

believe she is gone, Minnesotans will be feeling the impact of her leadership forever.

When a Minnesota student gets a free school lunch, that is Melissa. When a Minnesota parent is able to take paid leave to spend those early precious moments with a newborn, that is Melissa. When a Minnesota voter casts a ballot without facing unfair discrimination, that is Melissa. When a woman is able to access reproductive care in our State, that is Melissa. And when our State achieves 100 percent clean energy by 2040, that will be because of Melissa. And when we had a tied State house this year, it was Melissa who forged a power-sharing agreement and a budget with her Republican counterpart. She was a generational leader, and she led with integrity and with courage.

She and her husband Mark, who you see here, who also was accomplished in business and a kind, kind person—they were compassionate, and they were smart. They were just nice to everyone, and I can't believe they are gone.

Here they are with their kids.

The polarization in our country—the divisions, the online hate—needs to stop. Violence has absolutely no place in our democracy. We need to come together and bring down the rhetoric. We must be united in the face of this attack. It was simply un-American.

That is why the entire Minnesota delegation, Democrats and Republicans—including Senator SMITH, including Congressman EMMER—came together over the weekend to call this violence out. We spoke with one voice to condemn it. And in our State, Melissa's colleagues on both sides of the aisle have done the same.

We need to recognize the reality that there are unbalanced people out there who read things online, they believe them, and they act on them. We have seen this too many times.

There are many things we can do as a body to fix this problem, and I am sure, in the days to come, we will offer legislation on security and all kinds of things. But we don't need to pass a law for people to turn down the rhetoric, to treat each other with decency and respect, to act a little more like Melissa and Mark.

Mr. President, Melissa and Mark Hortman were the best of us. I am shattered to have lost them but eternally grateful to have known them.

I want to end by sharing a message from their beloved kids Sophie and Colin. They wrote this just last night:

This tragedy must become a moment for us to come together. Hold your loved ones a little closer. Love your neighbors. Treat each other with kindness and respect. The best way to honor our parents' memory—

they said—

is to do something, whether big or small, to make our community just a little better for someone else.

I urge my colleagues to hear that message, and I am honored to be here with my wonderful colleague Senator SMITH.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

REMEMBERING MELISSA AND MARK HORTMAN

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, many thanks to my colleague Senator KLOBUCHAR for her heartfelt words.

I rise today because my friend Melissa Hortman, speaker emerita of the Minnesota State House, incredible person and strong leader, was shot and killed Saturday morning, along with her husband Mark, in a tragic, politically motivated attack.

State Senator John Hoffman and his wife Yvette were also shot a total of 17 times, and Yvette—incredibly and selflessly—used her own body to shield their daughter from the attacker. I thank God that they are expected to recover.

I am filled with gratitude for the State and local and Federal law enforcement that marshaled all of their resources to keep Minnesota safe after this horrendous attack and to mount the largest manhunt in the history of our State to capture this shooter late on Sunday evening.

This was an unspeakable act of political violence, an attack on our democracy, as well as a personal tragedy.

There will be a time and a place to discuss the evilness of Speaker Emerita Hortman's assassination, the forces that drove her assassin to violence, and how we as leaders must rise to this moment and speak with one voice to condemn violent political attacks; but, today, I want my colleagues and America and everybody back home in Minnesota to know the kind of person and leader that Melissa was, and I want to think especially of Colin and Sophie, who have lost their parents, their mom and dad, and understand that they will not be forgotten by me or Senator KLOBUCHAR or many, many thousands of people.

I hope that everyone will be able to understand a little bit more keenly the depth of our grief, the human cost to the loss of Melissa and Mark's family, their friends, their community, and to Minnesota and our Nation.

So I don't know about you, but I need a little inspiration right now, and Melissa was inspirational.

The first thing you need to know about Melissa is that she was a middle-class girl from the north metro of the Twin Cities. She was funny, she was straightforward, and she was kind. She was smart and driven and determined, and she did well because she worked hard at everything she did—from her first job making burritos to her last job leading her caucus through a deeply divided legislative session. Nothing was handed to her, and she earned it through her work. That is the inspiration of the American dream.

The second thing that I want you to know about Melissa is that she believed and acted on one of our most

American of values: the conviction that we all have a responsibility to one another. We have a responsibility to contribute to our communities, and we have this unshakable belief that our country is great because we feel that conviction and that obligation to one another.

Service to and respect for others was the guiding principle in Melissa's life.

Over the last few days, there have been so many beautiful tributes written to Melissa's life and work. I see a common thread in all of these remembrances—that even in the rough business of politics, she was someone who never lost focus on our shared humanity, those shared values, and that shared goal that we should all have in public service, which is improving life for Americans. Her gift for focusing on our shared humanity helped her not only to earn the deep loyalty of the members of her own caucus but also the trust and respect of Republicans on the other side of the aisle.

Current house speaker Republican Lisa Demuth recently recalled how Melissa reached out to her at the start of Lisa's leadership—Melissa was the speaker of the house, and Lisa was coming into leadership—and how she came to view Melissa as a mentor to her leadership. Many disagreements on policy, but Melissa was a mentor to her because she brought such clarity and honesty and compassion to their working relationship.

Former senate majority leader Republican Paul Gazelka reflected on his years of working closely with Melissa. He noted that they had built a “deep trust” with one another because of her honesty, because of her even-keeled temperament, even though she was a very tough negotiator.

He remembered their moment of human connection as they shared a hug after the passage of a landmark public safety bill in the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd. That hug was in recognition of how they had worked so hard, coming from different places in such a difficult moment for Minnesota.

Melissa always approached her work by leading with compassion and respect for our shared humanity, and, of course, she was unafraid to demand that respect in return both for herself and others. I mean, she was fearless.

One of the most famous anecdotes of her speakership is—Amy was referring to this—one night—it was a long night; colleagues in this room can relate to it—it was a long night. The debate was going on and on. But there were members of the house that were making important speeches, making personal speeches about the impact of the bill that would have increased criminal penalties on certain protests.

Meanwhile, there was a group of male legislators in the back room that were playing cards. Melissa called them out on this, and these legislators—unaccustomed, I think, to being confronted with their rude behavior—expressed their indignation. Melissa's response

was pretty simple. She said: You know, I am really tired of watching women and especially women of color being ignored. She said: "So I'm not sorry."

Mr. President, I have to tell you that "sorry, not sorry" became a little bit of a rallying cry around the Minnesota State Capitol after that and is something we all remember Melissa for.

She lived her values, and she knew how to stand up for others and insisted that we all treat one another with dignity and respect as we undertake the serious work of public service, even in a political climate that too often rewards meanness and sort of a dehumanizing of one another.

Here is the third thing I want everyone to know about Melissa Hortman: She was a formidable legislator.

Melissa's tenure of public service began long before her election to the Minnesota Legislature. She was an intern in this very body for then-Senators Al Gore and John Kerry. After law school, she served as a clerk in our State's court system and then as an assistant Hennepin County attorney.

She first rose to prominence after winning a housing discrimination case as a legal aid attorney. What she won for her client was at the time the largest civil award in Minnesota history for housing discrimination—and she was 27 years old.

She volunteered on campaigns and ran for office twice, losing before she won and came to the Minnesota Legislature. She was tenacious.

Once elected, her talent was immediately obvious to her caucus. By her second term, she was already mounting and growing in leadership. By the time she was elected speaker, she had a remarkable record as a negotiator, an honest broker, someone who was true to her principles even when she had to make tough choices.

Melissa's leadership during the 2023 legislative session of the Minnesota Legislature was nothing short of historic. Much has been written about the great accomplishments of this legislative session in Minnesota, but I think an underappreciated part of this was that this remarkable session didn't just happen in one short period; it happened because of years and years and years of work by legislators and organizers and activists building support of consensus, and Melissa was a part of that work from the very beginning.

The success of that legislature and that legislative session came because of her ability to see an opportunity and to meet the moment and meet it with deftness and courage, and the result has been transformational to Minnesota.

She always believed that you can make a difference for people if you work at it, and she did. Because of her leadership, more than 13½ million more Minnesota students get a healthy and free breakfast and lunch in 2024. Minnesota is on track to eliminate all lead water service lines by 2033 thanks to Melissa. More than 65,000 Minneso-

tans were automatically registered to vote. Minnesota, of course, is the State—we are very proud of this—with the second highest voter turnout in the 2024 Presidential election and the highest youth voter turnout by far.

Starting next year, working Minnesotans who are starting or growing or caring for their families will have access to paid leave thanks to Melissa.

In short, millions—millions—of Minnesotans are better off because of the work that she did. Her record of accomplishment is so extensive, it is hard to capture it all in just a few short minutes. It is so bitter to realize that she was only 55. She had so many more contributions to make, so much—as Melissa would say: Don't get carried away. I was just going to do my work. I was going to work as hard as I could.

It is bitter for us that her life was taken in this way, and it will now be up to all of us to carry on these fights. I will miss her leadership and her friendship as our State navigates these uncertain times.

Mr. President, I look around this Senate Chamber, and I see legislators who, like Melissa, understand that the job of a legislature and a legislator is to help fix things, not just talk about fixing things, to lift up people who need help, to build opportunity, and to use the power of our connections to one another to build a better, stronger, more fair community.

I hope my colleagues will take heart and inspiration from Melissa's example and rededicate ourselves to what it means to be a legislator, working across lines of difference to solve problems for the people who sent us here.

I want to close with a suggestion from Melissa and Mark's beloved children Sophie and Colin to all of us in Minnesota just yesterday. It is in the spirit of Melissa's directness and down-to-earthness.

She said:

If you would like to honor the memory of Mark and Melissa, please consider the following: Plant a tree. Visit a local park and make use of the amenities, especially a bike trail. Pet a dog. A golden retriever is ideal, but any will do. Tell your loved ones a cheesy dad joke and laugh about it. Bake something—bread for Mark or a cake for Melissa—and share it with someone. Try a new hobby and enjoy learning something. Stand up for what you believe in, especially if that thing is justice and peace.

May the memory of Melissa and Mark be a blessing to all who knew and loved them. May John and Yvette have a speedy recovery. And may we all find a way to recover and be better after these terrible attacks.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

ONE BIG BEAUTIFUL BILL

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, first of all, I just want to say how powerful the presentations were talking about the tragedy in Minnesota and how all of our hearts go out to the families and to

the entire State because it is obviously something that had a profound impact upon the entire community, and it is something that has all of us grieving for them. I was just touched, as I think everyone who heard them was, with the presentations that we heard.

Mr. President, I rise today in opposition to the Republican's "Big Billionaire Boondoggle," which is economic sabotage and climate denial masquerading as fiscal policy.

Last night's Senate Finance Committee text doesn't just double down on repealing smart clean energy tax credits, it erodes our progress and our chance at a livable future.

Senate Republicans are doubling down on egregious attacks against historic investments in the Inflation Reduction Act, cutting more than \$500 billion in investments and programs, threatening hundreds of thousands of jobs, and raising monthly household energy bills.

In 2024—this is the big number—in 2024, 94 percent of all new electricity generation added to our country was wind and solar and batteries. I want to repeat that. In 2024, 94 percent of all of the new electricity generation capacity added in our country was wind and solar and batteries. That is 50,000 megawatts of solar, 4,000 megawatts of wind, and 11,000 megawatts of batteries. Compare that with the fuels of the past. Last year, only 2,500 megawatts of natural gas were added and zero from coal.

That is the present state of affairs for electricity generation installation in our country in 2025 as we begin this debate in the Senate over the reconciliation bill—over the tax policy for our country.

Unfortunately, it is why the oil and gas and coal industry, through the Republicans, are using the budget bill to rig the game while eliminating incentives that lower energy costs and reduce collusion, but they are not going to remove the tax breaks for the fossil fuel industry.

So what is about to unfold is that we are going to see the pursuance of a vendetta against wind and solar energy by cutting incentives for the cleanest and cheapest sources of electricity, all to pad the pockets of the big oil and big gas industries.

This bill eliminates the residential clean and efficient energy incentives. Let me say that again. If you want to put solar panels on your roof, that tax break is going to be gone. If you want to make your home more energy efficient, that tax break is going to be gone. Heat pumps, all of it, is gone. Robbing homeowners—homeowners—of the ability to save money on energy bills, breathe safer air indoors at home, and ensure a livable future for their families. And it also removes support for families looking to buy a clean vehicle, an electric vehicle, and saving money at the pump.

It imposes draconian restrictions on large-scale solar and wind incentives.