

whose father is the school superintendent, and I will compete against him.

As a matter of fact, I actually sit here at the desk which Jimmy Stewart—"Mr. Smith Goes to Washington"—had in the movie "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington." He had never been to Washington. I had never been to Washington.

But it didn't mean you couldn't do a good job if you had access to the same tools that young people had in the best school systems in America. That is what this debate is all about. It is about ensuring that every child has access to the internet through a Wi-Fi hotspot if they need it.

If the school, the library, says we have got to help them at home, they don't have it—because that kid will fall behind the kids who have it. And it won't have anything to do with their ability, won't have anything to do with their desire to be a full participant in this great American experiment.

A study using Census Bureau data estimated that individuals with greater access to the computer and internet at home spent 28 percent more hours learning than those kids without that access. I mean, do we really need a study of this? Of course not. We know that is the truth.

So as this evidence on home connectivity piles up, there is no debate: Students without access to internet at home are seriously disadvantaged compared to their classmates, plain and simple.

I identified with this because my father was a truck driver. We didn't have trips to the Himalayas. We didn't have some kind of summer school at universities to help out my brothers and me when we were 15, 16, or 17. But we didn't feel deprived because we had the same books as the kids in the suburbs, in the private schools. We had the same books; and I am going to study as hard as I can.

Today, that is not possible. If you don't have a Wi-Fi hotspot, you can't do it. If you don't have internet at home, you can't do it. You might want to do it, but you can't do it. And by the way, they know they don't have it. They can see the kids on the other side of town who have it. They know it. They are 9; they are 10; they are 11; they are 12. They know it. That is what this program is all about. It is just to say: You have got it; you have got it at home. Go to it. Be whoever you can be.

These Republicans, they are going to vote this program out of existence. This is the great equalizer. This is the access to opportunity. This is democratization of access to opportunity through education, which is supposed to be the foundation of our country.

You know, when I grew up, I would look at Abe Lincoln and his story. I would look at the movies about Abe Lincoln. He would be reading books by candlelight in his house on the prairie. That is all you needed, was the light, because the book was there. You could do it.

Well, without a Wi-Fi hotspot, there is nothing to read. Your device is not working. You are denying that ambitious, hard-working, imaginative, creative young person—by the way, disproportionately Black and Brown in our Nation—from having the same opportunities that we have provided for 250 years since the dawn of our country.

So we are putting these young people at a serious disadvantage compared to their classmates. So now my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, they want to just take that tool away. They want to rip the hotspots out of students' hands. Why? Let's just listen to a few of their arguments.

First, the Congressional Review Act supporters say: The hotspots rule is illegal.

This is simply untrue. It is not illegal.

In section 254 of the Communications Act, Congress provided the FCC with flexibility to adapt the E-Rate program for changing times and educational conditions. How do I know? I am the author of that provision. So when people tell me it is illegal, it is not illegal. I wrote the provision which says the Federal Communications Commission can do this for the children of our Nation.

Second, the Congressional Review Act supporters argue that the hotspots rule endangers students by allowing them to access inappropriate content, including on social media.

False. That is also not true. Under the Children's Internet Protection Act, schools and libraries receiving E-Rate dollars must ensure that hotspots block or filter images that are obscene or harmful to minors.

By the way, with all the crocodile tears coming down from my colleagues on the other side about their concern for children, I have had a children's online privacy protection act pending here in the Senate for years that gives total privacy protection to children under the age of 17 in our Nation, and we can't get it passed.

Why can't we get it passed? Because too many Republicans are concerned about what the big social media companies might say to them.

Well, where is their concern, then, for the poor child being exposed? Not there. They should be more concerned about what Meta is doing to them, what Google is doing to them, what those big companies are doing—because, under the law, it can't happen under the E-Rate dollars. It can't happen. It is illegal. We need another law to pass that makes it illegal to let the big social media companies in our country do the same thing.

If my colleagues are really so concerned about children's online privacy and safety, I urge them to support my legislation—if they care about it—because that would block it.

Third, they say that the program is wasteful.

That is false. Again, the hotspots rule limits the amount of money that

can be requested by an E-Rate applicant and prohibits the duplication of the funding. It is all written into the law.

Let me be clear: This repeal will not save the taxpayer a dime. What does the resolution really do? It doesn't make our schools stronger. It doesn't make our libraries better. It doesn't improve student outcomes. It doesn't lower your taxes. It doesn't save the government money. All it does is strip away a lifeline for the children in our Nation who need it the most, that they can take it home with them, that they can study at home. That is it.

So this E-Rate expansion didn't just connect students; it connected futures. It helped make good on the promise that every child, regardless of their income, their race, their geography deserves a fair shot at learning, and that promise is worth defending. It is worth defending.

Education is a great equalizer. It is the foundation of our democracy, the engine of our economy, and the heartbeat of our shared American dream that any child, regardless of where they come from, regardless of who their mother and father is, can dream the great dreams. But we have to give them access to the tools they need in order to maximize all of their God-given abilities.

In today's world, to be cut off from the digital world is to be cut off from education. And that means that broadband is not a luxury; it is a necessity. It is an essential tool as much as a textbook or schoolbus or a lunch program. This is not a partisan issue. It is not a liberal issue. It is not a conservative issue. It is a children's issue. It is an American issue. It is who we should be. It is a fairness issue.

I urge my colleagues to not vote to deepen inequality. Instead, vote to affirm our values. Vote to defend every child's right to learn, to thrive, to reach for the stars. Let's reject this resolution and recommit ourselves to closing the homework gap so that all children have equal access to learning.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 1668

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I understand that there is a bill at the desk from Senator MERKLEY, and I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title.

A bill (S. 1668), a bill to amend Chapter 131 title 5, United States Code, to prohibit the President, Vice President, Members of Congress, and individuals appointed to Senate-confirmed positions from issuing, sponsoring, endorsing certain financial instruments, and for other purposes.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I now ask for a second reading, and in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will receive its second reading on the next legislative day.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, MAY 8,
2025

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 10 a.m. on Thursday, May 8; that following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, morning business be closed, and the Senate resume Calendar No. 24, S.J. Res. 7, and at 11:15 a.m., the joint resolution be read a third time, and the Senate vote on passage of the joint res-

olution; further, that following disposition of the joint resolution, the Senate resume consideration of Calendar No. 65, H.J. Res. 60, the joint resolution be read a third time, and the Senate vote on passage of the joint resolution; finally, that upon disposition of Calendar No. 65, H.J. Res. 60, the Senate resume consideration of the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 66, S. 1582, the GENIUS Act, and at 1:45 p.m., the Senate vote on cloture on the motion to proceed.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M.
TOMORROW

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come be-

fore the Senate, I ask that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:57 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, May 8, 2025, at 10 a.m.

WITHDRAWAL

Executive Message transmitted by the President to the Senate on May 7, 2025 withdrawing from further Senate consideration the following nomination:

JANETTE NESHEIWAT, OF NEW YORK, TO BE MEDICAL DIRECTOR IN THE REGULAR CORPS OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE, SUBJECT TO QUALIFICATIONS THEREFOR AS PROVIDED BY LAW AND REGULATIONS, AND TO BE SURGEON GENERAL OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE FOR A TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE VIVEK HALLEGGERE MURTHY, RESIGNED, WHICH WAS SENT TO THE SENATE ON JANUARY 20, 2025.