? How is this going to impact us?

You know, I really appreciated that question from that 16-year-old, who is paying attention to what is going on. He has got questions. He is here in

Washington, DC, and he is figuring he is going to get some answers from his Senator.

Alaskans are facing consequences. They want to know that they have a voice in it. And their voice is us. It is their Senator. It is their Representative. That is our role here.

Now, it has been suggested—the President himself has issued a statement about this legislation. He has indicated that he does not support it and that he would veto it. That is absolutely within his power, but we also have powers. We also have powers here in Congress, and we need to assert them.

So I would hope that this bill is maybe just the start—maybe just the toe in the water here where we are starting to see Congress reassert its authority. Because if we don't stand up for the institution, if we don't stand up for the legislative branch of our government by debating this issue and others, but holding votes, debating—let's debate this. Let's have a vote on the Trade Review Act. Because if we just sit back, if we don't assert our authority, we have only got ourselves to blame when we don't like the direction that may be taken.

The Executive has slowly arrogated more and more power since the end of World War II, and it has dramatically accelerated post 9/11, but we here in Congress have stood by, and we have accepted it. We have said it is OK.

I think it is time for Congress to reassert itself, whether it is on tariffs, whether it is on the power of appropriation, whether it is overseeing the bodies and the Agencies that we as a body have authorized. So let's legislate. Let's remember our role is to legislate. We owe that to those that we represent as well as to this institution for the long-term good of the Nation.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

REMEMBERING E. LAWRENCE DAVIS III

Mr. BUDD. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the life of a dear friend and public servant, Egbert Lawrence Davis III, who went home to be with his Heavenly Father on March 17, surrounded by his loving family.

Everyone who knew Lawrence knew that he loved God; he loved North Carolina; and he loved his country so much that he chose to dedicate his life's work to serving the great State that he called home.

Lawrence served two terms in the North Carolina General Assembly as a State representative and two terms as a State senator. Throughout his career in public service, he served as the chair of the North Carolina Family Business Forum, the president of the Rotary Club of Raleigh, and a board member of the North Carolina Bar Association—just to name a few.

But when asked what he would consider to be the highlight of his career, he said his marriage to his beloved wife Sandra Holderness. Their enduring love