

We are producing energy onshore, offshore, and in Alaska. My home State of Wyoming is America's energy breadbasket. We are drilling; we are mining; we are powering data centers and factories.

More production at home lowers prices, it creates more jobs for energy workers, and it restores America's energy dominance.

Moreover, Republicans are strengthening Medicaid with reasonable work requirements. Currently, 4.8 million able-bodied adults who will not work still receive Medicaid benefits. Our law changes that. If you can work, you should work. That is fair to everyone else. It strengthens our safety net for those who truly need it.

Democrats are fearmongering about Medicaid. I am a doctor. Let me set the record straight. Under our law, single mothers keep their coverage. Children keep their coverage. Disabled Americans keep their coverage.

On national security, Republicans are reversing 4 years of weakness and woke distractions. We are restoring America's peace through strength. Our new law includes \$150 billion to rebuild our military. Our military will once again be lethal, ready, and respected.

Of course, national security starts with border security, and that is why Republicans secured the border. President Trump ended Joe Biden's disastrous open border policy. Under Joe Biden, 10 million illegal immigrants flooded across our border. Ten thousand illegal crossings every day was the standard for the Democrats and the Biden administration with their open border policy. Illegal border crossings are at a record low.

We ended the Biden policy of catch-and-release. In the last 2 months, the number of illegal immigrants who were released into this country is zero—zero. That is right. Think about what that means. I mean, think about what it means for our communities, for families. Zero releases means zero communities overwhelmed by an influx of illegal immigrants, zero schools overcrowded, zero hospitals overrun, zero new cases like Laken Riley's and Rachel Morin's. Our new law provides \$46.5 billion to finish the wall at our southern border. It also invests significantly in Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Additionally, Republicans cut billions in wasteful Washington spending around the world. Under Joe Biden, Democrats planned to spend taxpayer dollars on—listen to this—\$500,000 on electric buses in Africa, \$880,000 on social media mentorship in Europe, and \$6 million for net zero cities in Mexico. The list goes on.

Republicans passed a rescissions bill that saved taxpayers \$9 billion.

Here is the bottom line: These are commonsense reforms. At one time, they were bipartisan. In 1986, 30 Senate Democrats voted for President Reagan's tax cuts. One of the 30 was then-Senator Joe Biden. Today, every Demo-

crat in Congress voted to raise taxes on working Americans. Every Democrat voted for open borders and to give free healthcare to illegal immigrants.

The Democratic Party today is the party of high taxes, high prices, and open borders. Democrats are more than just liberal; they are radical, they are extreme, they are dangerous, they are scary, and they are terribly out of touch.

A Wall Street Journal poll this week-end found Democrats' favorability at a 35-year low. The American people see what we see and what I have just talked about in terms of what the Democrats are trying to do to this country and continue to push.

On critical issues like the economy, inflation, immigration, and national security, Americans trust Republicans more, and they are right to do so because Republicans are lowering costs, we are securing our borders, we are rebuilding our military, we are getting America back on track, and we are just getting started. The American comeback is real. The Republican majority is delivering, and America's best days are still ahead.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

NEW YORK CITY SHOOTING

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I come to the floor this morning not as Democratic leader, not even as the senior Senator from New York, but simply as a New Yorker, as a kid from Brooklyn, as someone who has walked that stretch of Park Avenue a thousand times.

Yesterday, my city—the greatest city on Earth—was shattered when a gunman took the lives of four innocent New Yorkers in cold blood just four blocks from my office in Midtown Manhattan. I actually worked in the building where the shooting took place for one summer as a summer associate at a law firm.

One of the victims, Officer Islam, was a husband and a father of two, with a third baby on the way. He was the best of who we are—a proud Bangladeshi American, a proud cop from the 47th Precinct, and a proud New Yorker. He died doing what NYPD officers do every day—running toward danger, protecting others, putting his own life on the line. That is what he did, and he paid—he paid the ultimate price.

When an NYPD officer is killed doing his duty, it is not just a tragedy; it is a rupture in the soul of our city, our beloved city, and it requires that we mourn and honor all those we lost.

I have lived in New York my whole life. I know this city, I know the people, and I know how we carry pain like this, how it lingers—I still remember the officers who had been shot in the line of duty months, even years and decades ago—because that is what happens when innocent lives are taken in the heart of your home.

This happened just four blocks from my office, in broad daylight, in one of

the busiest, safest, most iconic parts of Manhattan, right across from where New Yorkers pour in and out of work, pick up lunch or stop to say a prayer at St. Bart's or St. Pat's or Central Synagogue or at the Muslim Community Network mosque, all of which are in Midtown Manhattan, very close to the location where the shooting occurred.

We also grieve for another victim—Wesley LePatner, killed in the building. She was a brilliant executive from Blackstone, a beloved wife and mother of two.

We know there are two other victims as well whose names have not yet been made public, and we mourn them as well.

When something like this happens, every single New Yorker feels it. It is felt in every precinct, every kitchen table, and it is etched in the hearts of the families left behind, who will always have a hole in their hearts for the rest of their lives.

I want those families—especially Officer Islam's wife and kids and the families of Wesley LePatner from Blackstone and the other victims not yet named due to family notifications—to know this: You are not alone. All of New York grieves with you. We ache for you.

We will always remember the sacrifice Officer Islam—a husband, a son, and a father—made for all of us.

To the other victims—people just trying to make a living, do their jobs—our hearts are broken, and we, too, grieve with your families.

The city will carry their memories forward. We will continue to pray for those still recovering and in critical condition.

I want to thank the first responders who ran toward the gunfire—all the cops, EMTs, and firefighters that got there fast and prevented even more bloodshed. They are heroes, every one of them. That is New York—courage under fire, grace in the face of horror. It is who we are.

As we mourn this awful day in New York, we must remember that we cannot keep meeting these moments with thoughts and prayers alone. We owe these families more than silence; we owe them action. For now, we mourn, but we mourn as New Yorkers—together. We will carry on, yes. That is who we are. But we will never, never be the same.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. President, on costs, chaos, and corruption, nearly 8 months into Donald Trump's second term, the American people feel deep buyer's remorse. As you have seen so many times, Donald Trump's big promises turned out to be just duds, turned out to be more lies. He seems to lie every day. He doesn't even care. He doesn't even shrug his shoulders. He doesn't show a bit of remorse on his face as he spews out lie after lie after lie.

Today, only 37 percent of people approve of the job Donald Trump is doing, according to Gallup. Only 37 percent of Americans believe the country

is headed in the right direction, according to a recent YouGov poll. And an overwhelming number of Americans, including Independents and conservatives, despise Donald Trump's "Big Ugly Betrayal."

These are not the signs of a golden age; this is Trump malaise, created by three things: higher costs, endless chaos, and rampant corruption.

Let's talk about costs—the No. 1 thing on Americans' minds.

Donald Trump's tariffs have been a national sales tax on the American people. Yale Budget Lab estimated this week that the totality of Donald Trump's tariffs will cost \$2,400 this year—\$2,400. That is a lot of money.

The cost of healthcare is going to skyrocket. Thanks to the "Big Ugly Bill," as many as 15 million Americans are going to lose their coverage. Even if you don't lose your coverage outright, you are still in great, great danger of paying far more out-of-pocket, hundreds of dollars more—sometimes even thousands—for healthcare insurance. That is because Republicans failed to extend the ACA's premium tax credits, which expire at the end of the year.

Twenty-four million Americans will soon get a letter in the mail telling them that their premiums are going to go up in 2026. This letter ain't coming 2 years from now, as they tried—the Republicans—to kick the can down the road and hide this from people; it is coming right now, folks. You are going to get those letters, those increases, in the mail. Remember, it is because of Donald Trump and the Republican Senators' lack of courage to stand up for you as they bow down to millionaires.

If Republicans don't work with Democrats to restore these tax credits, premiums are going to go up by 75 percent, and 5 million Americans will lose their coverage altogether.

Let me say that again. If Republicans don't work with Democrats to restore these tax credits, premiums are set to go up by 75 percent, and 5 million Americans will lose coverage altogether. That is precisely what Donald Trump did to help the billionaire class and the corporate special interests—hurting, and hurting grievously, American families, so many of them.

(Mr. SHEEHY assumed the Chair.)

Mr. President, on chaos—now, as costs go up for the American people, so does the chaos. It is unending. It is exhausting. It is dangerous.

Donald Trump's trade war: total chaos. One minute he says yes to tariffs, the next he says no, and after that, he changes his mind again. And the American people are going to pay a lot more because of these tariffs.

What about DOGE? Again, unmitigated chaos and a failure at achieving any real efficiency. DOGE has fired, rehired, and fired again everyone from VA workers to medical researchers to USAID workers to even nuclear safety personnel. Incredible.

The Social Security Administration is being hollowed out in realtime. They

don't like Social Security, these right-wing DOGE people—it is a government program—even though it is the most successful government program we have ever had.

So they are afraid to just shoot it through the heart. So instead, they strangle it: fewer people answering the phones, fewer people solving the problems when you can't get your check, putting barriers in the way of people applying. They have sent 7,000 staffers packing. Wait times on the phones have gone way up. Online services have gone dark. Millions of seniors who depend on Social Security have been left anxious and betrayed and in the dark.

You can be sure when that chaos occurs, they will somehow figure out a way to blame someone else. But they are to blame. They did it.

Finally, as this all happens, as Americans pay out of pocket, as chaos keeps Americans distracted day after day after day, what is happening here in Washington with all this cost increase happening, with all this chaos? In addition, unfortunately, it is unprecedented corruption. Never in our lifetimes have we seen a President use the levers of power so transparently to personally enrich himself and his inner circle.

That never happened in America. Presidents, Democrats, Republicans, Independents, conservatives, liberals—they respected the fact that being in high office was a guardianship, not to grab and reach and make money and enrich themselves. But that is what Trump is doing regularly.

In the past few months, Donald Trump accepted a luxury plane from Qatar to use as Air Force One. And we have no clue—no clue—as to how many hundreds of millions or more in taxpayer dollars will be spent in renovations. You have to renovate it because there could be listening devices in even the little nails and screws in those planes. So you have to almost take it apart and put it back together so Donald Trump can have his plane.

The way the deal works, after he leaves office, it goes to his Presidential library. Can you imagine a gift like that to a sitting President from a country we have to deal with, in Qatar, where we have had good and bad relations all the time?

That is not all. He turned the south lawn of the White House into a Tesla dealership when he was friendly with Musk. His family is getting rich off crypto schemes, selling access to the White House for profit—personal profit.

Truly, the Trump administration is rampant self-dealing at an unprecedented scale, and that turns the stomachs of Americans who believe we are better than that. And there are many millions of us who believe that we are better than what Donald Trump is doing.

And then, we have Jeffrey Epstein. The more time passes, the less we all know about the truth behind Trump's relationship with the late billionaire

predator. Donald Trump promised he would release the Epstein files. While he was on the campaign trail, he made that promise. He has yet to do it. Speaker JOHNSON quite literally preferred to shut Congress down and send everyone home on an "Epstein recess" rather than risking a vote on the Epstein files to take place.

Americans are right to be angry over the lack of transparency. But this isn't just about getting the truth; this is also every bit about our national security. Whatever may be in the Epstein files is clearly troubling enough that Donald Trump doesn't want to touch this issue with a 10-foot pole. So it is natural to ask: What happens if America's adversaries use cyber attacks or other means to access investigative material into Jeffrey Epstein that are embarrassing—or worse—for the President and/or the people around him? What happens if Epstein materials end up in the hands of the Chinese Government or Russia or North Korea?

Unless the Epstein files are released and made fully transparent to the public, could our adversaries use that information to blackmail someone like the President or other senior leaders in government? What kind of risk could that pose to our national security?

So, today, I am calling on the FBI to immediately conduct a counterintelligence threat assessment to ensure we understand the risk posed if a foreign adversary were to gain access to anything connected to the Epstein files. Specifically, I am calling on the FBI to do three things: First, we must determine if foreign intelligence agencies could gain access to the information the President does not want to release in the Epstein files through methods that include cyber intrusion; second, the FBI must identify any vulnerabilities that could be exploited by foreign intelligence agencies with access to nonpublic information in the Epstein files, including being able to gain leverage over Donald Trump, his family, or other senior government officials; and, third, I am calling on the FBI to publicly show their developing mitigation strategies to counter these threats and safeguard our national security.

The idea of foreign adversaries hacking into Agency files to collect information that could be leveraged against our government is not at all a remote possibility. Just last Thursday, it was reported that DHS and HHS were among several government Agencies hacked as a part of a breach to Microsoft's SharePoint service. This hack, Microsoft confirmed, was carried out by Chinese actors.

Hacks like this could very well be an attempt to exploit Federal systems to get access to Epstein files and potentially use it to influence those named in the files.

Whatever is in the Epstein files is concerning enough that Donald Trump is running scared. If that is, in fact, the case, our adversaries could certainly be

interested in trying to use this information to hurt America and Americans. We must ensure that that can never happen, and the FBI must immediately conduct a risk assessment so we are not caught flatfooted if our adversaries have already seen these files.

National security, Mr. President, is not and should never be a partisan issue. We need to do everything we can to make sure we are protecting the United States and American families every single day. This report is imperative to do just that.

And there is one more thing Donald Trump could do to quell people's anger, confusion, frustration, and fears over the national security ramifications: Stop running away from this issue; tell the truth; and if there is clearly no national security risk, release the Epstein files, President Trump.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip.

NOMINATION OF EMIL J. BOVE III

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, soon, the Senate will vote on President Trump's nomination of Emile Bove to a New Jersey seat on the Third Circuit Court of Appeals.

The swirl of information concerning the Department of Justice this year is almost impossible to follow. And as ranking Democrat on the Senate Judiciary Committee, we try to follow closely not only the nominees for judicial positions and positions of leadership at the Department of Justice but also those issues that are relevant to our jurisdiction.

Surprisingly, a case that has been around for years, the Jeffrey Epstein case, has captured the attention not only of Washington but of many people in this country. I have never seen anything like it. The House of Representatives went into a rollcall vote that lasted for 8 hours. Eight hours the rollcall was open. I am sure it set a new record. What hung them up so dramatically? The Jeffrey Epstein case and whether the files would be released.

As a result of that, the Speaker of the House decided that he would give a special recess to the House of Representatives and basically tell them: Leave Washington. We are not going to vote on the Epstein question.

What is it in these files that is so frightening to the President, the White House, the Department of Justice, and the Republican leadership in Congress? The American people have had their doubts for a long time that we knew all that we needed to know about this case, but now they have been confirmed by the actions of the Speaker of the House and the President of the United States.

I would just say flatout for the record: I know of no information that implicates the President in wrongdoing with Jeffrey Epstein, period. But I do believe, as many Republicans believe, the best thing to do for all of us is to disclose to the American people the truth of the situation. What actually

happened with Mr. Epstein? Did he commit suicide? There are questions that are still unanswered.

And then, last week, something happened that was completely unheard of: One of the leaders in the Department of Justice asked for a private, personal meeting with a woman who was convicted for her activity with Jeffrey Epstein. Her name is Ghislaine Maxwell, and she is serving a 20-year term in prison, in Federal prison, for her wrongdoing. She was involved in the trafficking of children and young women for Mr. Epstein and his friends, and she lied about it. According to the prosecution, brazen lies. The penalty she faced: 20 years in prison. That is a hefty penalty. It indicates some serious wrongdoing.

The Trump administration sent a higher official to meet with her privately in the prison and to ask her questions. We don't know the nature of those inquiries, but it is certainly unusual for someone serving a 20-year sentence to have that kind of a visitor. We don't know what was said, but we should.

I joined with Senator SHELDON WHITEHOUSE, Democrat, of Rhode Island, in sending a letter to the Department of Justice. We want a copy of the transcript of that conversation between the Department of Justice officials and Ms. Maxwell, who is serving these 20 years in prison. We want to know what was said. I think we have a right to.

If there is some aspect of it that relates to redacting or, perhaps, relates to national security, I will be sensitive to that, as I am sure everyone would want me to be. But if it is a question of what kind of strategy was behind meeting with this woman—Jeffrey Epstein's girlfriend at one time—now serving a 20-year prison sentence, I think the American people have a right to know.

And, secondly, let me make it clear: For her wrongdoing, she is being penalized dramatically—and should be. Any notion that she is going to receive a pardon from Donald Trump, which seems to be a rather common thing in his administration, is totally unacceptable—totally. She was branded as a brazen liar when she was sentenced. Now that she has a chance to reduce the sentence or eliminate it by making statements, her credibility is zero. Any notion of a pardon or any notion of clemency by this President is totally inappropriate.

Let's go back to the nomination of Emil Bove to a New Jersey seat on the Third Circuit Court of Appeals. An unusual thing occurred with this. He came and answered questions, as he should, for the White House as well as for the Judiciary Committee and then appeared before us under oath and answered questions.

But what was unusual about this situation is that the many questions he tried to answer, he didn't get close to coming to the truth. So egregious were his statements that individuals who

worked with him were willing to risk their career in public service to come forward as whistleblowers to members of the committee in Congress to tell them that Mr. Bove had misrepresented the facts before us.

They risked their public careers to come and tell us this information, and as a result of it, some of them are going to have to leave the Department of Justice. But it seems that when given a test of values and ethics, time and again, Mr. Bove fails, and those around him step forward and risk their own careers to tell the truth.

So we said, as Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee, to the chairman: We believe these whistleblowers are credible. They are telling us things about Mr. Bove that contradict his testimony before the committee, and we believe that they should be heard. They are willing to come before the committee and take an oath to tell the truth and run the risk of retribution or penalty if they are found to have misled the committee in misrepresenting the facts.

You can't ask for more than that; someone willing to risk their job to tell the truth and then to appear before our committee under oath and testify as to what happened. I think that is credible, and I don't think it is avoidable.

We are talking about Bove being appointed to a Federal circuit bench that is a lifetime appointment. This is a critical decision, and we need to have the facts before the American people.

So what was the response of the Republicans on the committee, the chairman? They turned us down. They don't want to hear any whistleblowers. They don't want to hear people who are willing to stand before us under oath and tell us what actually happened with Mr. Bove and his misrepresentations to the committee.

As members of the conservative legal establishment have noted, Mr. Bove's nomination represents an alarming departure for the type of nominees we considered under the first Trump administration.

Like other individuals President Trump has installed at the highest positions of our government during his second term, Mr. Bove's primary qualification appears to be his blind loyalty to this President.

As Acting Deputy Attorney General, Mr. Bove personally ordered the terminations of dozens of career Federal prosecutors who worked to put violent January 6 offenders behind bars.

Remember what happened January 6? Vice President Pence was sitting in the President's chair. They were counting the ballots for the electoral college to determine who won the Presidential election, and we had to stop. Capitol Police came in, took the Vice President off the podium, and then notified us that there was a demonstration taking place in the Capitol Building that was dangerous.

I remember the first thing they said to us: Stay in your seats. This is going to be a safe room. You can stay here.