Secretary Noem, the Secretary of Homeland Security, began her tenure as the head of President Trump's Homeland Security agenda by sending a clear message that she intends to enforce the laws that prevent illegal immigration. But she didn't stop there. Under her leadership, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, otherwise known as ICE, arrests have increased by more than 600 percent. This includes arrests of criminal migrants, which have more than doubled. President Trump and Secretary Noem returned to a commonsense, case-by-case approach to humanitarian parole, which had been abused under the Biden administration, and they have clawed back about $80 million spent by FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, to house illegal immigrants in luxury hotels in places like New York City.

These policies were part of the reason President Trump got elected. What we had on November 5 was a referendum on President Biden's border policies, and obviously the voters preferred President Trump's approach.

But my point is that, in the 4 years of the Biden administration, somebody had to deal with this flow of humanity and drugs and trafficking across the border; and in my State, my Governor and the State leadership, to their credit, stepped up. Texans have had to bear the brunt of open borders, rampant crime, and deadly fentanyl for the past 4 years.

I am very thankful to President Trump and Secretary Noem for their leadership in ensuring that Americans and Texans once again are safe and secure, but the damage done by President Biden and his policies must be undone. It must be rectified. Congress must reimburse the State of Texas for the costs incurred for filling in for our then-absentee President.

I will continue working with President Trump, Governor Abbott, and the entire Texas delegation, as well as Senator JOHN THUNE and Speaker JOHNSON, to ensure that this priority is included in the reconciliation bill.

President Biden abdicated his duty to keep our citizens safe, and the State of Texas must be made whole for its efforts to protect Texans and the rest of the country from the consequences of his misguided policies.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

## GENIUS ACT

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about the GENIUS Act.

Analysts expect that passing the GENIUS Act could grow the stablecoin market tenfold over just the next 3 years. That would take a $200 billion market to a $2 trillion market, making it just a little bit smaller than the entire GDP of Canada.

Two weeks ago, Democrats refused to vote for the bill because it had inadequate safeguards for consumers and it posed too much risk, both for our financial stability and our national security. Democrats also voted no because the bill failed to address President Trump's blatant crypto corruption.

So here we are again. What has changed in the bill since the last vote? The answer: Not much. Its basic flaws remain unaddressed. While a strong stablecoin bill is the best possible outcome, this weak bill is worse than no bill at all.

First, corruption. It is fitting that we are voting on the GENIUS Act just a few days before President Trump hosts a ''private intimate dinner'' and a VIP White House tour for the top investors in his meme coin, many of whom remain anonymous. Buyers, including some apparently foreign investors, reportedly spent an estimated $148 million in the contest, enriching Donald Trump and his family. And yet this pay-to-play scheme is only the tip of the iceberg of the President's crypto corruption.

Trump and his family have already pocketed hundreds of millions of dollars from his crypto ventures, and they stand to make hundreds of millions more from his stablecoin, USD1, if this bill passes. It launched only weeks ago, but USD1 is already the fifth largest stablecoin in the entire world. Passing this bill means that we can expect more anonymous buyers, big companies, and foreign governments to use the President's stablecoin as both a shadowy bank account shielded from government oversight and as a way to pay off the President personally. For crooks, it is a two-for-one.

This is not a hypothetical problem. Already, an Abu Dhabi investment firm called MGX is using Trump's stablecoin to finance a $2 billion investment in the Binance cryptocurrency exchange, essentially just cutting Trump in on the deal of this enormous financial transaction. MGX is chaired by the intelligence chief of the United Arab Emirates and co-owned by a firm with extensive ties to the Chinese Government.

If Congress passes this bill, USD1 won't just be a coercive tool to pay off a corrupt President; it will be a financial instrument blessed by the U.S. Government. And this bill provides even more opportunities to reward buyers of Trump's coins with favors like tariff exemptions, pardons, and government appointments.

For months, many Democrats have pushed for commonsense ethics provisions in this bill. Unfortunately, the final bill does nothing—nothing—to rein in the President's crypto corruption. But some supporters say: Well, that is because the corruption is already happening, and at least this bill won't make it any worse.

That is wrong. The GENIUS Act will accelerate Trump's corruption by supercharging the size of the stablecoin market and the reach and profitability of Trump's USD1. And, for the first time in American history, this bill will make our President, Donald Trump, the regulator of his own financial product.

This Congress should be a check on the President. Congress should not be making it even easier for him to line his pockets with even more shady crypto cash.

If Congress does not fix this issue here today, then it will be aiding and abetting his corruption every time President Trump's stablecoin is used to finance a corrupt deal.

Second problem: financial stability.

I am deeply concerned that this bill will directly lead to the next financial meltdown. This is not the first time that Congress has listened to the financial industry and created a weak regulatory regime for a new, innovative financial product. We have seen this story before, and we know how it ends.

Twenty-five years ago, Congress passed the Commodity Futures Modernization Act to support the obscure financial derivatives market, and almost nobody noticed. At the time, derivatives were a relatively niche financial product. Most people really didn't understand what they were or what they did. But when the derivatives industry came knocking, begging for so-called regulation, Congress was willing to oblige. After all, people said, surely some kind of regulatory framework was better than nothing.

So Congress created a weak set of rules that was loaded with loopholes, just like the industry wanted. The result was a total disaster. Derivatives moved from the edge of the financial system to the center of it. The result of that law was to massively expand the reach of the derivatives market and further integrate it into the core financial system. That bill helped set the stage for the 2008 financial crash.

Congress came back after the meltdown and cleaned up the mess in Dodd-Frank, but that was long after 10 million people lost their homes and millions more people lost their jobs and their savings.

In the last decade, we saw this story in another version and just barely avoided another disaster because of it. In 2018, Congress debated and enacted S. 2155, the bipartisan Economic Growth, Regulatory Relief, and Consumer Protection Act right here on the floor of the Senate. Republicans and the banking industry pushed that bill, and a number of Democrats joined them as well. They voted to roll back critical post-2008 crisis reforms for some of the largest banks in the country.

Five years later—just 5 years later—three of those newly deregulated banks failed. Those three failures were the second, third, and fourth largest failures among banks in American history. For a while, it looked like we might face a run on the whole banking system. Swift action by regulators to bail out uninsured depositors and a whole lot of luck are the only reasons we didn't face yet another financial meltdown just 2 years ago. Now here we are back to do the same thing again.

A financial meltdown triggered by crypto instability is not some alarmist, fever dream. In fact, it nearly happened just a few years ago. Crypto markets abruptly lost $2 trillion—that is trillion with a ''t''—after the collapse of several major crypto firms. In 2022, two of the largest stablecoins failed to maintain their pegs.

Luckily, these cryptocurrency markets were mostly separate from the rest of the financial system, so we avoided mass economic destruction. That ends today if we enact this bill. The GENIUS Act folds stablecoins directly into the traditional financial system, while applying weaker safeguards than banks or investment companies must adhere to.

Make no mistake, we are likely to see another financial crisis in the coming years, and we are virtually certain to see another set of wild swings in cryptocurrency values. It will be the American people who will bear the cost of a massive financial crash facilitated by the stablecoin market if Congress passes the GENIUS Act.

Third problem: If this bill passes, it will mean easier access to money for terrorists and drug cartels.

Even today, the crypto industry's own analysts are calling stablecoins ''the new kingpin of illicit crypto activity.'' According to Chainalysis, a blockchain analytics firm, stablecoins account for more than 60 percent of all illicit crypto transactions. There is a reason for this: These stablecoins are an ideal payment system that works for cartels, terrorists, sanctions evaders, and human traffickers to finance crime.

Unfortunately, the GENIUS Act massively expands the marketplace for stablecoins while failing to address the basic national security risks posed by them. The bill fails to apply anti-money laundering safeguards to exchanges and intermediaries that facilitate the movement, obfuscation, and custody of stablecoins.

The bill includes glaring loopholes that would allow Tether—which has reportedly become the cryptocurrency of choice for illicit actors because of its alleged willingness to turn a blind eye to money laundering—to now get access to U.S. markets. In fact, the bill text now contains a so-called decentralized finance loophole that allows Tether and other noncompliant stablecoins to access U.S. markets without any constraints—a loophole that does not exist today and that didn't even exist in the bill until this past weekend.

I don't want to see fentanyl traffickers or child pornographers or terrorists or countries that are trying to avoid sanctions financing their operations with U.S.-backed stablecoins. I certainly don't want to see a major expansion of access to money by America's adversaries. But if we pass this bill in its current form, that is exactly where we are headed.

Fourth problem: If this bill passes, it will allow Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg to issue their own money.

The bill still permits big tech companies and other conglomerates to issue their own private currencies. Community banks have warned us that by creating a parallel, lightly regulated banking system, the stablecoin market will drain deposits from our local community banks and from the communities they serve. There will be less funding available for small businesses and households all across the country.

So if this bill becomes law, Congress will be responsible if a handful of giants take control of our money and then access and abuse troves of valuable consumer spending data. We will be responsible if small businesses struggle to access credit and if more community banks disappear.

Finally, if this bill passes, mainstream investors will be at greater risk of getting robbed and scammed. The bill jeopardizes CFPB oversight and the suite of consumer protections that people enjoy when using their Venmo app or their bank account. If you get cheated using a stablecoin, you may just be out of luck.

Our constituents will be reaching out to our offices because they have fallen victim to a stablecoin scam or have been saddled with junk fees when they redeem their stablecoin, only to discover that in many cases, there will be no recourse.

Congress should not choose to enable President Trump's egregious corruption. Congress should not fuel the next financial crash. Congress should not put consumers at risk for fraud or make it easier to engage in terrorist activities.

It doesn't have to be this way. A bill that meaningfully strengthens oversight in the stablecoin market is worth enacting. A bill that turbocharges the stablecoin market while facilitating the President's corruption and undermining national security, financial stability, and consumer protection is worse than no bill at all.

For these reasons, I urge my colleagues to vote no on the GENIUS Act.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. MOODY). The Senator from Vermont.

## PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS

Mr. WELCH. Madam President, it is good to see you and be with you.

Madam President, American families are struggling with the cost of living, and one of the biggest challenges they face is the incredibly high cost of prescription drugs.

Last week, President Trump signed a new Executive order that tries to implement international reference pricing on prescription drugs for Americans. At his press conference, President Trump called out pharmaceutical companies for ''price gouging,'' which he described as a ''great American rip off.''

I agree with President Trump. Prescription drugs are too expensive in America, and we are getting ripped off. There is no reason that pharmaceutical companies should charge American patients more than they charge people in other countries. These excessive price-gouging practices have forced many Americans to pay four times, five times, even six times for the same life-saving medications as folks in other countries pay. There is absolutely no justification for that.

Now, in the last Congress, the Inflation Reduction Act was a significant step toward combating Big Pharma's price gouging and lowering prices for American patients. That act allowed Medicare the ability to negotiate drug prices for the first time ever.

By the way, that is something that all other countries do. They protect their citizens from price gouging.

That bill meant 20,000 Vermonters who take one or more of the first 10 drugs selected by Medicare for negotiation will see lower prices starting in 2026. That can't come soon enough. Over 27,000 Vermonters will save an average of 600 bucks annually thanks to the $2,000 annual out-of-pocket cost cap that began in January of 2025. The Inflation Reduction Act will save senior Vermonters on Medicare a total of more than $21 million on prescription drugs.

But when you are the multibillion-dollar pharmaceutical industry, you have a lot of tricks up your sleeve to thwart any policy that cuts into your profits. One of Big Pharma's favorite refrains is that reference pricing—where we pay essentially the same as everybody else pays, not five times more—will put a strain on research and innovation. That is false.

The fact of the matter is that over two decades, the world's largest biopharmaceutical companies have spent way more on advertising and way more on administrative costs—including, by the way, multimillion-dollar CEO pay packages—than they have spent on research and development.

By the way, what they do spend on research and development is subsidized by taxpayers.

So while pharma is doing these maneuvers to keep prices up, real people are hurting. On average, Americans spend over $1,400 on prescription drugs every year. That is the highest per capita spending in the world, and it is one of the reasons why healthcare costs are so high—by the way, not just with the cost for Medicaid and Medicare but for employers who care about their employees and are fighting against ever-increasing insurance premiums that make that almost out of reach or make them make a decision between increasing pay, which workers want and workers need, and maintaining healthcare benefits that workers want and workers need.

And there is a part of this that I think is really sad and particularly