

failures in Texas, and two, to assess the risks their actions pose for future disaster response nationwide.

The facts are alarming. FEMA contracts stalled while survivors called for help. Vital staff positions sat vacant. Rescue and recovery efforts were bogged down by bureaucratic chokepoints. These aren't just breakdowns; they may constitute a dereliction of duty by those entrusted to protect the public in times of crisis.

The American people have a right to know: Did these reckless decisions cost lives? Are we now more vulnerable when the next storm, fire, or flood strikes, wherever it strikes? A comprehensive and urgent review is not just warranted, it is essential.

Americans do not support the administration making radical DOGE cuts to Agencies like FEMA. These cuts have devastating consequences in life-and-death situations like a natural disaster. Americans do not support chaos from the government when disasters strike. They do not support redtape that leaves families stranded and communities battered.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AND GROK AI

Mr. President, now on DOD and Grok AI, just days after Elon Musk's AI model Grok glorified Hitler, pushed Nazi propaganda, and spouted anti-Semitism, Elon Musk's company was handed a \$200 million DOD contract to deploy Grok—to deploy Grok—in our national defense systems. Soon, the same AI model that called itself “MechaHitler” and recommended a second Holocaust will be used in the Pentagon to “address critical national security challenges.”

This Musk contract is not just wrong, it is not just offensive, it is dangerous. The Trump administration must explain how this happened, the parameters of the deal, and why they think our national security isn't worth meeting a higher standard.

NOMINATION OF MICHAEL G. WALTZ

Mr. President, on Mike Waltz, this morning, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee is hearing testimony from Donald Trump's nominee for U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Mike Waltz. If that name sounds familiar, it is because the same Mike Waltz was fired as the National Security Advisor a few months ago after sharing military plans in a group chat with a journalist on Signal. Mr. Waltz was part of the crack team that grossly mismanaged national security during the opening months of the administration, from Signalgate, to Ukraine weapons and intelligence pauses, to outsourcing Air Force One to a foreign country.

He must directly answer for these debacles in front of the American people before assuming a critical role on the world's stage. With so much going on around the world, Mr. Waltz must acknowledge these failings and prove he is ready to collaborate with our partners and go toe to toe with our adversaries at the U.N.

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.

RESCISSIONS

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, it is astonishing, as I come to the floor, to listen to the Democrat minority leader. We just heard his comments about foreign aid keeping “Russia and China at bay.” If it were only the case.

The minority leader has a long and spirited history of wasting American taxpayer dollars. Now he wants to send taxpayer dollars overseas to pay for climate projects and vegan food programs. Apparently, that is what he means when he talks about foreign aid keeping Russia and China at bay. He forgot to mention that he wants to spend half a million dollars to put electric vehicles—electric buses—on the streets of Rwanda. He forgot to mention that he wants to spend \$6 million on net zero cities in Mexico. He forgot to mention he wants to continue to spend over \$100,000 for media training in Liberia.

Mr. President, I ask, how does that keep Russia and China at bay? He failed to mention that he wants to continue to spend \$3.3 million on civic engagement in Zimbabwe. He didn't say any of that because there is no good reason at all for that kind of wasteful Washington spending. None of that spending helps farmers or ranchers in my home State of Wyoming. None of this spending helps struggling families.

In November, Americans voted to end this wasteful Washington spending. Voters got it right. CHUCK SCHUMER gets it wrong. How many people went to the polls and told politicians to spend \$7.4 million of their hard-earned money on teaching foreign countries about environmental racism? No one.

Democrats love to hide behind fearmongering, and that is what the minority leader has done again today. Democrats never stand up and defend their spending on the merits. I don't see Democrats coming to the floor and talking about those projects that they want to see continued because they know it doesn't hold up to the least amount of public scrutiny. The American people look at this, and for them, the issue is quite simple. Their taxpayer dollars are being wasted and have been wasted for a long time. The Democrats in this body want to continue wasting them.

We still have families digging out from the worst inflation in 40 years. We have cities overwhelmed by illegal immigrants and the crime that they are bringing to these communities. People deserve to have their taxpayer dollars spent on issues that are focused on their priorities. President Trump sent Congress a proposal to rein in some of the worst wasteful spending.

How do the Democrats respond? Well, they are threatening to shut down the Government of the United States. Democrats are fighting tooth and nail to protect programs most Americans didn't know even existed and they wouldn't support if they knew they existed. That is what we are doing today: exposing some of these terrible programs and wasteful Washington spending.

It is indefensible what has happened with spending in the past with the last administration. If we have another Schumer shutdown—we have had one before—if we have another one, the American people will pay a heavy price. Seniors who rely on Social Security, military families living paycheck to paycheck, and border patrol agents will be forced to work without pay. Why? So the Democrats can continue to send Americans' taxpayer dollars to foreign countries for very questionable projects.

I heard the minority leader lecture us before about bipartisanship and regular order. Well, look at what has happened. When Senator SCHUMER was the majority leader of the U.S. Senate a year ago, the Senate Appropriations Committee—the committee itself—passed 11 of 12 appropriations bills. They did it by December of 2024, 1 year ago from now.

Many of those bills that came through the committee received unanimous support by the Republicans and the Democrats on the committee. So what happened? Well, Republicans supported getting all these bills done on time through the committee on a bipartisan basis. What did Senator SCHUMER do with these bills? He was the majority leader. He had control of the agenda of the floor of the U.S. Senate. He sat on them for 225 days. He didn't bring them to the floor of the U.S. Senate. Oh, no. He refused to bring a single bill to the floor of the U.S. Senate for a single vote not because he couldn't, because he refused to.

The American voters revolted, changed parties of the President, Senate, and the House. Now he wants to be the one to blame Republicans for gridlock. This is the height of hypocrisy.

That is what we are dealing with, Mr. President. I am all for regular order. That is why I want to commend Senator SUSAN COLLINS for her leadership now as the Republican chairman of the Appropriations Committee in the Senate. She is working in good faith. She is committed to getting the job done.

This debate is about more than dollars and cents. It is about priorities and about how we spend American taxpayer dollars. Americans didn't vote to continue the Green New Deal or even try to force it on the rest of the world. The American people voted to fix what is broken here at home. Republicans have our priorities straight. Republicans are focusing on making our Nation safer and more prosperous. Republicans are getting this country back on track.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. KING. Mr. President, I would like to talk today about the rescission bill that will be coming before us in the next couple of days, and I want to really cover two points: what is being done in this bill and how it is being done. I think they are equally important. In fact, I think, perhaps, how it is being done is more significant in the long run.

The rescission bill talks about, essentially, two areas: public broadcasting and USAID. In my view, the rescission—the total rescission—of those two Agencies—and, by the way, it is a total rescission. It is not a selective cutting of certain programs or partially. It is the whole thing, both in the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and USAID. The rescissions range from bad policy to downright dangerous, and I want to talk about that for a minute.

Public broadcasting: Public broadcasting has a unique place in the United States in our media environment in that it is the only media form that is not driven by advertising and advertising dollars. It cannot be driven by ratings. It, therefore, is able to provide programming to the American people that they probably, almost certainly, would not have access to otherwise. It wouldn't simply find a home on commercial broadcasting because the ratings wouldn't be there, but that doesn't mean that the programming isn't important.

My kids were raised on "Sesame Street." It made a huge difference in their readiness to go to school, in their understanding of language and numbers, and in the whole basis of our education system. "Sesame Street" is a program that wouldn't find a home on commercial broadcasting. This is likely also with "NOVA"—with nature—and, yes, with the "PBS NewsHour."

The news business today has become more entertainment because it is based upon advertising and attracting viewers and, therefore, is more inciteful—and I mean that as C-I-T-E, not S-I-G-H-T. It is more inciting to people's anger and unrest in order to keep them viewing, whereas the "PBS NewsHour" is pretty much straight news. It wouldn't get the ratings on MSNBC or on FOX News, but it provides a source of news both in terms of nationally but also in each State. The local National Public Radio's kind of programming—all things considered—is essential to providing information. Now, some people may think it is biased. I don't think anything done by a human is going to be free of any and all bias, but

it is pretty much straight news, and it is an asset to our communities, particularly to our rural communities.

By the way, this isn't where we have Federal dollars that are supporting all of these initiatives. In fact, the majority of the support for public broadcasting, both television and radio, comes from the public, from contributions. So, in effect, our Federal dollars are matched to a very high degree by the public making their own contributions. That is an indication of how much the public values these wonderful assets to our information environment here in the country, and to cut off Federal funding is just an essential piece of the funding. A lot of it goes to the local stations. We talk about the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and we think of PBS and the national programs, but a lot of this funding ends up going to the local stations all over the country that provide essential sources of information to their public.

By the way, the costs we are talking about are ridiculously low. I did the calculation. The relationship between the cost of the public broadcasting to the Federal budget is—let's see—7 cents to \$10,000. That is the ratio: 7 cents out of \$10,000. That is what we are talking about here, which is an almost immeasurable part of the Federal budget, but the return on investment is enormous. It is enormous. If this were a gigantic, \$100 billion program, then we would be having a different kind of discussion; but this is a relatively small program in the context of the Federal budget, with a very high return on investment to the American people.

Now let's talk about USAID. The majority whip was just talking about that, and he listed a number of projects that, I think, are questionable and that I don't necessarily support. USAID is an essential part of our foreign policy to help to stabilize unstable parts of the world; to extend America's soft power; to build America's brand; and, yes, to do some very essential projects.

For example, in PEPFAR, which is an initiative of the George W. Bush administration involving AIDS, the estimate is that that initiative, since its beginning in 2005, has saved 25 million lives; 25 million lives were saved by that program that will be destroyed by this bill. You can't tell me that having that level of benefit to the people of the world does not redound to the benefit of the United States—the sponsor of the initiative.

It is the same thing with malaria. The estimates are that the malaria program, which goes back to, I believe it was, the Obama administration, has prevented 1.5 billion cases of malaria—which is a real plague in many parts of the world—and has saved 11 million lives.

Just those two programs together—those two USAID projects—have saved 36 million lives. We are talking about cutting them off. That is not only bad policy, it is cruel—it is cruel—and it

undermines the credibility of this country.

Of course, foreign aid has a lot of benefits aside from the ones that I have just outlined. By the way, if Congress and the administration want to cull the programs and say, "We don't think this one is necessary. This is not a good expenditure of the people's money," that is fine, but that is not what this bill does. This bill throws out the beneficial baby with the questionable bath water. It is a total abdication of America's engagement with the world. Vaccination campaigns, food security, nutrition programs, disaster response, refugee support—these align with our American values. As I say, it is a relatively small part of the budget. It helps to stabilize fragile states, and it cuts the risk of extremism and terrorism and conflict.

James Mattis put it best. Gen. James Mattis—one of the most distinguished military officers of our time—said: If you don't fund the State Department fully, then you are going to have to buy me more bullets. That puts it most succinctly. You are going to have to buy me more bullets because the programs of USAID tend to stabilize the world and mitigate the tendency toward extremism and violence.

Since we have started to gut USAID, which was one of the first acts of this administration back in January and February, China has stepped into our shoes. I am on the Armed Services Committee and the Intelligence Committee, and I have seen and heard testimony that China is basically stepping in where we are walking away. We are handing Africa and Latin America to the Chinese—in some cases, to the very programs that we were sponsoring. They are the ones who are now engaging with local governments, with local leadership, and getting the credit for helping with these kinds of problems across the world.

We are giving away the goodwill that is part of the American brand. We are giving away the opportunity to build alliances, to strengthen our influence, especially in competition with regimes like China and Russia. It also creates markets for U.S. goods and the U.S. economy. A significant share of the foreign aid ends up going back to businesses and NGOs here in the United States. So it actually contributes to our economic development. Countries that are receiving this U.S. aid end up being partners and customers of U.S. goods, products, and services.

I mentioned it saves lives, and it aligns with our values. There is nothing wrong with talking about values. That is a part of what we should be doing.

USAID is doing important work all over the world. I met with USAID people in Kabul, Afghanistan. I met with them in Jordan, where they are working on a water desalinization project that will literally save Jordan. Jordan is a country that has no water. They are facing a tremendous crisis, so one

of the projects that they are relying on is a very large water production facility that is supported by USAID. That is the kind of project that, I think, we need to continue.

Again, I would not say that every single project they have sponsored is what I would have agreed upon. That is our job as oversight bodies—to take a look at the projects that are being sponsored. The administration can also do that, and they can then cull the projects that we don't think are a useful expenditure of the government's money, of the people's money, but not the wholesale destruction of an Agency that is critical, I believe, to the foreign policy of the United States. So that is the picture on these rescissions.

I believe the more important question, though, as I mentioned, is how this is being done. The question is, Who has the power in our government over appropriations? That is the fundamental question: Where is the power over appropriations as to where Federal dollars go?

The answer to that question, of course, is the Congress. Article I, section 8: The Congress has the power of the purse.

The President can submit his budget, and he can submit a budget that zeroes out USAID and that zeroes out the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, but then the way the process works is that we have hearings; that we have meetings with the Appropriations Committee; the appropriators meet and decide and discuss and debate and come to the floor with a bill that represents the consensus of those on the Appropriations Committee, and then we consider it here.

This process that we are talking about here, this rescission process, turns the whole thing upside down. It basically says the administration can decide programs that are going to go away, and "you can take it or leave it, Congress." I believe that it shreds the appropriations process. The Appropriations Committee and, indeed, this body becomes a rubberstamp for whatever the administration wants.

The deeper problem is, I believe this is another step in Congress's abdication—abdication—of its constitutional authority, which has dramatically accelerated since January.

The war power, which is article I, section 8, is an express power of the Constitution. We barely could have a debate about that, and the President attacked another sovereign country, which may have been the right thing to do. But there was no consultation, there was no attempt whatsoever to engage Congress, which has the power over declaring war, before that step was taken.

Foreign trade: Again, foreign trade—"trade among nations" is the term in the Constitution—is expressly delegated by the Constitution to the Congress. The Congress has delegated some of that authority to the President—to a President, to any President—under

emergency circumstances, but this President has expanded "emergency" to mean just about anything. We learned this week that he is talking about a 50-percent tariff against Brazil because he doesn't like the way the current government is treating the prior President. It has nothing to do with trade. It has nothing to do with the trade deficit. It has nothing to do with tariffs. It has to do with something that the President individually doesn't like. That is not the way the system is supposed to work.

The up-and-down roller coaster that we have been on with regard to tariffs is a perfect example of why one person shouldn't have this authority. This should be something that is done thoughtfully and systematically here in the Congress under article I, section 8, to debate and decide what appropriate tariff levels there are across the world and not this helter-skelter, up and down, changing every other day that has not only already—we have reports today—affected inflation in this country and brought it up, but it has also created enormous uncertainty both in our markets and across the world.

Then, finally, we see the power of the purse—Congress's fundamental responsibility.

By the way, as I have talked to my colleagues—particularly my Republican colleagues—about this issue over the last several months, one of the common refrains is: Don't worry. We don't have to buck the President because the courts will take care of it. The courts will take care of us. They will protect us.

Well, that ain't happening. The ridiculous decision of the Supreme Court yesterday on the Department of Education is an indication that we cannot count on the courts to protect us from the depredations of a proto-authoritarian regime. They basically said: The President can continue to gut the Department of Education because we are going to hear the case later, and maybe we will decide it when it comes.

They did the same thing with birth-right citizenship. They punted on the issue and allowed the authoritarian-like activities to continue before they get to the case in their own good time.

So we can't count on the courts. That means we are it. The Congress, the Senate, has to stand up for the Constitution.

What this bill is, is another building block in the edifice of authoritarianism that we are seeing built before our eyes—a building block in the edifice of authoritarianism.

Why is this important? Is this just a dispute between the Congress and the President; politics as usual; Democrats attacking and undermining a Republican President; and it is just going to be all about the midterms and the elections of 2028? No. This is much deeper than that. This is much deeper than that.

The fundamental premise of the Constitution is the separation of power,

and the reason it is there is because history tells us that if power is concentrated, it is dangerous.

Madison put it absolutely bluntly in the 47th Federalist:

The accumulation of all powers legislative, executive, and judiciary, in the same [set] of hands . . . may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny.

He used the word "tyranny." Madison wasn't mincing words.

History tells us that if you concentrate power in one set of hands, it is dangerous. Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. We know that from a thousand years of human nature. That was exactly what the Framers of the Constitution were trying to prevent by this complicated, difficult structure where there is power in the Congress, power in the States, power in the Executive, power in the courts, two Houses of Congress, vetoes, overrides. All of those checks and balances, which have become a kind of cliché, are there for a fundamental reason, and that is to protect our liberty, to protect us from the danger of power being concentrated in one set of hands.

The Framers thought that they didn't have to worry about this, having set up the Constitution the way they did, because they said: Never will the Congress give up its power.

The phrase they used was "Ambition must be made to counteract ambition," that there would be institutional rivalry and we would never give up. Well, they didn't reckon on parties. They didn't reckon on party primaries. They didn't reckon on the Executive having such sway with the legislative branch that the checks and balances essentially have melted away.

This bill is important because of the merits, as I talked about, about the danger of wiping out USAID and all the good it does in the world and the good it does for our country and also wiping out public broadcasting and all the good that it does—the irreplaceable good that it does—for the people in the United States. But it is also more dangerous than ever because it is one more step, as I mentioned, in the breakdown of the fundamental constitutional structure that says power must be divided because if it is concentrated in one set of hands—and I don't care whether it is Donald Trump or the Archangel Gabriel, it is dangerous to have the power in one set of hands. That is how we lose our liberty.

Again, Madison:

When the legislative and executive powers are united in the same person or body, there can be no liberty.

We must listen. We must listen to history, to the people who brought us here, the people who brought us this government, the geniuses who formed this structure to protect the liberty of the American people.

It may seem like a small thing—this is one more bill, one more item—but it is one more step, in my view, toward empowering the Executive at the expense not of the Congress but of the

people—but of the people—of the United States.

I don't know what it is going to take, but I hope this debate, this discussion, will lead us to finally say: This is a line too far. We are going to draw a line here, and we will establish a relationship with the President that is cooperative, collaborative, bipartisan, and sharing the power that the Constitution gives to each of us. There is nothing less than the liberty of our people that is at stake.

I therefore urge my colleagues to vote against this bill and begin a discussion in the appropriations process as to these two elements and how they should be structured and funded. That is the way it should be done—not by the dictate of a President, of one who is trying to collapse the authority in our Constitution into his own hands.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak for 10 minutes and Senator HAGERTY of Tennessee be allowed to speak for 5 minutes.

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

NOMINATION OF ANTHONY TATA

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise today to urge my colleagues to carefully consider their vote on the nomination of Mr. Anthony Tata to be Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness.

The position is absolutely critical and crucial. The Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness is responsible for all personnel matters in the Department of Defense, including military families, childcare, family and financial readiness, the military school system, and working with the military services to ensure the health and welfare of the force. It requires a leader of the highest quality of judgment, expertise, and character.

There is no question that President Trump has the right to choose whom he wants in this critical role, but the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness should be someone who is capable, without question, to meet the demands of the job and the expectations of those he will lead.

Mr. Tata was nominated 5 years ago for a position of similar importance in the Defense Department. However, the Armed Services Committee considered his nomination carefully and, on a bipartisan basis, declined to even bring his nomination to a vote. President Trump ultimately withdrew his nomination. I fail to understand why he now would be qualified to oversee millions of servicemembers and their families as the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness.

I respect and I appreciate his military service, but his record of public statements and behavior toward individuals with whom he disagrees politically is disqualifying for a position of this significance.

Mr. Tata's history of controversial and divisive statements is well-documented. Prior to his last nomination, he publicly called President Obama, the Commander in Chief, "a terrorist leader." And he said that then-CIA Director John Brennan deserved to be executed. More recently, he made unsubstantiated claims that there are "mutinous discussions" within the military ranks to sabotage President Trump, and he called for a complete purge of Pentagon leadership, including firing all four-star generals and senior career civilian employees.

I am concerned that Mr. Tata has a misguided and discriminatory view of the military and civilian workforces he would oversee. Our servicemembers and their families and the civilian employees who support them come from all backgrounds and political persuasions. They come from every State and territory in the Union—red States and blue States. Mr. Tata, to be effective, would need to serve all members of the Department of Defense and their families, not just those with whom he agrees politically. His public record and past performance at the Pentagon do not inspire confidence in this great regard.

Mr. Tata failed to alleviate any of these concerns during his hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee. In fact, he doubled down on his goal of removing leadership seen as not loyal to this administration and gave no indication he would exercise measured and independent judgment and seems intent on furthering this administration's political weaponization of the military.

The worst thing that could happen to our military is it becomes a political arm of the President of the United States—any President. Military men and women take an oath to defend the Constitution of the United States, not to serve a President. That has kept our military not only above the political fray but the most expert, the most credible, and the most dominant military force in history. If we have personnel in key positions that are evaluating people on their political beliefs rather than their merit, talent, and commitment to the Constitution, we are making a profound mistake.

As I hope my colleagues know, my top priority has been national security and avoiding partisanship as much as one can do. I am ready and able to pick up the phone and talk to people in the Department of Defense, regardless of political party. We look consciously—I look consciously—for common ground in which we can work together because, ultimately, it is not about Republican Presidents, Democratic Presidents, Republican priorities; it is about the welfare and effectiveness of men and women who wear the uniform of the United States. They deserve more than partisanship. They serve cooperation, consideration, and respect for their views.

The American people also deserve that because they are the ones who ul-

timately are supporting these men and women and not just in a financial sense but in a very, very strong, profound, emotional sense of lending their support, of saluting these brave men and women. I am extraordinarily proud of that.

Having reviewed twice and very carefully Mr. Tata's record, particularly his political—indeed, naked political assertions of going after his enemies, placing him in this position would, I think, put him at a point where he would do more harm than good. Therefore, I urge my colleagues to vote against his nomination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

NOMINATION OF LUKE PETTIT

Mr. HAGERTY. Mr. President, I rise today to urge my colleagues to confirm the confirmation of my teammate and friend Luke Pettit, President Trump's nominee to serve as Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Financial Institutions.

Luke has served on my staff for more than 3 years. In that time, he has become a vital part of my team, but more than that, Luke has become a leader, an indispensable adviser, and, in fact, a close friend.

Luke is exceptionally qualified. He came to the Senate with an already impressive resume. He has sterling academic credentials. Luke has years of experience at the Federal Reserve and in the private sector. His background has given him a deep understanding of how our Nation's financial system works, not just in theory but also in practice.

Luke is a true rarity here in Washington, DC. While possessing a deep understanding of complex technical matters, Luke has never lost sight of the true aim of economic policy, which is very simply to expand opportunity and to deliver prosperity to Americans from every walk of life.

Here in the Senate, Luke worked arm in arm with many of your staffers to write the GENIUS Act, landmark legislation to regulate stablecoins and promote innovation. Many of you and your staff will recall the long hours it took to move this measure forward.

This bill's passage was never guaranteed. It passed, in great part, thanks to Luke's tireless efforts to overcome obstacles and to bring people together across the aisle. In fact, without Luke's leadership and perseverance, the GENIUS Act, as we know it, would not have been possible.

Beyond his many qualifications, Luke is a leader in the truest sense. He is admired not merely for what he knows but how he carries himself, with humility and with selfless dedication to the task at hand.

Luke is beloved and respected by my entire team, and he mentors countless young men and women in the Halls of the Senate and beyond, including my own children.