

wants to cut off an alternative, and that is going to make prices go up and let China become the leader in clean energy, which our children and grandchildren will pay a dear price for.

So Senate Democrats are going to fight this bill with everything we have got so families don't have to foot the bill for Donald Trump's disastrous energy policies.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. President, and on judges, today Senate Republicans are holding their first hearing on judicial nominees under Donald Trump's second term. The last time Donald Trump was in the White House and Republicans held the Senate majority, this Chamber mutated into a conveyor belt for hard-right judges who sided with special interests and not the American people. Most were radically out of step with mainstream America; others were barely out of law school; and many were handpicked from the ranks of the Federalist Society not for their fairness but their ideological fealty to a hard-right philosophy that hurts average Americans every day.

When it comes to judges, Donald Trump cares about one thing only: Will they bow before the King? Will they break precedent and overturn rule of law just to appease Donald Trump? That is what he wants.

Senate Republicans must reject nominees like this. But, unfortunately, Senate Republicans are off to a dismal start. Among the five nominees testifying today is Joshua Divine of Missouri. Divine is a political operative with no judicial experience who has made a career of attacking everything from voting rights, to commonsense gun safety, to defending government overreach into people's private lives. He hasn't been out of law school for 10 years and spent less than half of that time practicing as an attorney.

Senators were not sent here to rubberstamp Donald Trump loyalists and put Donald Trump loyalists in black robes. Our duty, our sacred duty, is to the Constitution and to provide advice and consent, not blind obedience. You would think this would be obvious, but Republicans spent their last majority packing our courts with people who had no business being judges. At least 10 nominees were rated "not qualified" by the American Bar Association, an unprecedented number. One nominee had never even tried a case.

Of course, none of this—none of this—matters to Donald Trump. He is not in the business of creating an independent judiciary. He is not in the business of following what the Founding Fathers constructed as the third branch of government. He is cooking up a loyalist bench who will do what he wants instead of what the law says.

Recent reports detail how Donald Trump has been fuming lately over judges who haven't been, in his eyes, loyal enough to him. This kind of thinking should frighten anyone who cares about judicial independence.

Confirming judges is one of the most consequential things the Senate ever does. It shapes the future of our democracy. Getting it wrong has disastrous consequences. When hard-right judges take over, *Roe v. Wade* is overturned, voting rights are gutted, and now the Supreme Court has gone so far as to declare Donald Trump immune from prosecution, as if he wears a crown and sits as a King above the law.

This is not democracy. This is not balance. This is not justice.

So as Republicans begin marching more nominees through the Chamber, they face the choice: They can be the stewards of the Constitution and protect our democracy, or they can be foot soldiers in Trump's crusade to remake the judiciary into his MAGA loyalist bench.

They must reject MAGA loyalists dressed up as jurists, because once the robes go on, the damage lasts for generations.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican whip.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor today having just listened to the minority leader in the Senate talk about his view of the world and the economy and what the American people are seeing. Well, it is a misguided view, misunderstood, because he is clearly not seeing what so many Americans are seeing today in their lives.

So I rise to share some outstanding economic news with the Nation because people back home are seeing that America is getting back on track.

Americans want, need, and voted for affordable prices. Today, inflation is at a 4-year low. Inflation has fallen every month since President Trump and Republicans took office.

Americans want, need, and voted for higher wages. Income has risen nearly every month—actually, every month—since President Trump and Republicans took office.

Americans want, need, and voted for affordable groceries. Egg prices have dropped 61 percent under Republican leadership.

Today, Americans are feeling upbeat about the economy. Last month brought the largest boost in consumer confidence in 4 years. Americans are confident about their future. A majority of Americans now say the country is finally heading in the right direction. This is after 4 years of high prices.

CNN's own poll this weekend—this is CNN—they found that Republicans have a better economic plan than the Democrats. Not by 1 point—no, no, CNN didn't say by 1 point or by 2 points, but by 12 points—double digits. In the CNN poll, Republicans have a better economic plan than the Democrats. When it comes to the economy, Americans trust Republicans over Democrats. CNN on-air reporters appeared shocked and stunned—the video is astonishing.

Look, Americans trust us because they are seeing real results. They are seeing Senate Republicans here fighting for them. Republicans have used the Congressional Review Act to reverse 18 punishing regulations and rules out of the previous administration. The most recent was when we ended California's leftwing electric vehicle mandate. You remember that? That is the one that said you had to buy an electric car. They were going to ban gas-powered cars by the year 2035. We got rid of that, and the American people are grateful.

Now we are working on a comprehensive economic plan to deliver safety and prosperity for all Americans. Here are the facts: Republicans are committed to stopping a \$4 trillion Democrat tax increase. It would be the biggest tax increase in American history. We cannot let it happen, in spite of the fact that the Democrats want it to happen. We also cut taxes on tips and overtime. Hard-working Americans will keep more of the hard-earned money and put it in their pockets, not in the government till. Seniors will be able to keep more of their social security. They have earned it.

Republicans will also strengthen Medicaid for Americans who need it. Medicaid is a vital service. But let's talk about those who need it, because it is a trillion-dollar program, and what we see is that billions of dollars are being lost year after year to not just waste, fraud, abuse, but also to corruption. And that is taking the resources away from the people who need it.

Remember, it is the Democrats who put millions upon millions of healthy, working-age adults onto Medicaid. Many of them absolutely refuse to work. Democrats want them to stay on Medicaid forever; Republicans want them to find a job.

So the American Enterprise Institute, an organization that everyone in the Senate is familiar with, they came out with a report last week and said how nondisabled Medicaid recipients without children spend their time. So let's take a look at how folks who are working-age individuals who choose not to work who are taking Medicaid benefits—interfering with sometimes other people who need the Medicaid much more than they do. But how is it working? How do they spend their time?

Well, for Medicaid recipients who are not working, they say that, after sleeping, watching television and playing video games is how they spend their time. How much time? An average of 4.2 hours per day watching television and playing video games, rather than looking for work or working or volunteering or in school or education or preparing themselves to work. Apparently, they spend about 22 minutes looking for work. It is quite a disproportionate effort that shows where their priorities are. They are not looking for jobs. They are not looking to

get off Medicaid. They like the life—television and video games. The Democrats want them to stay on it forever, and they want the American taxpayers to pay for it.

The American people are fed up with that sort of abuse of our taxpayer dollars.

It was Democrats who gave 1.4 million illegal immigrants Medicaid benefits. How many people in our home States want that to happen? Very few in my home State and, Mr. President, I am sure very few in yours.

The California Governor—do you know what he wants? He wants to add even more illegal immigrants onto the Medicaid rolls.

Republicans want Medicaid for Americans who need it, not for 1.4 million illegal immigrants.

And it was the Democrats who spent over \$1.8 billion from Medicaid for transgender surgeries for minors. How many people in our home States think that is a use of government money?

Republicans will also unleash affordable, reliable American energy. These are the things that are making the economy strong, that lower prices at gas stations and on electric bills.

Senate Republicans are building a stronger, more prosperous America. That is why we have such good economic news and why people are saying: Yes, we are getting on the right track.

What are the Senate Democrats doing? They continue to be committed to obstructing the Republican agenda, and they say they are going to do it every step along the way. That is what we see coming from the minority leader. They want to stop President Trump from even getting his team in place. The Democrats are filibustering every one of the President's nominees.

Actually, by the end of this week, the Senate Republicans will have confirmed 74 nominees from President Trump that he nominated since January—74 nominated. The Democrats have filibustered 73 of the 74. The only one they didn't was Senator Marco Rubio. In the Foreign Relations Committee, last week, they said, "We are sorry we voted for you," because they don't like what he is doing.

I reviewed nomination records stretching back to the 1980s. Thirteen of these positions that require confirmation in the Senate have never before had a rollcall vote in the U.S. Senate—done by voice vote or unanimous consent. The Democrats have filibustered all of them. That is how obstructive they are.

They filibustered the Chief of Protocol for the State Department or the Under Secretary of Commerce for Industry and Security. These are not controversial individuals. These are people that the Democrats say we are just going to try to stop President Trump no matter what he tries to do.

They even filibustered the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering, all to tie up the Senate, to waste time, and to try to slow down an

administration that is working so hard to get our country back from the last 4 years of open borders and high prices that cost them the House, the Senate, and the White House.

These aren't based on objections of somebody's qualifications for those positions. This is all meant to obstruct President Trump and obstruct the will of the voters. Lest the minority leader forget, it is President Trump who won all seven of the battleground States in the Presidential election in November of 2024.

Well, Republicans are working through it. We have confirmed every one of President Trump's Cabinet at a record pace, and we are going to continue to work on all of these qualified nominees and get them all confirmed.

We are united on whether it is confirming nominations or passing our comprehensive economic plan. We are united on our mission. We will build an America that is safe and prosperous and strong, and not just for today but for generations to come.

I yield the floor.

I 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.

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

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

DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, one of the most important innovations that President Trump has brought to the Nation is the Department of Government Efficiency. And, of course, this has been headed by Elon Musk, during his term as a temporary government employee. But the good news is that the work of the Department of Government Efficiency—or DOGE, as it is called around here—lives on, and that is reflected in the fact that the Office of Management and Budget has sent its first rescissions package to Capitol Hill.

For those who don't follow the process of procedures here in Washington, DC, the rescissions package is important because it allows Congress to codify the important progress that the Department of Government Efficiency has made in identifying and starting to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse within the Federal Government.

And what DOGE found under the leadership of Elon Musk is a target-rich environment. During the last several months, DOGE has uncovered numerous examples of blatant government waste and abuse. These range from commonsense efficiency reforms to canceling programs that are outright nonsensical uses of the taxpayers' hard-earned money.

According to the website, the Department of Government Efficiency estimates that they identified \$175 billion in savings, or approximately \$1,100 per taxpayer.

I know some in the media have said: Well, that is peanuts; that doesn't count.

Well, tell the taxpayers who have to pay \$1,100 in additional taxes a year to fund an inefficient government that has waste and fraud within it.

The truth is, we have more work to do, and this is just a start. That, to me, is the most important point to make. This is just a start. President Trump and Mr. Musk have changed the culture here in Washington, DC, and changed the conversation.

We know that our national debt has now surpassed \$36 trillion, and that is an amount of money that I know no human mind can fully comprehend. But here is how I begin to get at it: when we start to think that we are spending more money on interest on the national debt than we are to defend the Nation, our most important job. That to me is shocking, and it is a mandate to get our spending under better control.

This isn't a matter of not taxing the American people enough. There isn't enough money to tax people for. It is a spending problem, and we need to get spending under control. We have multiple opportunities, and one of those is with this rescissions package.

DOGE started out with an ambitious goal of a 15-percent reduction in government spending of about \$1 trillion. Again, this is what the media has pooh-poohed and said: Well, they haven't come anywhere near their target.

But, again, the most important point I can make is this is just the beginning. I don't see the work of DOGE being finished but, rather, being a starting place. Again, I think, perhaps, the most important contribution is it has changed the conversation here in Washington, DC. When people realize the egregious expenditures of their hard-earned tax dollars, then they say: Well, what more is there? Is this just scraping the surface?

And the fact of the matter is, it is.

When I look at some of the items included in this rescissions package from the Office of Management and Budget, I think this package will sell itself—or should sell itself—to people with any common sense.

It rescinds \$67,000—a small amount, but small amounts add up—for testing insect powder nutrition on children in Madagascar—whatever that is.

Similarly, it rescinds more than \$1 million for LGBTQI+ programs in places like Uganda and the Western Balkans. Why are we spending tax dollars in Uganda and the Balkans for programs and projects like that? Surely, it doesn't seem like a priority to me.

And if that were not enough, the DOGE recommendations, now embraced within this rescissions package, cut millions of dollars for Green New Deal-style programs, not in America but around the world. The bill rescinds \$6 million appropriated for "net zero cities" in Mexico, half a million dollars for electric buses in Rwanda, and \$2.1