

Small business is a big deal, and the Trump administration and Republicans in Congress are working hard to deliver for American small business owners. One of our top priorities this year is making the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act permanent.

TCJA did a lot for small businesses. Lower tax rates, the 199A small business deduction, and bonus depreciation and other investment incentives lowered small businesses' tax burden and encouraged them to invest in themselves, hire more workers, and, in turn, grow our economy. And that is what happened.

After the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act passed, we saw businesses buy new equipment. They hired new workers. Paychecks got bigger. It was good for small business and good for American workers, and it led to a very strong economy before the pandemic.

But many of the law's provisions are expiring at the end of this year, and if we don't extend the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, small businesses will face a \$600 billion tax hike in 2026. Republicans do not intend to let that happen, but we don't just want to extend the TCJA's provisions. We want to give small businesses certainty by making these pro-growth tax policies permanent because permanence will encourage long-term investment, it will encourage growth, and it will maximize our economy's potential.

According to one estimate, making the 199A deduction permanent would lead to 1.2 million more jobs per year, and that number will grow larger as the years go on. And that is just one pro-growth, pro-small business provision in the law.

In addition to making the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act permanent, President Trump has already prioritized restoring American manufacturing. The Tax Code is a key part of that. Investment incentives like bonus depreciation helped manufacturers purchase the latest technology and grow their workforce with good-paying jobs for the American people.

More manufacturing—more businesses and jobs here in America—grows our tax base, and that means more revenue—revenue that we get the right way, which is with a bigger and stronger economy, not bigger tax bills.

We have an opportunity to help turn the page on the Biden economy and set up our country for long-term economic strength, and we can do that by delivering on the President's tax priorities and making his first term tax success permanent.

Another one of our small business priorities is regulatory relief. When I meet with South Dakota business owners, I often tell them to let me know how we can help, even if sometimes that means getting out of the way. Often, that is what the government needs to do—get out of the way—and that is what we have been trying to do this year.

Congress has blocked a number of burdensome Biden-era regulations

through the Congressional Review Act, and we have more Congressional Review Act measures planned for this week. For example, we have passed resolutions blocking Biden administration rules on commercial refrigerators and freezers and walk-in coolers. These are rules that would have driven up costs and reduced choices for small businesses.

One standard had a payback period—if you can get this—of 90 years; meaning, a small business would start saving money almost a century after purchasing an appliance. That is absurd, and it is just one example of the regulatory burdens Congress is working to lift off the backs of small business owners.

The Trump administration is also working overtime to rescind a host of bad Biden-era rules that would place heavy burdens on small businesses.

Farmers, ranchers, and landowners would be pleased to know that the EPA has initiated a more collaborative process with stakeholders as it considers an alternative to the Biden administration's WOTUS rule, or waters of the United States.

And the administration and Congress have been working to repeal anti-energy Biden regulations and unleash American energy dominance to ensure we have an affordable and reliable energy supply for years to come.

Strong small businesses mean a strong America. I will always be grateful for the lessons I learned getting my start working in small businesses. During the summers, my parents, who were educators, ran a motel in my hometown of Murdo, and as is common in a lot of small businesses, the whole family helped out.

Later on, my first job was as a busboy at the Star Family Restaurant. I later graduated to a cook. I learned a lot there, including what it took to keep the business running day to day and week to week.

Small business owners work hard in pursuit of their dream. They create opportunity and jobs, and they bear the heavy responsibility that comes with signing the front of a paycheck. I know that small businesses have been facing a number of challenges lately, and my aim is always to do everything I can to help.

I look forward to continuing to work with my Republican colleagues here in the Senate to support and strengthen small businesses because when small businesses succeed, we all succeed.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I didn't agree with former President George W. Bush on a lot of things, but I have repeatedly given him credit for making the United States the world's leader in stemming the HIV-AIDS epidemic in some of the poorest parts of the world. That was 22 years ago.

The program is called the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, PEPFAR. PEPFAR and its companion effort, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, dramatically curtailed the AIDS epidemic that was ravaging many parts of the world. PEPFAR alone has saved more than 26 million lives.

Thank you, President George W. Bush.

Both of these programs provide retroviral drugs for those with AIDS, allowing them to continue to live productive lives and prevent the spread of the disease at childbirth. They have been so effective that many have forgotten just how devastating AIDS was in many parts of the world, at one point killing more than 2 million people every year and leaving 14 million orphans in sub-Saharan Africa. In some countries, life expectancy had dropped to 20 years.

A few years ago, we took a look at the nation of Malawi. PEPFAR and the Global Fund Program increased the number of Malawians living with AIDS and receiving treatment from 5 to nearly 90 percent.

Thank you, President George W. Bush.

These programs are not only the right thing to do but also highly effective examples of American soft power and, until recently, a stark contrast to what China and the other nations of the world were doing. So imagine my reaction to the Trump administration's decision at the highest level to gut this lifesaving, bipartisan program under the heartless tutelage of the President's unelected billionaire buddy, Elon Musk, the wealthiest man in the world—never elected to anything; gleefully, senselessly dancing on stage with a chain saw so he can gut programs just like President Bush's PEPFAR.

It has been estimated by experts that the gutting of USAID could jeopardize the health of more than 20 million people worldwide, including 500,000 children.

What a contrast. Republican President George W. Bush will go down in history as a caring man who symbolized what the United States means to the world: a giving, caring people who have helped so many poor people in other nations, many of whom will never visit, and put them in a position where they can survive.

The Trump administration says that no programs were actually cut, just paused. The reality is far different.

Any of us who have raised a family can remember when that baby needed a bottle and was darned determined to let you know about it, screaming and

shouting until you finally plugged that bottle in her mouth and she quieted down.

So now the Trump administration says, when it comes to feeding programs for babies and infants and children around the world, because they are screaming and they are hungry, just tell them we have decided to pause the program—pause the program. Parents laugh out loud when you consider that possibility.

Just last month, the Trump administration dismissed the few remaining public health officials overseeing programs for pregnant women with HIV in low-income countries. Don't tell me that you have dedicated public service to strengthening families and then take away this basic need so that mothers giving birth to babies don't have to worry about HIV-AIDS.

All the experts at the Centers for Disease Control, the State Department, and USAID have been terminated and are waiting for reassignment. That is the Trump record. That is what he will be remembered for in history if we go along with it.

Even with some funding restored, how will the critical work continue without professional staff to carry it out? Like so many White House policies, this is cruelty and madness and certainly not efficiency.

In upcoming funding bills and any rescissions effort, it will be up to Congress—all of us in Congress, not the Democrats, although we are in the minority, but Republicans and Democrats together—to protect and restore these critical, lifesaving programs that are both the right thing to do and the strategic thing to do.

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, on a separate topic, as I reflect on my time in public service, I have been thinking about the issues that have meant the most during my career. There are a few that stand out, including my steadfast belief that the promise of medical research funding is one of the most important. That conviction led me to join forces more than 10 years ago with a bipartisan group of Senators: myself; Senator PATTY MURRAY, a Democrat from Washington; Senator Roy Blunt, then-Republican Senator from Missouri; and Senator Lamar Alexander, a Republican Senator from Tennessee.

Our team of four, Democrats and Republicans, came together and decided to speak up and be committed to increasing Federal funding for the National Institutes of Health. The National Institutes of Health is the premier medical research laboratory in the world.

I did my best to make sure with my friends that we fought for a 5-percent increase in growth in medical research each and every year. We did it too. A 60-percent increase to NIH's budget over the last decade—60 percent,

money that is used to research and develop new ways to fight childhood cancer, ALS, Alzheimer's, you name it.

If you own a television and you ever turn it on, you can't avoid an ad for a new prescription drug. They are on all the time, with great promise, and many of them are breakthrough drugs. Did you know over 99 percent of those drugs, those new breakthrough drugs that you see on television, were developed by America's taxpayers at the National Institutes of Health. Sure, the drug companies sell them and market them, do a good job in that regard. They charge too much in most instances, but having done the basic research at the expense of American taxpayers, those drugs are available in America, as they should be.

A 60-percent increase in the NIH budget over the past decade resulted in many of those drugs being discovered and being sold to American families and bringing relief to them in ways no one imagined.

That progress and the hope it brings to patients and families is why I am absolutely dismayed to see how President Trump has dismantled medical research in America during his 100 days in office.

Was that what we were voting for last November? a cutback on medical research in America? to give up our leadership in a world of developing new cures and medicines for people who are afflicted with disease? I don't think that was the message of the last campaign at all.

President Trump has frozen funding to university labs and hospitals across the board. For example, Northwestern University in Evanston, IL, a cancer research powerhouse that earns hundreds of millions of dollars of NIH grants annually has had its accounts frozen by the NIH for the past 6 weeks.

This chart gives you an indication of what this freeze in funding means. Take a look at the numbers for funding for competitive grants and medical research: President Biden, first term President Trump, President Obama, and now down at the bottom, President Trump in his current term.

We need people to speak up in Congress, in the Senate, in the House, Democrats and Republicans. Silence is not acceptable. The amount of funding awarded in Trump's first 100 days is dramatically lower than past years, with more than \$2 billion in research funding being held up so far this year. Two billion dollars isn't just lost opportunity, but it discourages researchers from staying on the job, breaks their will to continue to dedicate their lives to finding cures for things that we, in America, view as dangerous.

President Trump has canceled hundreds of NIH-supported grants and clinical trials and placed gag orders on experts, eliminated the programs that attract young people to the field, and fired nearly 2,000 NIH scientists and healthcare professionals, 2,000 researchers. Is one of those researchers

working on a cure for a disease that will affect someone in your family? It is quite possible.

On Friday, the President released a preview of his budget, which proposes to slash NIH's medical research budget nearly in half, wiping out all the gains we have made in the last 10 years. That is heartbreaking. These actions are devastating to medical research across America.

We are ceding our competitiveness to China, weakening our scientific expertise as the envy in the world, and unfortunately, Americans are paying the price.

So imagine my surprise by my Republican colleagues and their reaction. What has their reaction been? Silence. Crickets. It is the "Silence of the Lambs."

It only took two or three Republican Senators in the past 2 years to join with Democratic Senators, including myself, to make a dramatic difference in medical research. It only takes three or four now to step up to say to the President: We are sorry. This is part of your budget we cannot go along with. We are not going to walk away from medical research. We are going to stand together on a bipartisan basis because it means so much.

I came to the floor a few weeks ago to announce that if Republican Senators won't stand up for NIH funding in their States, then I would. So today, I want to highlight what NIH means to one State, Arkansas.

Last year, Arkansas received more than \$100 million in NIH funding that supported more than 1,500 jobs and generated nearly \$300 million in economic activity.

Among the top-funded NIH institutions were the University of Arkansas System and Arkansas Children's Hospital in Little Rock. Arkansas Children's used NIH funding to research why kids in rural, smalltown areas were experiencing higher rates of pediatric asthma and improving their treatment options.

They also used Arkansas NIH funding to research how to limit the negative long-term impact of chemotherapy for kids with leukemia. Is that important to you? If a member of your family was afflicted by asthma or needed chemotherapy, it would be critical.

I won't speak for either Senator of Arkansas, but helping pediatric cancer survivors and asthmatic kids in small towns sure seems like something worth fighting for, and I hope the Senators from Arkansas agree with me that this is a serious mistake for President Trump to cut the funding for that kind of research.

I look forward to working with those Senators if they want a bipartisan effort to restore this medical research in Arkansas.

Last week, the Senate Appropriations Committee heard testimony from a mother whose child beat cancer, thanks to NIH-funded clinical trials and treatment. It was great testimony