

here, talking to Members, Democrat and Republican, and we got the bill passed because of their good work.

Confirming Mr. Bedford would be an insult to the families of Flight 3407 and the memory of their loved ones. It would betray everything these families have sacrificed to make sure others don't suffer the same tragedy they did 15 years ago.

The Senate should not confirm someone who will prioritize profits over passenger safety like Mr. Bedford. I vote no on his nomination.

TARIFFS

Mr. President, finally, on tariffs, 90 days ago, Donald Trump promised the world that his tariffs will lead to 90 deals in 90 days. Another Donald Trump promise. He makes these promises left and right. He doesn't care whether he executes them or not, but the American people do.

So remember 90 deals in 90 days. Well, by my count, he is about 88 trade deals short.

So what has Donald Trump done? He kicks the can down the road again and again. He talks a big game but shows little followthrough or strategic understanding of how to secure America's interests. He seems to just talk. Whatever pops into his head, he says.

Worse, Donald Trump's tariffs are yet another one of his broken promises to working Americans, just like his promise to bring costs down on day one, just like his promise to immediately end the war in Ukraine, just like his promise not to touch Medicaid.

Donald Trump's tariffs are another example of why he cannot be trusted to fight for the interests of everyday Americans. Instead of making America great, Donald Trump's tariffs are making Americans pay. The Yale Budget Lab says his tariffs will cost American families an extra \$2,300 a year. That is on top of all their other costs going up: their electricity costs going up because of the reconciliation bill, their healthcare costs going up because of the reconciliation bill, and the tariffs add an extra \$2,300, according to the Yale Budget Lab.

His tariffs are weakening America's standing on the world stage because he always makes big threats only to back down. As we all know, Donald Trump always chickens out when it comes to tariffs.

So today I urge Donald Trump to stop governing in chaos and focus on a trade plan that actually will protect American workers while holding adversaries like China in check. He has failed to do that thus far.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

The majority whip.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the previous order with respect to the lunch recess and the 2:15 vote series be modified so that Senate recess until 2:05 today and the previously scheduled votes begin at that time and with all other provisions of the order remaining in effect.

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

WAIVING QUORUM CALLS

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I also ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum calls with respect to the Kapor and the Briggs nominations.

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

ONE BIG BEAUTIFUL BILL ACT

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to point out to the American people that the Republican plan for a safer, more prosperous nation has now been signed into law.

And yet already this morning on this Senate floor, I heard the minority leader engage in fearmongering about this historic piece of legislation.

Well, I am here to set the record straight. This is a historic triumph. This is a victory for working families all across America. It certainly includes the people of my home State of Wyoming.

It is fitting that President Trump signed our bill into law on Independence Day, July 4. That is because the law is about independence for working families. It means independence from soaring prices, independence from high taxes, independence from foreign countries on which we have become dependent, and it comes from independence for American energy.

This law is a direct attack on wasteful Washington spending. On Friday, I celebrated Independence Day in Cody, WY. It is the home of the world-famous Cody Stampede. I spoke with Wyoming families, Wyoming small business owners, Wyoming workers, Wyoming ranchers, talked about their lives and the impact of this legislation. Let me tell you, the people of Wyoming are very appreciative that this bill is signed into law.

The law does what voters sent Republicans here to do, it cuts taxes, secures the border, finishes building the wall, unleashes American energy, and it restores peace through strength.

Had Congress not passed the law, Americans would have seen their taxes go up cumulatively by \$4 trillion. This was a vote against the largest tax increase in American history. Every Democrat in this Congress voted to raise taxes on the American people; Republicans prevented it.

Wyoming would have been hit very hard if the Democrats had gotten their way. Wyoming families were staring down the barrel of a \$1,700 tax increase on Wyoming families, and 50,000 Wyoming small businesses would have seen

their tax rates soar if the Democrats had their way.

Mr. President, 10,000 family farms in Wyoming and ranches would have faced higher death taxes.

Republicans stopped this highest tax rate rise in American history. We also cut tax: taxes on tips, taxes on overtime, taxes on Social Security. No tax on tips puts about \$1,300 back into the pockets of waiters, barbers, bartenders. No taxes on overtime puts about \$1,400 back into the paychecks of nurses, firefighters, and police officers.

Ten thousand Wyoming workers are going to be benefit from the no taxes on tips. Tens of thousands more will benefit from no taxes on overtime. Seniors will see more money at the end of each month because of a larger deduction. These are all things that were included in this bill that is going to help Americans all across the country.

Republicans also expanded the child tax credit. That gives more than 65,000 Wyoming families an extra \$2,200 per child per year to help them pay their bills.

Additionally, this law is a win for Wyoming's hard-working families and ranchers. Our farmers and ranchers—they work hard. They do in your State, Mr. President. They certainly do in Wyoming. They do all across the country. They work hard to keep their operations running strong. Today, they face growing challenges. The challenge has been growing dramatically over the last 4 years—rising costs as well as natural disasters, predators that attack livestock. Our law ensures future success for our farmers and ranchers.

You know, in Wyoming, bears, wolves—they kill livestock. If they do, they are going to be compensated. If wildfires or droughts destroy your grazing land, you are covered by disaster assistance. If you invest in new equipment, you can fully expense up to \$2.5 million to grow your business.

Now, with the changes to the death tax, families can keep their land instead of having to sell it to pay off the IRS.

Additionally, Republicans delivered for Wyoming and for the country—energy. Our energy workers are the best in the world. This new law will unleash affordable, reliable Wyoming and American energy.

In the past 4 years under Joe Biden, the Democrats wanted to keep energy in the ground. Prices of energy rose 31 percent. Why? Because they declared war not just on energy but on the people who power our country. Oil and gas, coal miners, uranium—all of those things have been under attack by the Democrats. They handcuffed energy producers. They buried energy projects in red tape. You couldn't get things started. They locked up our Federal lands.

That has changed now as a result of our law and as a result of the elections. This law empowers States to produce more energy, and that certainly includes my home State of Wyoming and

your home State of Oklahoma. It unlocks 4 million acres of coal leasing within the next 90 days. It encourages increased coal production on Federal lands. It cuts redtape. It creates new opportunities for our energy producers, and it mandates oil and natural gas leasing in Wyoming and across the West. This creates jobs, it lowers costs, and it restores America's energy independence.

Wyoming is America's energy breadbasket. We have the energy resources. Now we finally have the green light to unleash them.

Additionally, Republicans have strengthened healthcare in rural America and especially in our rural communities. There is a rural hospital fund. This directly supports our Wyoming clinics and our hospitals. There is also a renewed push for breakthrough treatments and innovative care and cures. This is a lifeline for patients with rare diseases. It is all in this bill.

With regard to Medicaid, there are now work requirements for Medicaid, as there should be, and the American people want that. Over 70 percent of the people say: If you are going to be on Medicaid, you ought to be working to prove that you are not taking the Medicaid benefits away from the people whom they were intended for in the first place. If you are able to work, you need to work.

These are just commonsense reforms under the law. Democrats voted against every single one of these commonsense reforms. What did Democrats vote for? Oh, continuing to give tax-funded healthcare to illegal immigrants. That is what Democrats are for—healthcare for illegal immigrants. Free.

Democrats voted for continuing the waste, fraud, abuse, and corruption that weakens Medicaid. I practiced medicine in Casper, WY, for over 24 years. The changes in this law will strengthen Medicaid for the people who truly need it.

I want to thank my colleagues from Wyoming, both Senator CYNTHIA LUMIS—she led the charge on the Environment and Public Works Committee. Congresswoman HARRIET HAGEMAN made sure Wyoming's voice was heard in the House of Representatives. Because of their dedication, these Wyoming priorities are now part of the law.

This is a turning point for our country. After 4 years of record-high prices and wide-open borders, the people of Wyoming are going to feel relief. They will feel it at the grocery store, the gas station, and when they pay their bills. They are also going to feel it when they file their tax returns.

All of us Republicans made a promise to make America safer, stronger, and more prosperous. This law signed on the Fourth of July keeps that promise.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. McCORMICK). Without objection, it is so ordered.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I am here to sound the alarm—to make my colleagues aware—of the crisis that faces us. It challenges all veterans. It faces the United States of America because of the chaos and confusion that continues at the Veterans Health Administration and the sliding downward of service that is available to our Nation's heroes.

On Monday, VA Secretary Doug Collins announced that he would be abandoning his disastrous plan to fire 83,000 VA employees, and the reason is pretty simple: The Trump administration is set to lose 30,000 employees at the end of the year. That number is incredibly worrisome. It is a significant number. The VA typically has a net gain of 10,000 VA employees every year. Yet, this year, it stands to lose more than 30,000 of its workforce, despite serving more veterans than ever before—significantly more—because of the PACT Act.

So, at a time when the VA already has 40,000 vacancies in veterans' healthcare, this administration ought to be focused on hiring more employees, not touting how its employees are abandoning the VA—fleeing a toxic work environment and a demoralizing work environment. They are fleeing the VA because of a failed and failing leadership.

Now, the reason why the VA Secretary has abandoned this plan to fire 83,000 people is, essentially, unexplained. There is no transparency. He has denied us information about who would have been fired. He has refused to provide information about the 30,000 individual workers who are leaving and what positions they hold.

But here is what we know for sure. Only because of the blistering backlash of veterans themselves, the veterans service organizations that represent them, Members of Congress like myself, and the public, is he, in fact, abandoning this cruel and stupid plan, which has never been explained. He is abandoning it because of the protests of veterans and VSOs who spoke out. And I thank them. I am here to say “thank you” to the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, the DVA, the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans—I could go through the entire list. And to all the veterans posts and organizations, thank you for helping to save those jobs and those workers who would have been fired—by the way, a third of them veterans themselves.

But this 30,000 number is no cause for relief or complacency. In fact, it is unconscionable because it will undercut veterans' care and benefits. We have already seen some of the impacts of this haphazard effort to force hard-working public servants out of the VA because

of a toxic work environment created by this administration and DOGE's slash-and-trash policy.

VA nurses across the country are having to perform mandatory overtime. Lifesaving clinical trials have been canceled. Veterans are being directed to call the Veterans Crisis Line instead of regular appointments as mental health providers leave the VA in droves.

This announcement by the VA Secretary makes clear that the VA, essentially, is bleeding employees across the board. And the loss of key people includes clinical staff: doctors, nurses. There are already 40,000 vacancies. How can the VA possibly recruit talented, skilled, dedicated employees when they know they will be fired at any moment?

We know that a lot of the people leaving or declining jobs at the VA because of this chaos are, in fact, the professionals who deliver medical care—like doctors and nurses—to veterans. These positions are already facing shortages, especially in rural areas. How will rural veterans fare between the bleeding out of the VA employees when many rural hospitals are now set to shutter their doors under the President's “Big Beautiful Betrayal,” the bill he just signed into law?

Make no mistake, this attrition is not natural. It is not natural attrition to lose 30,000 employees when the ordinary rate is to hire 10,000 per year. It is a reduction in force. You can call it what you will, but it is essentially a purposeful and intentional reduction in the workers necessary to provide medical care and benefits to veterans. It is shameful to ruin a great institution. And veterans' healthcare has provided world-class, gold-standard care to countless heroes across the country. This administration is decimating that institution.

American veterans deserve nothing less than for every single Member of this body to call out and challenge these damaging policies—not applaud them as some measure of success or even to sanction them by our silence. We need to speak out, stand up for our veterans. Now is the time, before the damage escalates and becomes more serious.

I am absolutely anguished and furious about these cuts, which not only destroy an institution but endanger our veterans who want to go to VA clinics and hospitals like the ones we have in Connecticut in West Haven or in Newington, rural hospitals that will be shuttered, clinics providing telehealth—all of the people who are necessary to provide those services, whether they are the technicians or the clinician or the janitors who are part of a team. And the VA thrives on teamwork.

As things stand, 30,000 VA employees will lose their jobs. That is not what America should be tolerating or celebrating on Independence Day and this time in our Nation's history.