

these relationships will help put an end to the cartels' child trafficking which the Biden administration enabled.

I am pleased that President Trump has also ended the use of the Customs and Border Protection One app. This was an app that you could download on your phone that allowed migrants to more quickly and efficiently cross the open border.

Under the Biden administration, you could simply make an appointment using this app on your phone, meaning the Federal Government would facilitate your entry into the United States on a quicker basis. It is really bizarre if you think about it. But it gave the cartels other ways to make money by selling appointments that they had made on the app. It was obviously hijacked by the cartels, who are not dumb—they are smart—and they are driven by a profit motive.

I am glad that President Trump made border security a day one priority of his administration. I look forward to continuing to work with him to help improve the safety for communities all across Texas and all across the Nation.

But I am also thrilled that President Trump has chosen a new U.S. Border Patrol Chief, a Texan, Mike Banks. People may have heard of Mike Banks before because he was Governor Abbott's border chief.

Mike brings incredible credentials to this job. While the Vice President made only one trip to the Texas-Mexico border during her entire tenure, Mike is a former Border Patrol agent. He has got vast experience at the border.

He understands firsthand the impact on our border communities and what our Border Patrol agents have been through. He spent two-thirds of his more than three decades of Federal law enforcement at the United States-Mexico border. As I indicated, Governor Abbott had selected him to serve as the Texas border czar, and Mike has also served in the U.S. Navy military police.

So I have had the privilege of getting to know Mike, and I know his qualifications, his experience and his competence and his firsthand experience dealing with the challenges at our border, and I have no doubt that he will make an outstanding 27th head of the U.S. Border Patrol.

I look forward to working with him and President Trump to secure our borders and to make our community safe again.

This is one of the main reasons that President Trump was elected, along with sky-high inflation, and the very dangerous world that seems to have grown up in the face of the weakness projected by the Biden administration around the world. But job No. 1 is to secure our borders and protect the American people. And I am proud of the fact that President Trump has, on day one, taken such important steps to begin that process.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:33 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. BRITT).

BORN-ALIVE ABORTION SURVIVORS PROTECTION ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

NOMINATION OF JOHN RATCLIFFE

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, at some point, the Senate will vote on the nomination of John Ratcliffe to be the Director of the CIA. I am here to outline for just a few moments why I oppose this nomination.

Let me begin by saying I often vote for nominees who have different policy views than I do. However, my concerns with Mr. Ratcliffe are much deeper than that.

In 2020, I opposed his confirmation to be Director of National Intelligence because I believe his partisanship and willingness essentially went to the proposition of doing what would please Donald Trump. Unfortunately, his actions as head of National Intelligence only confirmed my concerns. Today, I want to focus on John Ratcliffe's commitment to the law and his truthfulness with Congress. I will give a couple of examples to illustrate my concerns.

In 2019, the Congress passed a law requiring the Director of National Intelligence to submit an unclassified report on who was responsible for the brutal murder of Washington Post reporter and U.S. resident Jamal Khashoggi. In 2020, after John Ratcliffe was nominated to be the head of National Intelligence, I asked him at his confirmation hearing whether he intended to follow that law. He responded that he needed to take a look at the underlying intelligence to see what could be released, and that is not the same as saying he would do as the law required.

After Director Ratcliffe was confirmed as DNI, he decided that nothing more could be declassified about the murder of Jamal Khashoggi. The effect of that decision was to cover up the fact that Saudi Prince Mohammed bin Salman approved the operation to capture or kill Khashoggi. The public only has the facts today because after the 2020 election, then-head of National Intelligence Avril Haines abided by the law and released the report.

But while John Ratcliffe was Director of National Intelligence, the Saudi leadership was protected from public accountability. While he was Director of National Intelligence, Director Ratcliffe wrote to multiple Members of Congress saying that he had completed his review of the intelligence and determined that nothing more could be

released. Despite the fact that the Congress passed a law, Director Ratcliffe insisted that there was only marginal public interest in declassification. He said this in three letters to me, to Acting Chairman Rubio and Vice Chairman WARNER, and to the chair of the House Intelligence Committee. To me, this raises questions about John Ratcliffe's commitment to the law.

Basically, I have concerns about his truthfulness with the Congress. As part of this nomination process, I submitted a written question asking him why he didn't obey the law. He responded that a review had been necessary to determine what could be declassified and I quote here:

This review was not completed until after I left office.

Madam President, that statement by Mr. Ratcliffe just wasn't true. Mr. Ratcliffe wrote three letters to the Congress saying that the review had been completed. That fact was even included in the ODNI's representations to a court in a FOIA case.

So here is why I am opposing the Ratcliffe nomination. If John Ratcliffe is willing to make representations to the Congress that are contradicted by what is in the public record, imagine how easy it would be for him to misrepresent classified matters behind a veil of secrecy.

There are other aspects of John Ratcliffe's record as DNI that are troubling. He said during his confirmation hearing he would tell truth to power. The record suggests otherwise. For example, at the end of September 2020, he released intelligence about Hillary Clinton's 2016 campaign. That was even though the intelligence community didn't know if it was accurate or the extent to which it was fabricated or exaggerated by Russian intelligence. Needless to say, this was a major break from standard practice, and it is hard to escape the conclusion that it was done for partisan political purposes, particularly given the timing.

I asked Mr. Ratcliffe whether he had ever taken any actions that were actually in conflict with the positions of the President. His response was simply to offer nothing.

Madam President, my concerns in 2020 that John Ratcliffe was too partisan to be confirmed as the head of an intelligence Agency have been validated by these specific examples I have cited today. As I said, he also now has a record of ignoring a law passed by the U.S. Congress and then misrepresenting basic facts about that decision.

So when the Senate does vote on the Ratcliffe nomination, I want the record to show that I strongly oppose the nomination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

HAMAS

Ms. ROSEN. Madam President, on October 7, 2023, Hamas terrorists shocked the human conscience when they carried out an attack on Israel

that killed innocent men, women, and children and took hundreds of hostages, including Americans.

I still remember waking up that day to horrific reports coming out of Israel—the heart-wrenching stories of people brutalized, of women raped, the mass murder of more than 1,200 people, and the abduction of so many men and women and babies and the elderly.

These hostages, they are more than just names; they are more than just statistics. They are mothers. They are fathers. They are sons. They are daughters. They are friends. They are community.

Since that horrific day more than a year ago, Hamas has kept them captive, enduring inhumane conditions that no one—I repeat no one—should be subjected to. And in doing so, Hamas has inflicted an unimaginable amount of pain and suffering on the families of the hostages as well; families who have been living a nightmare—a nightmare. They don't know the fate of their loved ones, and they are tormented by every video that Hamas releases.

For others, it meant the heartbreak of knowing their loved one was murdered by Hamas, but their body has remained captive. Families have been unable to properly bury and grieve their loved one.

In the days, weeks, and months since that terrible day, I met with many of the hostage families repeatedly, both in Israel and the United States. Their resilience and their strength—I don't know how they do it. They wake up every day and they stand tall and they are resilient and they are strong and they speak out in the face of such pain and suffering. It is remarkable and unimaginable that they have to do this all at the same time.

Each time I met with these families, I made it clear, I will continue to do everything I can to make sure that they are reunited with their loved ones.

That is why the agreement between Israel and Hamas—which has paused the conflict and commits to bringing the remaining hostages home—is welcome relief. The deal is also helping to save civilian lives in Israel and Gaza by putting a stop to the fighting. It is ramping up the delivery of much needed humanitarian aid into Gaza.

So let's be clear: This agreement was possible because of the steadfast and unwavering support of the United States for Israel. And it was brought about because of the advocacy of the hostage families, together with bipartisan diplomatic leadership.

Now I am going to take a moment and speak directly to all of the families who have been waiting for nearly 500 days—waiting for news, waiting for a phone call, waiting for a moment that they could embrace their loved ones once again.

Your pain, your perseverance, your strength in the face of heartbreak and tragedy and your tireless effort pushing forward for a deal, pushing forward

for progress—you got us to this point. You did. You have made the difference.

Though nothing can undo the devastation in the past 15 months, I can only hope that this agreement can begin to provide some form of relief.

I know that we are all relieved to see three hostages finally freed over the weekend and reunited with their families. Romi, Emily, and Doron are finally home—finally home. The images of embraces with their mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers filled our hearts; it fuels our resolve.

We know that our work is not yet over, so I want to be clear: The United States will not rest until every single hostage is returned home. Now more than ever, we must continue being vigilant to make sure this agreement is fully carried out. The road ahead undoubtedly will be difficult, but with our continued, unconditional support of Israel and commitment to regional stability, this deal can bring some much needed peace of mind to the people of Israel, to the hostages, to their families, and to the region as a whole.

We pray for the families who are still waiting the returns of their loved ones, and we hope to bring peace through strength.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BANKS). The Senator from Louisiana.

GEORGE SOROS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, last week, President Biden—I wish him well—gave his farewell address to America. He said a number of things, but one in particular got my attention. He warned America about—his words, not mine—“a dangerous concentration of power in the hands of a very few ultra-wealthy people.”

President Biden went on to say:

Today, an oligarchy is taking shape in America of extreme wealth, power, and influence that literally threatens our entire democracy, our basic rights and freedoms, and a fair shot for everyone to get ahead.

I don't know who President Biden was talking about, but I know one particular circumstance about which I am going to speak that fits his warning. Again, I don't know if the circumstance I am about to describe is what President Biden meant, but if the shoe fits, wear it, Cinderella.

Let me cut to the chase. Mr. George Soros is an oligarch. He is one of the wealthiest people in the world. He is a friend of President Biden's—nothing wrong with that. In fact, President Biden just gave him I think the highest civilian honor that a President can give to a civilian—the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Mr. George Soros is buying WWL AM radio in New Orleans. Let me say that again. That may not mean much to you, Mr. President, but it means a lot to my people in Louisiana. Mr. George Soros is buying WWL AM radio in New Orleans.

WWL AM radio is practically an institution in my State. It has been around since 1922—1922—over 100 years.

It is a clear channel—what the communications experts call a clear channel class A station. Its transmitter output is about 50,000 watts. That is a lot, folks. That is the maximum for commercial AM stations in the United States. It is the lead station on the New Orleans Saints Radio network. It is an important station, and Mr. George Soros is buying it.

What does that mean, and how did this happen? WWL is owned by a national company called Audacy. Audacy has about 220 radio stations nationwide, one of which, of course, is WWL—the second largest radio network in America. It reaches I think 45 different markets throughout our country, 165 million Americans. It is huge.

Audacy borrowed too much money. They took on too much debt. They took on about \$1.9 billion worth of debt, and they couldn't service that debt with their revenues. So what did they do? They did what many other corporations do when they can't service their debt: They went into what is called chapter 11 bankruptcy—not chapter 7. Chapter 7 is when they liquidate the company. Chapter 11 bankruptcy is when a company goes into bankruptcy in front of a bankruptcy judge and says: Judge, we want to get all of our creditors and debtors together and restructure our cash flow and our debt so we can come out of this bankruptcy a surviving entity.

They went into chapter 11 with a bankruptcy plan. Mr. George Soros immediately pounced. Of that \$1.9 billion in debt, he bought about \$415 million of it; cash on the barrelhead; paid 50 cents on the dollar.

One of the tenets of the reorganization was that all the current shareholders would be wiped out. The new creditors would assume equity positions in the company. I know that sounds complicated, and it can be, but really what it means is that the bondholders—one of which is Mr. Soros after he bought it, bought the \$450 million worth of debt—became a shareholder, and Mr. Soros is now the largest single shareholder in Audacy radio stations, including WWL AM in New Orleans, an institution.

In America, you can't just go do this. Why is that? Because those airwaves on which WWL and the other radio stations broadcast—they don't belong to the radio stations. They belong to you and you and you and you. These airwaves—the spectrum, if you will—are owned by the American people.

Years ago, we created the Federal Communications Commission, the FCC. We set it up to be in charge of the airwaves that belong to the American people to make sure that those airwaves were being used prudently by radio stations. For example, if a radio station is bought by a bunch of foreign nationals or foreign entities, the FCC has to approve it. For example, anytime a broadcast license, as is the case with Audacy, is transferred, the FCC has to approve it. So Mr. Soros's purchase of WWL Radio and the 219 other

radio stations had to go before the FCC, and it did, and it went—the approval for Mr. Soros went through the FCC like green grass through a goose. It was a party-line vote. It was last September. All three Democrats—there are five people on the FCC—all three Democrats said let it go, and they short-circuited the normal process.

Now, I am not an FCC expert, and I am not a communications law expert, but this has been widely reported, and I have read about it in many reports. Normally, on a deal of this size, when 220 radio stations are being transferred—their licenses—using airwaves that belong to the American people and there is a substantial percentage of foreign owners, it would take about a year to get through the FCC. The FCC would do a complete investigation. Not this time—no. This time was special. What happened was what some members of the media have called the Soros shortcut. They just got together and rammed it through. Did I mention it was like green grass through a goose—3 to 2?

Now, the two Republicans on the Commission—they are screaming the whole time: Whoa, Nellie! Whoa! Whoa! Why aren't we taking this seriously? Why aren't we investigating this? Why aren't we doing our due diligence?

They were outvoted 3 to 2.

You know, even in a democracy, when you have the votes—you can make a porcupine like hot peppers if you have the votes. That doesn't make it right.

A number of people petitioned the FCC and said: Please don't do this.

One of the groups that petitioned the FCC was a group called Media Research Center. The FCC—three Democrats, two Republicans—dismissed them. But this is what the Media Research Center said—their words, not mine:

There is no question that George Soros and his affiliated businesses are looking to control these radio stations to advance their particular brand of activism.

The MRC urged the FCC not to create a "special Soros shortcut" that would circumvent their rules and allow the deal to move forward. They did it anyway.

Here is what Mr. Troy A. Miller, NRB president and CEO, said. He said—his words, not mine:

The fact that the FCC is apparently willing to bypass the usual protocols—

That means the normal procedures—to get this transaction done just weeks before a presidential election—

And right after the President of the United States gave Mr. Soros the Presidential Medal of Freedom—

seriously undermines the Commission's credibility and raises warranted questions of whether administrative processes are being manipulated—

Manipulated—

to exert political [interference and] preference.

Here is what one of the Republican members of the FCC, in dissent, said—

Commissioner Brendan Carr, who is soon to be Chairman of the FCC now that there is a new sheriff in town. Here is what Mr. Carr said:

The Commission's decision today [approving Mr. Soros's plan] is unprecedented. Never before has the Commission voted to approve the transfer of a broadcast license—let alone the transfer of broadcast licenses for over 200 radio stations across more than 40 markets—without following the requirements and procedures codified in federal law.

Pass me the sick bucket. This isn't right, but they did it.

Now, this is America. You are entitled to believe what you want. If it is legal, you are entitled to do what you want. And Mr. Soros is certainly entitled to his opinion. He is. I don't agree with him, but he is certainly entitled to it in America. I am not much into this cancel culture, and hopefully we have seen the end of it, but when you are acquiring radio licenses which can influence public opinion and you are doing it in part—not exclusively but in part—with foreign money, well, that is why we have the FCC.

But I want to make this clear: I believe in free speech and free expression. You are not free if you can't say what you think. You are not free if you can't express yourself. Mr. Soros has that right. But here is where he stands. I want my people in Louisiana to know who is buying WWL Radio in New Orleans. Mr. Soros is a billionaire. God bless him. He made his money himself. He has poured much of his wealth into what, in my opinion, are radical causes.

He is now working with his son, who I understand is a very smart young man. His name is Alex Soros. Mr. George Soros and Mr. Alex Soros hold some—how should I put this?—non-mainstream American beliefs.

For example, Mr. George Soros has called the United States "the main obstacle to a stable and just world." Mr. Soros believes that our country is "the main obstacle to a stable and just world," not China, not Iran, not North Korea—the United States of America.

Pass me the sick bucket.

Mr. Soros has also said that China has—his words, not mine—that China has a "better functioning government than the United States of America."

Mr. Soros does not believe that the United States should have secure borders. He once called national borders an "obstacle" to his plan for widespread immigrant resettlement.

Mr. Soros and his family, as you probably know, have spent millions and millions of dollars to elect prosecutors throughout America who believe that violent criminals are the real victims. These prosecutors believe for the most part that if a cop has to shoot a criminal, it is always the cop's fault, but if a criminal shoots a cop, it is always the gun's fault. These prosecutors whom Mr. Soros has backed with millions of dollars all believe that if you are concerned about crime, you are automatically a racist.

Mr. Soros and his son Alex—Alex in particular—have called for softer sentences on violent criminals. This is what he has said—his words, not mine. Mr. Alex Soros said:

But if we are serious about ending mass incarceration, we must also rethink our response to crimes that are more serious, including violent ones. Even those who have been victims of violence increasingly do not believe in long-term prison sentences.

In short, Mr. Soros—both George and Alex believe that America would be better off if we had open borders. They believe that America would be better off, in my opinion—this is how I read their writings—if we ended jails and if we ran our government like the Communist Party of China. I don't agree with that, but Mr. Soros—both of them are entitled to their opinion.

But my people in Louisiana are entitled to know whose opinion they are hearing on the radio, and this has not been reported once in Louisiana. Let me say it again.

Mr. George Soros, through an expedited procedure—I am trying to be evenhanded here—who received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Biden and who is close to President Biden and all of my Democratic colleagues, on a 3-to-2 vote at the FCC, has been able to buy over 200 radio stations throughout America, including WWL Radio. I want my people to know about it, and I want us to make sure that it was done legally. I am not saying it wasn't done legally; I am saying that it looks funny. Not funny ha-ha—it looks weird the way this was done. It has the aroma of politics, and I hope the new FCC revisits this issue.

These licenses and these airwaves do not belong to me or to the FCC or to Audacity or to WWL; they belong to you and you and you—the American people. We are supposed to make sure, through our FCC—that is why God created the FCC—that these licenses are not just given to anybody.

CHAGOS ISLANDS

Mr. President, let me say one other thing quickly. I didn't mean to go on this long. You have heard me talk about this before, and I am going to talk about it again.

This is India. This is China. Right here are the Chagos Islands—right now owned by the United Kingdom. America, the United States of America, with your tax dollars, has a very important military base out in the Chagos Islands, on an island called Diego Garcia.

Now, the United Nations, as I have said before, has said to Britain, the UK, which acquired the Chagos Islands from France—the folks at the United Nations, with their whey protein powder and man purses, say: Bad United Kingdom. Bad United Kingdom. You are a bunch of colonialists. Give it back. Give the Chagos Islands back—not "give them back to the people of the Chagos Islands"; give them back to this island down here, Mauritius, over 1,000 miles away. Give it back to Mauritius. That is who had it when France

transferred—Mauritius was a province of France when France transferred all of its ownership to Mauritius and to the Chagos Islands in the early 1800s.

The new government in the United Kingdom said: Oh, we feel so guilty. We are going to give it back. We are going to give it back—and our Air Force base with it, which we use to rearm and restock our submarines in Indochina—in the Indian Ocean to combat China.

This kind of stupid takes a plan, folks. This kind of stupid takes a plan.

The United Kingdom said: OK. We feel guilty. We are going to give it back. We are going to give it to Mauritius, and we are going to start paying Mauritius £9 billion over 10 years. And you know who went along with it? The prior administration.

Now, I have talked to President Trump about this, and I have talked to Marco Rubio about this—our esteemed new Secretary of State—and I am hoping they are going to do something about it.

The United Nations has no jurisdiction over the United Kingdom or us in America, and this is our military base. And, already, if we give the Chagos Islands to Mauritius, Mauritius says they will lease to us our own base for about 9 billion pounds over 10 years. Already, China is circling Mauritius. Already, China is trying to be Mauritius' best friend.

And I don't have anything against the Government of Mauritius. They are wonderful people. I understand they want the money. They want our money. They want your money. They want us to pay them for our own military base.

We need to stop this deal. President Trump and Secretary Rubio need to pick up the phone and call Prime Minister Starmer in the United Kingdom and say to the Prime Minister: Mr. Prime Minister, with all due respect, stop dipping into your ketamine stash. Put down the bong. We need this military base to combat China. Don't do it.

And if the President will do that and the Secretary of State will do that, I believe Mr. Starmer, who tried to ram this through the week before President Trump took office but was stopped—I believe that he will give in.

I don't have anything against Mr. Starmer. I don't have anything against the people of Mauritius Island. I am sure they are all wonderful people.

But our struggle with China is serious. It is as serious as four heart attacks and a stroke. And it is bone-deep, down-to-the-marrow stupid for us, because of guilt over colonialism, to bow to the wishes of the United Nations and give a military base that we built to Mauritius, which eventually will end up in the hands of the Communist Party of China. That is why I say that kind of stupid takes a plan.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA WILDFIRES

Mr. President, on a final point, I want to just highlight this. The people of Mexico have sent some of their firefighters to help us in California, and I

want to thank our friends in Mexico for doing that. Other countries have sent their firefighters too. But because we are proximate to Mexico, their fighters were able to get here earlier, and I just want to thank the people of Mexico for their generosity.

My work here is done. I will show myself to the door.

And before I do that, I will 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.

Mrs. MURRAY. 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 Washington.

BORN-ALIVE ABORTION SURVIVORS PROTECTION ACT

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, families are looking to us to solve problems. They are looking at us to lower prices. They are looking for help getting food on the table or getting childcare or getting their prescriptions filled. But what they are seeing instead, today, is Republicans lying about women, lying about healthcare, and lying about the tragic realities that families face when they learn that their baby has a fatal diagnosis and cannot survive long after birth.

Of all the bills that we could be voting on right now, it is an absolute disgrace that Republicans are spending their first weeks in power attacking women, criminalizing doctors, and lying about abortion.

This bill would create a new government mandate that would override the best judgment of grieving families who find out their fetus has a fatal condition. And it would create new, medically unnecessary barriers for doctors and patients, at a time when doctors already have their hands tied when it comes to providing basic reproductive healthcare.

Republicans' whole premise on this bill is a sham. Their whole bill is a disgrace, and we are here on the floor today to call it out.

I am not going to let anyone perpetuate the so-called "abortion until birth" myths and lies about people who have abortions and the providers who care for them. That is not how abortion works, and Republicans know it.

Killing a baby is already illegal in every single State. In fact, we passed a law in 2002 that made that crystal clear. I would know because I was here. It passed unanimously. Doctors already have a legal obligation to provide appropriate medical care to any infant born in this country.

And let's be clear: We already know Republicans' sham bill is not going to go anywhere, by the way. We have been here before. After all, Republicans held a vote on this bill a few years ago, and not a single Democrat who is still in the Senate today voted for it.

The last time we voted on this bill, I spoke about something Republicans re-

fused to acknowledge in this debate: the actual voices and experiences of women who receive a heartbreaking diagnosis late in pregnancy, what they actually go through, and how this bill would hurt them and their families.

I spoke then about Judy. She is from Washington State. Her son's organs did not develop properly. One lung was 20 percent formed, and the other was missing entirely.

I spoke about Lindsay. Her daughter had an aggressive, inoperable tumor growing into her brain, her heart, and her lungs.

I spoke about Darla. One of her twins had serious medical complications. Not terminating that pregnancy would have put her other twin's health at risk. How you ignore something like that I will never understand. But instead Republicans are talking about things that simply do not happen.

However, I have a different story to share today. You see, the last time I shared those stories of women who were able to make the choice that was right for their family, but the stories now are of women who were denied that choice. And that is because Republicans have ripped away abortion rights, and State abortion bans have forced some women into the kind of nightmare Republicans are now seeking to take nationwide.

In Florida, Deborah learned, at 23 weeks, her baby had no kidneys, and it would not survive after birth. She felt an abortion was the right step for her family. But Florida gave her no choice about what happened next. They forced her to carry a doomed pregnancy for months.

Do you know what it is like to go for months, pregnant with a baby you know will not survive, and getting questions and comments like: Oh, is this your first child? Are you excited?

Do you know what it is like fighting back tears as you try to decide whether to just nod politely or explain that, actually, your world is falling apart and, all the while, knowing you have to go through all of this against your will because some politician decided they knew better?

Deborah avoided going out. She was afraid to go to the grocery store. And she said:

I just went into a really dark place, you know, essentially planning my son's birth and funeral at the same time.

That is what abortion bans do. That is what happens when we take choice away from patients, when Republicans decide they know better.

And Deborah is far from the only woman to go through this. Infant deaths from birth defects jumped in Florida following their abortion ban.

Now, Republicans have a bill here to take that issue nationwide. That is what we are voting on here tomorrow. That is their top priority, now that Trump is in office. And not only are they trying to take that abortion heartbreak nationwide, they are lying about what is at stake here and lying

about what women like Deborah are going through, what their own policies will cause more women to go through. Shame on them. This is infuriating.

Women like Deborah may not be billionaires, but they should still have their voices heard. And as long as I am here, they will be.

So here is my message for Republicans: Families don't need less choice about how to handle tragic medical news. What families actually need is affordable groceries. What families actually need is childcare. What they actually need is paid leave, quality healthcare, access to programs like SNAP and Medicaid, which Republicans want to cut to the bone.

Now, I can't predict what attack Republicans will launch on abortion next, but I can promise we will be here to call them out, both for what they are trying to do—lie about women and doctors—and for everything they are failing to do—lowering costs and making life easier for folks back home.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, first, I really want to thank my friend, our great leader on women's issues and on choice issues, Senator MURRAY, for leading this floor block. She has been indomitable on this issue. I can't think of a person who has done more to protect the rights of women than PATTY MURRAY. So thank you for your great leadership.

I want to thank all my other colleagues who will join me as well.

Look, it is Donald Trump's first week as President, and Republicans are already escalating their war on women's reproductive freedoms. They didn't wait long. And the Republicans' desire to impose politicians' and their views on women's health and substitute their judgment for the judgment of the woman, her family, and her doctor continues.

There are many different permutations and combinations of this, but it is always: Take the women's rights away. Let some politician for some ideological reason decide.

This week, Senate Republicans will advance their so-called Born-Alive bill, a bill we have all seen before, which the Senate squarely rejected in the past. The bill is deeply pernicious because it attacks women's healthcare through false narratives and outright fearmongering. It seeks to make something illegal that is already illegal.

In essence, the Republican bill would substitute the judgment of qualified medical professionals and the wishes of millions of women and their families with an ultraright ideology. It is the long hand of injustice reaching down and hurting women from afar.

And so much of the legislation is passed, frankly, by men who have, really, no understanding of what women go through when they are through difficult situations like the one my colleague from Washington State has outlined.

This would harm the ability of medical professionals to provide healthcare based on evidence and on science. It would expose medical professionals to the risk of punishment and prosecution if they don't comply with the hard right.

So we are here because we need to expose this bill exactly for what it is: myth-based fearmongering. It is an attack on reproductive care.

The anti-choice movement keeps trying to come up with these scenarios to try and scare people, but they misstate the facts and misstate the evidence.

This bill is clear. It is an attack on reproductive care. It is anti-women, anti-family, anti-science.

I will tell my Republican colleagues this: Democrats will oppose any attempt to erode access to high-quality and safe reproductive care. Democrats will continue to fight for America's women, America's doctors, and America's families who sometimes have to make heartbreaking, difficult decisions when serious complications arise during pregnancy.

That is what makes this bill so, so horrible. It basically takes a woman who is in a very serious, difficult situation and tries to use her as a political football. That is a bad, bad thing.

So we should resoundingly reject this deeply partisan bill when it comes to the floor later this week.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this is not the first time we have considered this measure on the floor nor the first time I have spoken about it.

I want to thank Senator MURRAY for leading this conversation on a very serious topic.

I want to thank Senator SCHUMER for joining in this conversation as well. I couldn't agree with him more when he said: What we are trying to do with this bill is to make illegal what is already illegal.

I am going to make an invitation to anyone following this debate who wants to judge for themselves, to reach their own conclusion, as to whether or not there are laws existent in America today which cover the situation described in this bill.

I am going to give you the name of a physician in Philadelphia who is serving a life sentence in prison for having violated the current law, and I want you to look it up and read it yourself. Don't take my words for it. His name is Kermit, K-E-R-M-I-T, Gosnell, G-O-S-N-E-L-L. Write that down if you want to follow this debate and want to draw your own conclusions by doing some personal research. Look it up on the internet: Kermit Gosnell. I will tell you his story in a moment, but it proves the fact that we have existing laws that make this current bill unnecessary.

Tomorrow marks the 52nd year since our Nation's highest Court issued a rule recognizing a woman's constitu-

tionally protected right to choose. *Roe v. Wade* enshrined into law something that should have been a given in America: In America, women have the right to make decisions about their own bodies. And, as a result of *Roe*, America's women took a giant leap forward in gender equity. The decision in *Roe* afforded women the right to choose whether, when, and how to start a family.

But after nearly 50 years of progress, in June 2022, the Supreme Court overruled *Roe* with *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, dragging women's rights half a century backward. Following that decision, we saw Republican-led States open the floodgates to abortion restrictions—laws that, in some cases, have had deadly consequences for women who could not access critical healthcare that they needed.

Instead of addressing the healthcare crisis that *Dobbs* has unleashed, Republicans are now instead looking to make it even harder for women to access comprehensive and compassionate healthcare.

Tomorrow, they will attempt to bring to the floor the so-called Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act. They want to bring it to a vote—this bill that, as Senator SCHUMER said, is already covered in law.

The bill, they say, creates new standards of care for physicians providing reproductive healthcare that are not based in medicine, fact, or science.

The goal of the bill that we will consider, introduced by the Republicans, is to target and intimidate reproductive healthcare providers and make it harder for women to access comprehensive and compassionate healthcare. This bill offers a poorly drafted and dangerous solution to a problem that simply does not exist.

The authors of this bill will tell you that this legislation simply ensures that all children born alive as a result of a so-called attempted abortion are provided the same medical care as any other newborn of the same gestational age. They say that is all it does. But we already have a law on the books that ensures that any child born in America, regardless of the circumstances surrounding that birth, is afforded equal protection under the law.

In 2002, the House and Senate passed, on a bipartisan basis, the Born-Alive Infants Protection Act. Do you know who signed that into law? Then-President George W. Bush. Put simply, it is already illegal to kill a child born alive in America. And in rare cases where a doctor does harm a baby in violation of State and Federal laws, they are held legally accountable.

The year was 2013. Dr. Kermit Gosnell, a Pennsylvania doctor, was convicted on three counts of first-degree murder for murdering babies after botched abortions. Gosnell was sentenced to life in prison without possibility of parole under existing law, and he is currently serving that sentence at

Pennsylvania's State Correctional Institution at Huntingdon.

Do you know what else the authors of this legislation didn't tell you and won't tell you? Abortions late in pregnancy are incredibly rare. And when they do occur, it is most often because of a heartbreaking, late-breaking, fatal fetal diagnosis or because a woman's doctor has told her that she may not survive the pregnancy or because a woman lives in a State that prevented her from getting an abortion earlier. No, Republicans would rather have you believe that vast numbers of women are intentionally waiting until the final days of their pregnancy to have abortions.

This is a cruel political contrivance. These are women who often already have had their baby showers, picked out names, persevered through morning sickness, back pain, swollen ankles, countless doctors' appointments and tests. These are women who wanted their babies.

And what is the response from the actual doctors on this legislation? Ask the professionals to respond to the Republican bill that is coming to the floor, the so-called Born-Alive bill. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists said this when the House passed the bill last year:

The offensively named "born-alive" legislation is another cruel and misguided attempt to interfere with evidence-based medical decision making between patients and their physicians.

Laws that ban or criminalize evidence-based care and rely on medically unsupported theories and misinformation are dangerous to families and their clinicians. This bill negatively affects all obstetric and gynecologic care.

What I just read to you is a quote from the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. Given this reality, what would happen if this bill were signed into law by the new President?

Take the case of Meredith Shiner, a constituent of mine in Illinois who was thrilled to learn a few years ago that she and her husband were going to have a little baby boy. However, at 22 weeks and 6 days, Meredith woke up with a terrible abdominal pain, rushed to the hospital thinking she had a bladder infection. She didn't realize the seriousness of what was happening until the doctor told her she was in labor. The prognosis was grim. Having the baby at 22 weeks and 6 days meant although the baby would be born alive, the chances of survival were almost nonexistent.

Knowing medical interventions would be futile, Meredith and her husband made the difficult decision to take the minutes they had with their son to hold him, to touch him, to look at him until he gently passed away, as doctors provided palliative care.

This bill is written in such an overly broad way, vague way, that had it been the law, those same doctors that provided compassionate care to Meredith, her husband, and their son could be subject to 5 years in prison.

In these heartbreaking situations, it is not the time for politicians to dictate the course of medical treatment, as this bill would do. Those wrenching decisions, those personal tragic moments, must be left to medical professionals and the individuals in their care. It is the only compassionate outcome.

This week, we lost a lifelong advocate for women's rights, Cecile Richards. She spent her life fighting to keep politics out of healthcare and defending every woman's right to decide when and how to start their family. We lost Cecile to glioblastoma—the same brain cancer that took John McCain, Beau Biden, and Teddy Kennedy.

If Senate Republicans truly cared about saving lives, they would be working with us to expand access to healthcare, increase funding for medical research that results in new cures, and implement policies that address our Nation's abysmal record of infant and maternal mortality.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today with my colleagues Senator MURRAY and Senator SCHUMER and Senator DURBIN and my close colleague from Minnesota Senator KLOBUCHAR and others to stand up for women and for doctors in my home State of Minnesota and around the country.

And I just want to appreciate Senator DURBIN for raising Cecile Richards, who was a dear friend of mine and someone who I worked with closely when I worked at Planned Parenthood. And I was thinking about something that Cecile often pointed to. She would quote the great American poet, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and this poet would say: It is not one damn thing after another. It is the same damn thing over and over again.

And here we have that being shown on the Senate floor. Once again Republicans are here introducing this bill—not to talk about what we can do to lower prices for Americans, not to talk about how we can lower the cost of housing, or how to help people's lives become more affordable.

Instead, one of the very first bills that they are putting forward is for a vote in service of a national abortion ban that, I can tell you, the people in Minnesota do not want, the people in America have made it abundantly clear that they do not want. And I guess the nicest thing you could say about this is that it is out of touch with where Americans are.

But let's talk about it a little bit more because I think it is important that we fight some of the myths and the disinformation that this legislation promotes.

What this bill would do, it would put Congress and politicians in the middle of personal medical decisions that patients and doctors should be able to make together without political interference. It would override physicians'

professional judgments about what is best for their patients, and it would put physicians in the position of facing criminal penalties if their judgment about what is best for their patients goes against what is described in this bill.

So, colleagues, let's be clear. At the core of the debate here is whether or not we trust women to make the very best decisions for themselves and their families. And in difficult medical, challenging, often tragic, medical situations, should women and their physicians be making decisions about their lives and their health—often their very lives—or is this about politics?

And I think Americans say this is not about politics. Politics should stay out of it.

I know that everybody on this floor has talked to their own constituents who have experienced what really happens for women who are needing abortion care later in their pregnancy. These stories are inevitably heartbreaking and tragic, and they each are individual and unique. Every situation is different. But they always are about women and families that are thrilled to be pregnant. In some cases, as my colleagues have said, they have already picked out a name. They have decorated the nursery. They have planned a baby shower. But it becomes clear, as the pregnancy progresses, the devastating news that this child is not going to survive. And in some cases, the mother's life is also at risk; her health, her ability to have children in the future are at risk.

And as I said, every situation is going to be unique because everyone is going to have a different diagnosis, different personal histories, different family circumstances, and that means everybody is going to need to have their own individual care. But what every single one of these women have in common is that each one of them deserves the dignity and the autonomy and the freedom to be able to make those decisions, make their own medical decisions, without a bunch of politicians getting in the way.

But let's be really clear here. Women are not waking up in the last weeks of their pregnancy just to change their mind about that pregnancy. I mean, how disrespectful of women is that attitude? Because these are terrible situations where something has gone catastrophically wrong. They are not just changing their minds. They are doing everything they can to take care of themselves and their families.

You know, I know that in this country, we don't tell oncologists how to treat their patients. We don't tell emergency room doctors what they need to do in any specific circumstances to save lives, and we shouldn't be telling women's doctors how to take care of their patients.

But, colleagues, that is what this bill does. It would give politicians in this room a seat in the doctor's offices and in the ERs with women all over this

country. And that has an intimidating impact on providers who are already desperately trying to keep their head down and do their jobs while operating under the chaos that has erupted after the Supreme Court overturned Roe.

So, colleagues, this should be about treating women with respect. We should be all in agreement that decisions about women's healthcare aren't different from decisions about men's healthcare or anyone's healthcare. So why would we be treating women differently?

Colleagues, let's get out of the business of dictating medical care for women. Let's trust women and their doctors.

I urge my colleagues to oppose this legislation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise today with my colleagues. I want to thank Senator MURRAY for her leadership, but also Senator SMITH, who has long led on this issue and has stood up time and time again for freedoms and reproductive freedom.

Yesterday, as she noted, we lost Cecile Richards, who was a true force of nature who spent her career fighting for reproductive freedom. We lost her just 2 days before what would be the 52nd anniversary of Roe v. Wade.

But we all know that our country is now well into its third year without the protections of Roe. In the years since the Supreme Court overturned half a century of precedent and stripped away a woman's right to make her own healthcare decisions—going against 70, 80 percent of Americans who believe that this decision should be made by a woman, her family, her doctor, and not by politicians; who believe, as my colleagues just noted, that politicians should not be in the waiting room making the decisions for families—women are now at the mercy of a patchwork of State laws that are creating chaos when it comes to accessing reproductive care.

So the solution is not the bill before us this week. The solution is not to take rare cases of the most tragic nature, as my colleagues have described.

I am a former prosecutor. I know what murder is. Murder is murder, including murder of a baby.

We are here talking about tragic cases where doctors have to make a decision in the moment with the family about how they are going to handle very, very tragic situations with a baby.

Today, nearly 20 States have enacted some form of abortion restriction. The result, a third of women of reproductive age now live under extreme, dangerous bans. And in States across the country, women are being turned away from emergency rooms, forced to travel hundreds of miles for healthcare. So adding to that situation, this idea that we are going to start intervening in these rare, tragic cases would be a horrible result for so many women.

I am thinking about the pregnant teenager in Texas who died after being denied care in three hospital visits. I am thinking about the young woman from Florida who was forced to miscarry in a bathroom due to her State's restrictions. By the time she finally got to a hospital, she had lost almost half the blood in her body. And we will never forget the heartbreaking story of the 10-year-old in Ohio who had to go to Indiana in order to get a legal abortion after she was raped. People said that story was a hoax. It wasn't a hoax; it was true.

Doctors are being threatened with prosecution for doing their jobs, an issue that will only get worse if we pass the legislation that Republicans have brought to the floor.

We already know that there have been repeated attempts to restrict mifepristone. Just last week, a judge allowed Idaho, Kansas, and Missouri to proceed with their lawsuit challenging FDA approval of the drug, which is safely used in 90 countries.

This is our reality right now, but it doesn't have to be our future. I call on our colleagues to join us in codifying Roe v. Wade into law. And simply because someone may have different views—I know many people in my own family who may be pro-life, but they don't believe that their views for what they would do in their personal life would apply to other people—and certainly not people—women—who at the very end of a pregnancy, something they have been so looking forward to, having a baby, have to have the Federal Government intervene and tell the doctor that we can't do this or she can't do that.

This isn't about politics. This isn't about red States and blue States. People across the country are on our side on this, and we ask our colleagues to vote with us and reject this bill.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BUDD). The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I am proud to join my colleagues on the floor today in opposition to the Born-Alive Abortion Survivor Protection Act.

If you are wondering whether that title to a legislation makes sense, the answer is, no, it does not. This legislation is simply a blatant attempt to interfere with evidence-based patient care and medical practices while enshrining lies about abortion care.

My Republican colleagues spent the last 4 years calling Democrats alarmists. But here they are aggressively pursuing legislation that would persecute providers for doing their jobs and making a tragic situation for families even worse. Medical professionals are and have always been required by law to provide infants high-quality care from the moment they are born.

There is absolutely no evidence that this law is being broken. To suggest otherwise is deeply offensive and dangerous. For any family—all of us know

families, if they are not our own—learning their child will be stillborn or not survive beyond birth is a profound loss, deeply grief-stricken.

This legislation would deepen that loss. It would remove any control a woman may have over her pregnancy and force the family to endure unnecessary and unethical medical overreach at the hands of politicians—that is right, at the hands of politicians, not medical personnel.

The bill would force physicians to provide invasive and hopeless measures, which are both medically and ethically inappropriate in these situations. That is why the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists strongly oppose this legislative effort.

Let's listen to the doctors, the scientists, the professionals, rather than trying to "message bill" an anti-scientific, anti-medical science stand.

We have seen now how overturning Roe has emboldened Republicans across the United States and in this very Chamber to make policy based on their own personal beliefs instead of evidence-based practices. This legislation is just another opportunity for Republicans to stand on their soapbox and lie to the American people.

It also creates fear and apprehension on the part of people across the country. These policies actively harm families. Pretending otherwise is a slap in the face to those who voted for all of us and you, in particular.

Let me close by invoking the spirit of Cecile Richards, after losing her just yesterday. She was a giant. She modeled guts and grit and public service, showing courage and fortitude beyond words as a champion of women's reproductive freedom. I will always remember her smile, her fierce determination, her endless energy. They will be with me always, and they inspire me to say today to my Republican colleagues: Please leave alone the women who deserve doctor's care and that care alone, not our interference.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to express my strong opposition to Republicans' so-called Born-Alive bill.

I want to commend Senator MURRAY and all my colleagues who have done so much good work on this. This is not the first time the Senate has debated this bill on the Senate floor, and I doubt it will be the last.

Republicans claim this legislation will protect women and children. The foundation of this Republican bill is that babies are forced to go without basic medical care after they are born. This is a disgusting, stomach-churning lie that is pedaled to fearmonger the American people.

No child born alive in the United States is denied the healthcare they need to survive. It is already illegal to do so. In reality, what this bill does is turn what is already an impossibly difficult situation for countless expecting parents into a living hell.

Imagine you and your spouse get the good news that you are expecting. You are over the Moon until a few months later when you get the worst news you could possibly imagine receiving during pregnancy. For reasons out of your control, your baby has developed a terminal medical condition and will not survive once they are born. On top of that, to force the mother to continue carrying the baby to term would most likely be deadly for her.

Many women and couples are all too familiar with the gut-wrenching decisions that come next. What a statement about Republican priorities that this is one of the first pieces of legislation brought to the Senate floor just a few hours after Donald Trump was sworn into office.

Republicans talk a big game about being “pro-life” and being the party of family values. Their actions show reality couldn’t be any further from the truth. For example, the Republicans recently blocked a bipartisan expansion of the child tax credit that would have really helped to lift kids out of poverty. Now they are gearing up to cut food stamps so kids go hungry. They put Medicaid and health insurance for millions of children on the chopping block.

If Republicans really care about helping women and children, they would be using their new-found majority to vote on legislation that cuts housing and childcare costs or grocery bills and keep moms safe.

Let me close this way, Mr. President, and colleagues. This deeply flawed Republican Born-Alive bill is the real Republican agenda on full display. While Republicans are full steam ahead with their crusade against reproductive freedom, all my colleagues who are here today, led by Senator MURRAY, are focused on fighting inflation, bringing down costs, getting to work for working families. I am proud to be associated with their efforts.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I am pleased to join my colleagues today because I strongly oppose this legislation. I oppose it because it would significantly interfere with the doctor-patient relationship. And I oppose it because it would pose unnecessary and harmful obstacles to a woman’s right—to all women’s right to make our own decisions about our own reproductive health.

This legislation has one purpose, and that is to make safe abortion services even more inaccessible by intimidating doctors with the threat of criminal liability. This is fearmongering at its finest.

And by choosing to focus on this bill during President Trump’s first week in office, some Republicans—and I say some because they don’t all support this bill—are choosing to politicize a family’s problem instead of focusing on making life easier, more affordable,

and better for all Americans, which President Trump promised when he was campaigning when he said he wasn’t interested in a Federal law that would outlaw abortions.

Abortions performed later in pregnancy are rare, and they are done as the result of fatal diagnoses for the fetus, the mother, or both. These are tragic, heartbreaking situations that no one—I am going to repeat that—that no one wants. And by inserting new uncertainty and risk of criminal liability into the process, this legislation only further increases the risk that a woman will not be able to get the medical care that she needs.

This bill ignores these important realities in hopes of scoring political points with anti-choice factions.

And the timing is done deliberately because many of those groups are going to be here in Washington on Friday. So we should see this bill for what it is. It is a political stunt.

Again and again, at every turn, some Republicans and the Trump administration have pushed forward dangerous policies intended to threaten access to abortion care. I think it is just shameful. They should be ashamed of themselves. This bill is just another battle in a long line of attacks on the ongoing war on women’s health.

Now, more than ever, we need to stand up and defend women’s healthcare, make certain that abortions are safe and legal. And we know that banning abortions doesn’t actually stop them. You just make them more dangerous for women. Enough is enough. I urge my colleagues to oppose this legislation and its consideration on the Senate floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I rise to join my colleagues in opposing this legislation that is the Republican Party’s latest effort to take away a woman’s fundamental freedom to make her own healthcare decisions and take away a family’s fundamental right to navigate heartbreaking and complex health decisions without government interference.

I come from the “Live Free or Die” State. Granite Staters and Americans love freedom. Our country’s promise is that freedom belongs to everyone.

But today, thanks to the Supreme Court’s decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade* and the extreme actions by Republican legislatures in some States, women in America are not free. In a sense, this legislation that we are debating right now is disconnected from reality. This bill ignores a pretty basic fact: Infanticide is illegal in every corner of this country.

The claim that this legislation will save lives is disingenuous, and the assumption underlying this bill that an expectant mother would seek an abortion after months of pregnancy for anything but the most dire of reasons shows a deliberate willingness to ignore the realities of women’s health.

So here are the facts. All that this legislation will do is make it harder for doctors to perform lifesaving care for their patients. And it will make it harder for families to make the best healthcare decisions for themselves in moments of great heartbreak as they face the final moments of a desired pregnancy or the final moments of a terminally ill newborn’s life.

It is also remarkable that this is among the first pieces of legislation that the Republicans have brought to the floor since the inauguration of the new President. This is, of course, legislation in search of a problem. But it is not in search of a motive.

Some of my colleagues have decided that rather than address the most pressing issues facing the American people, they will, instead, push legislation to curtail the freedom of women—just the latest in their long line of effort since *Roe* was overturned to take away more and more freedom from half of the population.

I am willing and eager to work with my colleagues to tackle the greatest challenges facing our country. That is what our constituents expect and deserve of us and something that this bill so clearly fails to do. This legislation will not bring down the price of groceries, nor will it reduce rents or do anything to make it easier for families to make ends meet. But it will make life harder for expectant mothers facing a painful choice.

It won’t make healthcare more affordable, though it provides that doctors can be put in jail for providing care for their patients. It won’t keep our children safe from crime or fentanyl traffickers, though it will make our daughters less free.

This legislation, in short, does nothing to address any of the great challenges that America faces. It seeks only to deny and diminish the freedom of our fellow Americans.

But this is what some of our colleagues have decided to focus on during the first full day of the new administration. Across our country, in red States and blue alike, in the distant corners of the land of the free, there is no great clamor to further limit freedom; there is no great clamor to have Members of Congress substitute their judgment for that of a woman’s, her doctor’s, and her family’s. But you wouldn’t know it if you follow the action of the Senate majority today.

We cannot lose sight of what this debate is ultimately about. At the center of this debate is a very simple question: Do we believe in the promise of our Declaration of Independence that we all are created equal? Do we believe that freedom belongs to everyone? And do we believe that women deserve to be free and equal citizens in the United States of America?

This is America, the world’s greatest democracy. Here, women should not be second-class citizens. In this country, each of us is supposed to have the freedom to chart our own future. We know

well that that freedom includes the freedom to make personal, private decisions that others may disagree with.

Our commitment to putting freedom first is part of what makes America different. Indeed, that is what makes us exceptional. The American people understand freedom's importance. Their leaders should remember it too. The American people have not asked for the extreme agenda that this legislation represents. They haven't asked the majority to further restrict their freedom.

I urge my colleagues to listen to the American people, to put aside this partisan agenda, and to get to work on tackling the challenges that are facing our country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I rise today in opposition to this deceptively named Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act.

Tomorrow is the 52nd anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, the decision that guaranteed fundamental rights to choose abortion before that right was stripped away. Now reproductive freedom is under attack in multiple States. Over a dozen States have passed abortion bans, and several pregnant women in Georgia and Texas have died because they could not access safe abortions. In some States, patients don't have access to legal abortion care even after they have been raped. Multiple States are currently suing to restrict access to even medication for abortion.

We don't yet know how the new administration is going to handle Federal protections for pregnant women in medical emergencies. The new administration, yesterday, took down a government website that offered just information about reproductive care. This was one of the top priorities yesterday of this administration on day one—taking down that website.

Instead of working to resolve any of the serious, real challenges, my colleagues are trying to force a vote on something that is completely unnecessary. It is already illegal to kill a child who is born alive in this country. I was a Member of the Senate when we passed, in 2002, the Born-Alive Infants Protection Act to ensure that all infants have legal protections.

The so-called Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Act, as my colleague from New Hampshire just said, is legislation in search of a problem. It is deliberately misleading and offensive to pregnant people and to their healthcare providers.

It is incredibly heartbreaking—these scenarios—where a baby is born with a fatal diagnosis, and the baby's parents must want to spend those precious moments holding and saying goodbye to their child, but under these extreme ideas, doctors would have to perform aggressive medical care that would only prolong a family's suffering.

We need to honor that these are medical decisions left to the woman, her

physician, and to her family. We trust that doctors and nurses know how to carry this out. We want to honor these—not politicians, not lawyers—so I will be voting against this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to do so.

We also need to make sure that here in the Senate, as my colleague said, we are working to lower costs. We need to make sure that they don't try to cut Medicare or food assistance or the neediest of issues for young families who are being impacted. Healthcare in the United States needs to be strengthened; drug costs need to be lowered; and we need to help and protect working families.

I thank my colleagues for being here today.

I yield the floor.

CERTIFICATES OF ELECTION

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Chair lays before the Senate the certificate of appointment to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of former Senator J.D. VANCE of Ohio and the certificate of appointment to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of former Senator Marco Rubio of Florida.

The certificates, the Chair is advised, are in the forms suggested by the Senate. If there be no objection, the reading of the certificates will be waived, and they will be printed in full in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the certificates were ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

STATE OF OHIO CERTIFICATE OF APPOINTMENT

To the President of the Senate of the United States:

This is to certify that, pursuant to the power vested in me by the Constitution of the United States and the laws of the State of Ohio, I, Mike DeWine, the Governor of Ohio, do hereby appoint Jon Husted a Senator from Ohio to represent Ohio in the Senate of the United States until the vacancy therein, resulting from the resignation of JD Vance to assume the Vice Presidency of the United States, is filled by election as provided by law.

Witness: His excellency our Governor Mike DeWine, and our seal hereto affixed at Washington, D.C. this 18th day of January, in the year of our Lord 2025.

MIKE DEWINE,
Governor.
FRANK LAROSE,
Secretary of State.

[State Seal Affixed]

STATE OF FLORIDA CERTIFICATE OF APPOINTMENT

To the President of the Senate of the United States:

This is to certify that, pursuant to the power vested in me by the Constitution of the United States and the laws of the State of Florida, I, Ron DeSantis, the Governor of Florida, do hereby appoint Ashley Moody a Senator to represent the State of Florida in the Senate of the United States until the vacancy therein caused by the resignation of the Honorable Marco Rubio, is filled by election as provided by law.

In Testimony Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the

State of Florida to be affixed at Tallahassee, this 21st day of January, 2025.

RONALD D. DESANTIS,
Governor.

Attest:

CORD BYRD,
Secretary of State.

[State Seal Affixed]

ADMINISTRATION OF OATHS OF OFFICE

The VICE PRESIDENT. If the Senators-designate will now present themselves at the desk, the Chair will administer the oaths of office.

The Senator Jon Husted, escorted by Mr. Moreno and Governor DeWine, and the Senator Ashley Moody, escorted by Mr. SCOTT of Florida, advanced to the desk of the Vice President; the oaths prescribed by law were administered by the Vice President of the United States; and they subscribed to the oaths in the Official Oath Book.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Great. Congratulations, Senators.

(Applause, Senators rising.)

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

(Mr. BUDD assumed the Chair.)

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CURTIS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

BORN-ALIVE ABORTION SUR- VIVORS PROTECTION ACT—MO- TION TO PROCEED

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, unfortunately, we were at the point of almost having a consent agreement to have a vote on the confirmation of John Ratcliffe to be CIA Director tomorrow—not today, not yesterday when it should have happened, but tomorrow—but the Senator from Connecticut has decided to object at the last minute.

I don't really understand the objection to Mr. Ratcliffe. He was confirmed by this Senate to be the Director of National Intelligence. He was fully vetted through the bipartisan process in the Senate Intelligence Committee. We voted him out yesterday on a 14-to-3 vote.

Senator SCHUMER stood here yesterday and talked about how we are going to cooperate on highly qualified, capable nominees with integrity, which John Ratcliffe is, but the only vote we got yesterday was Senator Rubio.

Now we are not going to have a vote today, and apparently we are not going to have a vote tomorrow, which means I hope nobody is making any plans for the weekend or the evenings because