

to-staff facilities, even when there was a clear shortage?

They gave 13 other facilities bonus pay so they could attract more people. Why not New York, Washington, and Philadelphia, where it is worse?

Second, what is the plan to reduce decades-old technology, equipment, and infrastructure at our airports?

One of the reasons Newark had a problem was a copper wire burnt. Did they ever hear of fiber optics over there at the FAA?

Three, what is the plan to quickly fill critical leadership vacancies?

Members have been fired at the FAA, and others have quit out of just disgust. Well, there are a lot of vacancies, especially in the higher positions. We need to fill them. What is the plan?

Other airports across the Nation could see similar problems like Newark if the FAA does not take this investigation seriously.

NOMINATION OF FRANK BISIGNANO

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, finally, on Mr. Bisignano to be head of the beleaguered Social Security Administration, we all know that SSA—the Social Security Administration—is in a state of chaos, but instead of advancing someone who will bring order and stability to Social Security, Senate Republicans are backing a slash-and-burn, billionaire CEO who will only pour gasoline into the DOGE fires.

Mr. Bisignano has zero experience in government or with Social Security, but he has plenty of experience in cutting jobs and downsizing. He says of himself:

I am fundamentally a DOGE person.

That is who they want.

Madam President, American people, Republicans, you want someone who is a DOGE person in charge of Social Security? My goodness. I can't think of a worse Agency for Mr. "Slash-and-Burn" Bisignano to lead than the Social Security Administration. That is his nickname, "Slash-and-Burn."

Every single Senate Republican who votes yes on Mr. Bisignano is voting yes to put Social Security benefits in jeopardy. Voting yes on Bisignano means voting yes on continuing the wave of office closings and mass layoffs. What they are doing at Social Security—DOGE and the Trump people—they are afraid to say they want to kill it, so they try to strangle it—closed offices, longer wait times, phone lines disrupted, emails disrupted.

Mr. Bisignano's nomination is another reminder that Donald Trump's chaos is made possible thanks to the complicity of Senate Republicans. They could stop the attacks by DOGE if they wanted. They could halt terrible nominees if they wanted. But every Senate Republican, every time, who has a chance to side with the American people instead sides with Donald Trump. They are doing it again with Mr. Bisignano's nomination.

The Senate should reject the nomination of Mr. "Slash-and-Burn" or else the chaos we have seen from DOGE will only get worse.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

NOMINATION OF FRANK BISIGNANO

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I am pleased to supplement the remarks of our distinguished leader with respect to Social Security.

Rhode Island has I believe the largest participation per capita in Social Security in the country. Social Security is what brought American seniors out of poverty and into a distinguished and fair retirement, and it really matters that we defend it and that Social Security remain unbroken.

The threat is pretty clear. The President keeps talking about imaginary fraud. Why would you talk about imaginary fraud in a system unless you have some motive?

It wasn't just him. Elon Musk talked relentlessly about fraud in the Social Security system. The Secretary of Commerce went a mile out of his lane to add a shot at Social Security being riddled with fraud. Then the President went to the other end of the building there, stood at the rostrum of the House, and lied to the American people, flat-out lied to the American people about Social Security fraud. He let Elon Musk call it a Ponzi scheme as well.

This is a battering ram of misinformation and disinformation, and it doesn't happen without a motive. The motive here is to degrade public confidence in Social Security.

At the same time, you sent what I call your little "Muskrats"—you sent your "Muskrats" into Social Security to disrupt its operations. So you have the rhetorical attack happening over here, and then you begin to have Social Security fail because you broke it and get what has been referred to as an interruption of benefits—an interruption of benefits.

Then you also have your private equity people and your tech bros over there so that when the interruption of benefits happens, they can come in and swoop to the rescue of the problem that the administration caused, and next thing you know, what have you got? Privatized Social Security, with private equity guys and tech bros running the show because thousands of the employees who know how to run the Social Security Administration have been forced out.

That is the concern, and it is a very real concern.

I want to give Mr. Bisignano good marks for saying that he is not going there. He said that he will not privatize the Agency—will not. He said that under his leadership, the Social Security Administration will remain a government Agency and remain an Agency

that is run for the benefit of the American people and benefit recipients.

Now, the problem is, I find nominees' statements hard to believe up against the power of that pressure from the White House and from Musk and from the Secretary of Commerce and from whoever else is trying to accomplish the Republican extremist goal for decades of getting rid of Social Security. So I was a "no" vote in committee. I am going to be a "no" vote out here.

I hope very much that I am wrong, but I also hoped very much that Secretary Rubio would stand up for Ukraine and that he would be an anchor, as Secretary of State, to defend Ukraine against the predatory, brutal, criminal war crimes of Vladimir Putin. But what we have seen instead has been the "Putinization" of our strategy to Ukraine, and the Secretary of State has been entirely complicit in it, from all the signs that I see.

So when you have somebody who says one thing and, in the case of Secretary Rubio, who actually lived it—he was actually an ardent advocate for defending Ukraine. Then you get into Trump zone, and suddenly all your principles disappear, all your commitments disappear, and you just become a tool of the Trump political operation. I have seen that too often, so I am going to vote no.

We need, as a Senate, to send a clear message that Social Security is inviolable; that it is a promise amongst us all, as Americans, to protect our seniors, to protect ourselves when we get to that age; and that no one will be allowed to break it.

And one of the things I am going to ask is to make sure that we go into Social Security's databases and make sure that those "Muskrats," when they went in there, didn't do any permanent damage, didn't set off mines to go off later, and didn't leave backdoors for the information to be exfiltrated out to private sector folks for whom it is as good as gold.

I will say one last thing, and that is Mr. Bisignano said he would work with me on the benefits cliffs, where you are fine with full benefits, and then one little thing happens, you miss one little mark, and there is a complete crash. There is a better way to deal with it. Benefit cliff smoothing is a technical thing. He promised to work with me. I intend to hold him to that promise.

My friend Mr. CORNYN, the Senator from Texas, has been patiently waiting. So I yield the floor to him.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, it looks like my timing is exquisite because I came down here to talk about something that I think has sort of fallen off the radar screen here in recent weeks, and that is the work of the Department of Government Efficiency,

one of the most important developments that I think we have seen with the advent of President Trump's ascension to the Office of President.

It is amazing to me to listen to my Democratic colleagues talking like Chicken Little: "The sky is falling." I heard the Senator from Rhode Island suggest that we are trying to privatize Social Security. There is no one—absolutely no one—suggesting that. This is what is called a straw man. You erect a phony argument, and you knock it down, and you claim victory.

The truth is, Mr. Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency should be applauded for their efforts to root out waste, fraud, and abuse. You would think taxpayers—the same taxpayers our colleagues represent in their States—would applaud this effort.

I can't think of a more difficult but important goal than helping the government find efficiencies and reduce spending, because if we reduce spending, two things happen: Either we reduce the taxes that are taken from the hard-working families and produce the revenue by which government operates or we eliminate or reduce the amount of debt that the Federal Government accrues, which right now is at an unsustainable level. To me, both of those things are positive: limiting the amount of money that comes from the taxpayer or—and maybe it is "and"—reducing the government debt.

The problem with runaway spending by the government, of course, is not a new one, but it has been getting increasingly worse, particularly during the last 4 years of the Biden administration. The truth is, it has taken us a long time to get to \$37 trillion in debt, but it has now reached the point of unsustainability. We are spending more money on interest on the national debt than we are on defense in an increasingly dangerous world. That alone is unsustainable.

Ronald Reagan described our spending problem back in 1984, when he said these famous words, "We could say they spend money like drunken sailors, but that would be unfair to drunken sailors," which just about sums it up.

For somebody like Elon Musk, who is reportedly one of the most wealthy—maybe, the most wealthy person—on the planet to spend his time and effort and to assemble a team like he has to work with the government and to start the Department of Government Efficiency is a huge public service. I am grateful to Elon Musk, who has volunteered his time, as well as recruiting others to help the U.S. Government deal with its spending addiction and to try to help it get clean—certainly, much worse than a drunken sailor.

This morning, I had a chance to meet with a gentleman, Joe Gebbia, who is the former CEO of Airbnb and who is volunteering his time because he sees this as an unprecedented opportunity to get at problems that the government historically has been unable to deal with, and that is the incredible

rise and increase in government spending, the inefficiency, the waste of taxpayer funds, and the national debt.

So getting a team like this, with very accomplished entrepreneurs and people who have been very successful in the private sector, to come in and try to help us figure out how to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse strikes me as an act of patriotism and public service.

I know we have heard the saying that imitation is the highest form of flattery. Back home in Texas, Governor Abbott and the Texas Legislature have also followed dozens of other States in paying a high compliment to the Department of Government Efficiency and Elon Musk by proposing a DOGE-like task force at the State level. I am sure that, even in a State as efficiently run and with as low taxes as Texas, you can find inefficiency that can be and should be rooted out.

Governor Abbott recently signed the first bill of this year's legislative session into law to establish the Texas Regulatory Efficiency Office, modeled after DOGE.

While some States are more fiscally responsible than others, State governments, as I said, are not immune from spending taxpayer money on outdated or inefficient programs. Texas is one of the most efficient. That shouldn't surprise anyone. We have the fourth lowest State taxes in the country, and we have been ranked one of the lowest spending States in terms of State-spending per capita.

I look forward to seeing the great work being done down in Austin by the Texas DOGE and what they can do to try to help make State government more efficient. I know I join many of them in thanking Elon and his team at DOGE for the inspiration and what he has brought down to our State.

Of course, Elon's status within the Federal Government is that of what is called a special government employee. That means it is for a period of time—130 days, in this case. And with that date approaching soon, Mr. Musk indicates he plans to wrap up his work. But I must emphasize that the work of DOGE must go on. The task of improving government efficiency is one that will never be finished.

I believe that Elon Musk and his team at DOGE have made monumental progress in just a few short months. Let me give you a few examples.

The Department of the Treasury started its first automated payment verification system at the recommendation of DOGE. So far, more than \$300 million has been identified in improper payment requests.

Over at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the government has launched a Fraud Detection Operations Center, and 1 week ago today, CMS announced they suspended suspected fraudulent payments to 33 different providers. One such fraudulent payment was for a patient that died two decades ago. It reminds me of some of

the people on the Social Security rolls that DOGE has also found—some well in excess of 100 years old, if they exist at all.

Well, another example included billing more than \$2 million in genetic testing for patients that never actually received the test. These are just a few examples of the gross fraud and inefficiencies that happened throughout the Federal Government.

I am sure it is just the tip of the iceberg, but these technical payment glitches are just scratching the surface. DOGE's findings and recommendations have also eliminated some of the most egregious examples of fraud.

The Department of Justice, in partnership with DOGE, discovered and charged an Iraqi man for illegally voting in a U.S. election. Now, we should know—I think everybody does know—that foreign nationals, noncitizens, are not eligible to vote in U.S. elections. That is a privilege reserved for citizens of the United States. Instances of foreign nationals voting in our elections threaten the bedrock of our democratic Republic. All of us should be thankful to the Department of Justice, Attorney General Bondi, FBI Director Patel, and DOGE that they identified and eliminated this violation of the sanctity of our elections process.

The Department of Labor and the Department of Agriculture are working to make sure that illegal immigrants are not receiving Federal benefits that they are not authorized to receive, such as unemployment insurance or SNAP benefits, otherwise known as food stamps. These programs were meant to protect vulnerable Americans, not to reward illegal immigrants for breaking our laws.

From eliminating improper payments to safeguarding our elections, I believe we owe Mr. Musk a debt of gratitude for helping to identify these problems—again, just the tip of the iceberg—and/or eliminating these wasteful uses of hard-earned tax dollars.

In order to consolidate the gains that DOGE has made, I support Congress and the administration working together to codify these cost-cutting measures through rescissions. That is the official process by which we actually save the money.

This will be important for a few different reasons. No. 1, it will allow us to use the savings that DOGE is identifying in order to offset the costs of the tax bill that we are currently considering, allowing us to send even more money back to the American people. Any money we can save from wasteful spending, obviously, can be sent back or kept by the people who earn it in the first place, which are hard-working American families.

So I am very happy to hear that the White House indicated that they plan on sending us a rescissions package very soon. I would recommend, personally, that they send a rescissions package on a monthly basis.

I am going to be very interested to see how our Democratic colleagues react to some of these sensible spending cuts or rescissions. So far, what they have done is they have been in complete opposition to anything and everything that the Trump administration has proposed, including the Department of Government Efficiency.

I don't think it helps their credibility when some of the most egregious expenditures and waste of taxpayer money are pointed out, and they complain about the person who is identifying it and made it possible maybe to save that money or to return it to the taxpayers from whom it came in the first place.

As officials at the Office of Management and Budget consider their options moving forward, I hope they know that I will be a willing and eager partner in their efforts.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

NOMINATION OF FRANK BISIGNANO

Ms. WARREN. Madam President, Donald Trump and Elon Musk are taking a chain saw to Social Security.

For nearly a century, Social Security has been there for tens of millions of Americans. But now, Trump and Musk are threatening to tear all of that down. They are firing staff. They are plotting to close down offices. They are making it harder for people to get help over the telephone.

Trump's pick to head up Social Security, Frank Bisignano, will rubberstamp Trump and Musk's attack on Social Security. He will let them keep slashing services. He will let them keep threatening benefits. That is going to hurt people everywhere, from seniors who count on their monthly checks right now to the parents of kids with disabilities supported by Social Security, to every American who is paying into the program now for results later on down the line.

Social Security, by the way, is more than just a retirement program. It is insurance. If you are 30 years old today and you get in an accident and become disabled, Social Security has you covered. If you have a child and something happens to you, that kid will get Social Security benefits.

Donald Trump and Elon Musk want to rip that protection away. Two people who don't have the slightest clue how much Social Security means to families are now threatening Americans' benefits in order to pay for giant tax cuts for billionaires, and since those two cannot begin to imagine what it means for working people, let's tell them what Social Security does.

A few weeks ago, I posted a video explaining what Trump and Musk were doing to Social Security, and I asked people: Just tell your stories. And the stories came flooding in, and here are just a few:

I'm on Social Security disability—it's about 95 percent of my total income. Every month since Trump took office this year, I've worried about whether or not my [Social Security] payment will come as usual.

Yes, there are millions of people out there who are worried about getting their Social Security payments on time because Trump and Musk are out there with that famous chain saw, doing what they can to make it harder for people to get the benefits that they have earned.

Or here is another:

I've had Medicare medication coverage for around 20 years, and all of [a] sudden, with Musk's appearance, I've had to fight to keep it.

Here is someone who has a legal right—a benefit—and now, thanks to Elon Musk, has to be in the fight in order to keep what this person is entitled to.

Or another:

I've been getting my Social Security check with zero problems for 15 years. Last night, I was so worried about me not getting a check [that] I stayed up to the early morning hours, to make sure it was in my account. Thanks to Trump and Musk, I worry if I will be able to pay my rent every month. Since Trump has been in office, it's been extremely stressful.

Yes, that is the stress people are feeling about whether or not they will have access to the money that they invested year after year when they were working, the money that they earned—their Social Security benefits.

Or another:

We have a son born with Down syndrome and we are now retired, depending on our Social Security for the three of us—for food, utilities, clothing, medical services, things that we worked [for] all our lives, only to have billionaires come in and take what little we have to live on away.

Yes, the billionaires may not care about Social Security, but here is someone who depends on it every day.

Or another:

I'm about to turn 65 and have had a nightmare of a time trying to even talk to a real human being at the Social Security office. It's been just a series of dead ends and mistakes piled atop confusion.

And, boy, there is the heart of it. Donald Trump and Elon Musk can't legally cut Social Security benefits, but what Trump and Musk are now doing is cutting access to being able to get your Social Security benefits started, which has a very similar effect for people who don't get what they earned all their lives.

Or here is another:

I had cancer at 52 years old—stage 4 uterine cancer. I spent more than a year fighting cancer. I am currently 66 years old and fighting the chronic pain from the chemicals they used to treat the cancer. I rely on my Social Security to survive. What am I going to do?

This is what is happening in America now because Donald Trump and Elon Musk are taking a chain saw to Social Security.

Or another:

I'm 71 years old and work part time as a data technician in dementia research, so my [Social Security benefits] supplement my in-

come. I'm anxious that eventually I, too, will have my Social Security check delayed or stopped altogether.

Or another:

We all need Social Security to survive, as a nation. I myself have been having it drawn out of my paychecks for over 40 years but haven't retired yet and will need it shortly. My only hope is that it is still there when I need it. We earned that right to collect this money and [will] not let a bunch of billionaires take it from us.

Amen.

I have worked since I was 16 years old and now I'm 71 but I still work part-time. It goes without saying that I need my [Social Security] benefits to survive and since Trump and Musk took over I don't know from one month to the next what might happen. So scary now!

This is what Donald Trump and Elon Musk are doing to people who are counting on Social Security.

Or another:

I only get \$25,000 yearly from Social Security, and it constitutes more than half of my income. I have a small pension from the company where I worked for 40 years. If I lose my Social Security, I'll have to support myself and my sister (who cannot work) . . . I don't have much in savings due to continuing medical expenses over the years. [We] need my Social Security to survive.

I will say that again.

[We] need my Social Security to survive.

Or another:

I'm a [Social Security] employee and I just want to say thank you for standing up for the programs SSA runs and the beneficiaries. It is true it's been becoming harder for people to access their benefits but also for other services such as getting their Social Security card replaced. There [are] some days where people are waiting for 8 hours just to talk to a customer service representative or they don't even get the call back and have to call again the next day to have an issue resolved—that's if they have the time [to call] the next day.

That is testimony from the frontlines, from one who works at the Social Security Administration—lines that are 8 hours long.

Or another:

I went to a [Social Security] office yesterday because I need[ed] to change my direct deposit for my monthly benefits. The doors were locked . . . All the booths were shuttered. Sign on the door said "by appointment only" and there was a number to call, which I did. The automated system put me on hold, and the recording said 15-minute wait, and after time passed, the recording said I would be helped as soon as possible, then said they were receiving higher than normal call volumes . . . After several rings, the recording said . . . leave [a] message (which I did) and someone will return your call, but that hasn't happened yet. As I sat outside that office, another person walked up and said he heard that we have to go into the office in person to show our ID or lose our benefits—then realized the door was locked . . . Now I am very concerned that I might not get my benefits in the future.

So, Donald Trump and Elon Musk, that is what your attack on Social Security means for Americans: more problems and fewer people to fix them; hours on the phone or hours waiting in line at an office, trying to get help—all to get the benefits that people have