

of a State that has a very provocative history on race.

It is a rare moment when searing pain and disbelief leaves an unforgettable yet undeniable impression on both your heart and your mind.

Mr. President, 9/11 was one of those occasions. I remember exactly where I was on that fateful day. June 17, today, 10 years ago, 2015, was another one of those days.

I will never forget sitting in my bed when I received the news that there had been a shooting in my hometown of Charleston where, ultimately, nine African Americans attending a Bible study at Mother Emanuel AME Church would be murdered. Murdered for the simple reason that they were Black. No other reason.

Invited into a Bible study was the murderer. With open arms, they welcomed him in. And for 90 minutes or so he sat through a Bible study listening and watching as these Christian souls talked about and then prayed, including him.

This atrocity that was carried out in an attempt to start a race war, a second race war, at the birthplace of the Civil War, changed the landscape and, frankly, the hearts, not only of Charleston, SC and those members of the Mother Emanuel Church but our entire State and Nation.

But even in the face of such an atrocity, in the face of such grief, 36 hours after this horrific shooting, representatives from every single family looked into the eyes of the murderer and simply said what needed to be said:

I forgive you.

Thinking back on the power of our scriptures, Matthew 5:44 reminds us to love those who persecute us—to pray for those who persecute us, and to love our enemies, and to think about the capacity of love of nine family members to turn away from the grief and the pain and the misery and turn towards love.

To say to the person who just executed the person they loved dearly: We forgive you, the power of that moment started healing our Nation caught up in racial tension and violence, healed our Nation in a way that nothing else can do.

Sometimes fire can't meet fire. Sometimes hate can't meet hate. Sometimes the only thing that brings healing and restoration—or at least begins it—is meeting hate with love.

I won't ever forget the Wednesday, one week later. I was coming to this floor to give a speech, and I was talking to Daniel Simmons, Jr., whose father was one who was executed on that fateful day, his father Daniel Simmons, Sr. And I asked Daniel Simmons, Jr.: What would you want me to say to the Nation if they are listening as I go out and talk?

He said: Please remind them of Romans 8:28; that somehow, some way, all things work for good for those who love God and are called according to His purpose.

I have got to tell you, had I been in his shoes, I do not believe I would have had the strength, the conviction, the clarity of mind to find good in the midst of that tragedy. But it is the message of hope that we needed then, and I believe it is the message of hope we need now.

I am personally forever grateful to those family members, the family members of the nine, who simply chose forgiveness in the face of something I pray none of us has to experience.

Their example of a faith-filled hope in the wake of tragedy and loss not only inspires me still, it inspired our Nation, and I pray that it continues to lead us in the direction of reconciliation. As we honor those who are no longer with us, we must never be driven by our pain, our division, or our fear.

I would like to have a moment of silence for the Emanuel nine and their families.

Rev. Clementa Pinckney, Cynthia Hurd, Rev. Sharonda Coleman-Singleton, Tywanza Sanders, Ethel Lance, Susie Jackson, Rev. DePayne Middleton-Doctor, Rev. Daniel Simmons, Sr., and Myra Thompson.

May America, the greatest Nation on the planet, always strive to live up to our highest ideal, the ideal that we are all created equal; that we all share the same bloodline; that we are all a part of the same family, the family of God.

Mr. President, therefore, as if in legislative session and notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 282, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 282) commemorating June 17, 2025, as the tenth anniversary of the Mother Emanuel AME Church shooting.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 282) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I thank my colleagues for coming to the floor to remember this horrific shooting in their State and to remember those and the family ones who were affected by this. I very much appreciate this resolution.

RECOGNIZING VANCOUVER ITECH PREPARATORY

I come to talk about history as well. I just visited a group of young students from my State, Vancouver iTech—actually, it is the second time I have seen a group of students from this school in the last week. A group of them were here last week competing in a national history championship, and I am very proud to say that the young women presenting a historical review of the Kaiser shipyards in our State that changed the workforce and basically women came to the workforce during World War Two, placed second in that national championship. So hats off to those young women for capturing that moment of history and explaining what it was all about.

The competition from Vancouver iTech Preparatory had four other individuals who placed in the top 10 of the subjects that they were providing. So I love that my State is focusing on history.

(The remarks of Ms. CANTWELL pertaining to the submission of S. Res. 281 are printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

Ms. CANTWELL. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

ONE BIG BEAUTIFUL BILL

Mr. HICKENLOOPER. Mr. President, this month, my fellow colleagues in the Senate—the Republican Senate Members—are working to pass a budget proposal that I feel can best be described as dangerous.

Their plans are going to dramatically reduce—even gut—services like Medicaid and SNAP, which give food to hungry, low-income workers. It will strip healthcare away from, most likely, more than 16 million Americans and threaten millions of seniors living in nursing homes.

All of this is focused, really, on just trying to give larger tax breaks to very wealthy people—who don't, really, in most cases, want them—or to the largest corporations. This lavish—and I think "lavish" is the only word that describes it fairly. This lavish tax bill gives more to the top earners while taking away from Americans with the least.

But it really doesn't have to be that way. If Republicans could focus on extending tax cuts for working families rather than on the wealthiest—that one effort, in and of itself, that one initiative—they could avoid ripping away healthcare from more than 15 or 16 million Americans; gutting our much needed investments in climate change—in fighting climate change—and making sure we have lower energy prices. Instead, they are going full steam ahead with really what is a god-awful bill.

I want to focus today on another dangerous part of this plan: how it explodes our national debt and really risks our economic future.

Many proponents of the bill love to hem and haw about being financially responsible. Like a few people in here,

I have managed budgets before. It was back when I started Colorado's first brewpub and then as mayor of Denver and as Governor of Colorado. So I know something about fiscal responsibility, and it is not partisan. At its best, fiscal responsibility should be bipartisan. I can definitely say this bill that we are looking at is the opposite of fiscal responsibility. It is fiscal madness. This is a massive spending bill that is going to create the largest national debt in American history.

You don't have to take my word for it. You can look at the numbers.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates that the House Republican plan—so this is the plan coming over from the House—would add \$2.7 trillion—that is trillion with a “t,” \$2.7 trillion—to the deficit over the next decade.

The Penn Wharton model, which includes something like north of \$500 billion in additional interest payments from that accumulated debt year after year after year, over 10 years, suggests it would add up to not just \$2.7 trillion but more like \$3.2 trillion or \$3.3 trillion.

The bill our Senate colleagues are putting together makes many of the same mistakes, and I think, by most measures that a small businessperson would look at, it is reckless.

The bottom line is that more American tax dollars would go toward tax cuts for the ultrawealthy. Again, at least in Colorado, the very wealthy people I have talked to aren't asking for and aren't seeking these tax cuts. You know, under this tax plan that is coming over to us right now, those tax cuts for the very wealthy are coming instead of expanding access to healthcare or building roads or improving our schools, and more tax dollars would go to paying off the massive debt—to paying the interest on the massive debt—than all of our defense spending combined. It will become more than 25 percent of our Federal budget just to pay the interest on the debt.

Now, if that sounds like a bad idea to you, it is because it is, and the markets agree. Moody's, which is the last major credit rating agency to maintain the U.S. at its highest rating—at its highest, you know, designation as being a safe place to invest your money—just downgraded our credit rating. It is the first time that happened, and it shook investors that Moody's would downgrade our credit rating. Investors aren't confident that the United States will be able to pay its debts. At least in terms of Moody's, that has never happened before.

It is really just going to lead to more trouble. Those investors who buy those tenured bonds and help pay for our national debt are demanding higher returns because they view it as a riskier investment; that they will need a higher return if they are going to hold U.S. debt. Since you have got to attract that investment, it means you have got

to offer higher interest rates, which means you have got higher borrowing costs. That means that Coloradans and Americans are going to pay higher interest rates when they want to buy a house or expand their business or if they want to pay off their credit cards. They are going to have to pay more because the interest rates are going to be higher.

Americans are already plenty concerned about rising prices and for good reason. This whole system could lead to the dreaded stagflation. This could all become a one-two punch to working families, all the while the wealthiest families will end up being better off.

But we don't need to do this. We can certainly grow our economy. We can help working families, and we can cut the deficit. We were able to balance the budget all 8 years I was mayor of Denver and all 8 years I was Governor and still grow our investments in our roads, in our education system, and in our healthcare system. We also did this with the Inflation Reduction Act, which will reduce the deficit by over \$175 billion over the next 10 years. It has already, dramatically, lowered a number of prescription drug costs, has expanded healthcare access, and in the process, has created hundreds of thousands of good jobs. The Republicans' budget, I think, does the opposite.

We also can't forget that this budget comes in the midst of the Trump administration's efforts around tariffs and what our good friend, the Senator from Washington, was just talking about when she described the consequences of Smoot-Hawley and how those tariffs, just at 20 percent, led to a global slowdown in the overall economy. We all know that these tariff taxes are really not so hidden; they are taxes on the American people. They raise prices on everything from groceries to kitchen appliances. None of this is a growth strategy. It really is a recipe for a recession, at best, and stagflation, at worst. We can't borrow millions, we can't borrow billions, we can't borrow trillions just to hand out tax cuts to the top when working families are struggling to afford everyday goods. It doesn't add up. It never has. It never will.

There are many issues that may be partisan but being financially responsible doesn't need to be one of them, neither should good, strong economies, neither should economic fairness, neither should protecting working families. They don't have to do it this way. Now, I am always game to roll up my sleeves and dig into a balance sheet, but we haven't seen from the other side that they are willing to negotiate or really invest in long-term economic growth. I would suggest that we write a budget that reflects our values and puts tax cuts toward working families first, a budget that strengthens the middle class, one that keeps our economy strong and will keep it growing for generations to come. This bill is not any of that.

I urge my Republican colleagues in the House and the Senate not to temporarily put a pass on their values and to support, again, what I think is a truly reckless fiscal bill. I hope that we can come together and negotiate a better bill that does more for economic growth and puts a far, far lesser penalty on the working people of America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, as every high school student of government knows, the Constitution of the United States of America provides for three coequal branches of government: the legislative branch under article I; the judicial branch under article III; and the executive branch under article II. What I would like to talk about, briefly, is the role of the Chief Executive, the President of the United States.

Under our Constitution, the President has vast authorities. The Chief Executive enforces Federal laws; oversees the entire Federal executive branch of government; and manages Federal Agencies and Departments, which includes appointing and removing high-ranking officials like Cabinet members and Agency heads subject to Senate confirmation for certain positions.

The President of the United States—the Chief Executive—is also the Commander in Chief. He leads our Armed Forces and directs military operations. While only Congress can declare war, the President can deploy troops and respond to immediate threats, often with congressional authorization but not always. The President—the Chief Executive, the head of the executive branch—can grant pardons and reprieves for Federal crimes except in cases of impeachment. This power is nearly absolute and cannot be overturned.

The President also has some legislative powers in the form of a veto. He can veto legislation passed by Congress forbidding those acts of Congress from becoming law unless both Chambers override that veto with a two-thirds majority vote. And while the President is not a legislator per se, he can propose legislation—and often does—and influence the legislative agenda by proposing budgets, delivering the State of the Union Address, and advocating for certain policies.

The President—the Chief Executive of our government—can call special sessions of Congress and, in rare cases, actually adjourn Congress if the House and the Senate cannot agree on adjournment.

The head of the executive branch—the President of the United States—is also our chief diplomat. He shapes U.S. foreign policy, negotiates treaties, and appoints Ambassadors with Senate confirmation.