

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

TARIFFS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, yesterday, Donald Trump announced what he called a deal with South Korea, and it is very similar to the deals we saw with Japan and the European Union. It is all talk, no substance; all hat, no cattle. And it raises the costs for average Americans.

Now, instead of levying a 25-percent tariff, as he has threatened, South Korea will face 15 percent tariffs. And then he pretends like that is some kind of victory. Fifteen percent is far from a victory because it is American families who are the ones who will have to pay for it in the end. Raising your prices by 15 percent on imported goods—that is a lot of money to a lot of people.

In fact, we got some more news this morning. According to the Federal Reserve's preferred inflation gauge, inflation continues to accelerate as Trump tariffs continue to hammer American pocketbooks. That means Americans are paying more. Inflation goes up, the American family pays more. That is because, in part, of Donald Trump's tariffs. That sure doesn't sound like a golden age to me.

Just like the supposed deals with Japan and the European Union, Donald Trump has claimed that South Korea will invest billions towards the United States. The problem is, there is no way to enforce what Donald Trump is saying. It is just talk—more talk, no action. That is all he does.

When he announced his deal with the EU, for instance, the EU immediately said there is no way they are going to be able to meet the kinds of investments Donald Trump was bragging about. The EU stated publicly the agreement was nonbinding and there was no plan to back it up.

So on day one, Donald Trump talks about some huge number that will be invested in America, and the next day, the people who say they are investing say: No way. It is not happening.

The same thing happened with Japan. In Japan, they said—after Donald Trump announced a \$500 billion investment—that they will only be able to invest 2 percent of what Donald Trump bragged about.

So listen to what the negotiators from the other side say the day after Trump puts out his braggadocio. If they were being totally honest, the Europeans, the Japanese, the Koreans would announce that day that what Donald Trump is saying isn't true, but they are announcing it the next day, and people hear it.

It is so typical of Donald Trump. He makes bold promises, talks a big game,

but when reality sets in, he changes the goalposts, makes excuses, lies about what he has done, and then the American people are left paying the price because his policies hurt them.

It may get worse. At midnight tonight, unless Trump changes course, a slew of tariffs will come into effect for dozens of countries that include America's most important trading partners. Four months since Donald Trump's so-called "Liberation Day," his trade war has been an experiment in chaos, dishonesty, and inflation.

Donald Trump has launched America against the rest of the world without a clue, it seems, about what he is trying to do. He seems to make it up every morning when he wakes up. If what he says 2 days later contradicts what he said previously, he doesn't care. Lying doesn't matter to him, and he doesn't believe the American people will see through it, but they do.

Americans are left paying, meanwhile, more of out-of-pocket expenses for everyday goods. It is estimated the average household pays \$2,400 a year extra. That sure doesn't sound like a golden age to me.

And more problems. The tariffs are affecting companies, businesses large and small. Yesterday, Ford said that Donald Trump's tariffs will cost the company \$2 billion—\$2 billion—and that is certainly going to be passed on to the consumers. Imagine what that \$2 billion could do if it weren't for tariffs. Ford might have hired more workers, invested in more plants.

What Donald Trump is doing—costing Ford \$2 billion, costing companies billions more—that doesn't sound like a golden age to me.

Amazon, Walmart, popular toy companies, and other retailers say price hikes may very soon happen. That is where everybody shops. Americans are going to pay more for their groceries, more for their toys, more for their clothes, more for their cars. As families get ready to send their kids back to school, they are facing the pinch as the cost of clothing and pencils and backpacks and all that kind of stuff goes way up. It doesn't sound like a golden age to me.

So Donald Trump can stay in his bubble. He can pretend like 15 percent tariffs on our biggest partners are a cause for celebration. But Donald Trump should ask the American people if 15 percent more for everyday goods is a victory. He won't like what they tell him.

CHINA

Mr. President, on China, meanwhile, if there is one country that has benefited from Donald Trump's tariff chaos, it is China. We all know that Trump loves to talk tough against Beijing, but a closer look at the Trump administration's actions towards them show it is just that—talk.

Over the past few weeks, Donald Trump has granted the Chinese Government greater access to American advanced AI chips vital to our national security.

Trump has done a complete flip-flop once again. First, his administration blocked these chips from being sold to the Chinese entities. That was a huge win. But now that has gone out the window.

Donald Trump is also hitting the brakes on new restrictions on other sensitive tech exports to Chinese companies, perhaps hoping it helps trade talks.

Meanwhile, reports are out that Donald Trump canceled the long-planned, high-level security meeting with Taiwan and even blocked their President from coming to the United States.

Donald Trump, our national security should never be a bargaining chip, least of all when dealing with Beijing. But, Mr. President, you somehow think otherwise. President Biden, whom I know you don't like, put a lot of these restrictions in because he saw the dangers of China, and you are backing off.

So while Donald Trump wants America to think he is a tough guy when it comes to the Chinese Government, when it comes to Beijing, his actions over the last 6 months show a pattern of appeasement, and he is unwittingly sending a clear message to adversaries around the world: Under Donald Trump, America's security, prosperity, and technological edge are open to negotiation.

Dollar for dollar, person for person, our tech is better than China's, but when we give them access to what might be the family jewels in terms of tech, in terms of chips, in terms of AI, since they spend more money than we do after DOGE and all those cuts, they are going to get ahead of us, and our children and grandchildren are going to regret it. So will we.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr. President, on Social Security, there is just a parade of horrors coming out of this administration. Yesterday, the Trump administration did something they rarely do: They told the truth. It wasn't Donald Trump, but it was one of his minions. They told the truth.

The Trump administration said—in this case, they talked about wanting to privatize Social Security. In the middle of an interview, Secretary of Treasury Scott Bessent said that the so-called "Trump accounts" that Republicans passed in their "Big Ugly Betrayal" could one day be used by Americans as a replacement for Social Security.

Listen to what Bessent said. The accounts that they put into this horrible "Big Ugly Betrayal" bill are a "back door for privatizing Social Security." That is what Bessent said, the highest ranking economic official, probably, in the administration. He said they put in their so-called Big Beautiful Bill "a back door to privatize Social Security."

I don't think our senior citizens think that is a big, beautiful bill when it could privatize their Social Security. Has America heard it? They are hearing it.

This is what Donald Trump and his cronies think about your benefits, America. They want to privatize them. They want to give it over to Wall Street. They want to eliminate a bedrock of this country, Social Security—probably the most popular government program ever created and has done so much good for so long.

Why are they doing it? Why do they want to privatize Social Security? Just to line the pockets of the wealthy elite.

Of course, Secretary Bessent had to rush to Twitter later to do a little cleanup, but the truth came out—the real truth.

Actions speak louder than words, and the actions Donald Trump and his gang are taking against Social Security speak volumes. For months, the Social Security Administration has suffered from the laceration of the DOGE chain saw—laying off thousands of staffers, closing local offices, and beneficiaries hanging in limbo. Now SSA is forcing the field office workers who are left to shift from working with the local beneficiaries who come in with appointments to instead answering the phone lines because they don't have enough staff. You call up, and you have to wait and wait and wait, if you get service at all. There are more delays in answering questions, more delays in processing benefits. Perhaps that is the point. I am pretty certain it is.

Donald Trump and Republicans know they can't come right out and say they want to end Social Security outright. So what does he do? What does Trump do? He and his cronies sabotage Social Security from within. Instead of one lethal blow, the Trump administration is engaged in an act of strangulation, making Social Security so unworkable, so problematic, and so inefficient, that they create the pretext for privatizing.

Secretary Bessent's comments yesterday more or less gave up the game. In their view, Social Security is not part of America's future. But in the views of an overwhelming majority of Americans, it sure is.

Trump and his people want to end guaranteed benefits and tie the dignity and survival of seniors to the whims of Wall Street. Democrats will fight this every step of the way. We believe in Social Security.

RAILROAD MERGER

Mr. President, about the rail merger, this week, Union Pacific, the largest freight railroad in America, announced its intention to acquire Norfolk Southern in an \$85 billion mega merger—the largest railroad deal in history.

If approved, this deal would cut down the industry from four major players to just three, pushing us even further down the road of dangerous consolidation and monopoly power.

Right on cue, the companies are already making the same tired claims: This merger will promote competition, improve service, benefit workers and customers alike.

History tells us the opposite. The last four decades of railroad mergers

have led to worse service, worse safety, worse working conditions, higher costs for shippers, which ultimately means higher prices for consumers.

They also promised that no union jobs will be cut. We heard that before from the same executives who laid off thousands of workers while raking in record profits.

That is why SMART TD, the largest rail union in the country, is opposed to this deal. They know what is coming—job cuts, corner-cutting, and corporate greed at scale.

The Surface Transportation Board has a responsibility to protect safety, protect public interest. This is a hostile takeover of America's infrastructure, and it is a test for the Trump administration. Will they side with the railroad oligarchs or side with the workers and families?

If Donald Trump rubberstamps another merger that hands over critical infrastructure to a corporate cartel, he will prove once again that he is not on the side of working Americans.

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.

RURAL HOSPITALS

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, let me bring up what I heard the minority leader say yesterday. Yesterday, he came to this floor, and when he left the floor, he went out to hold a press conference. At that point, the minority leader bragged—bragged—that the Democrats were introducing a bill to repeal the entire healthcare section of the One Big Beautiful Bill.

Here is what the minority leader won't tell you: The Democrats' plan would eliminate—completely eliminate—the \$50 billion designated for rural hospitals all across our country. The minority leader will not tell you that or anything about it because he prefers to focus on fear rather than the facts.

Republicans created this rural hospital fund because rural hospitals are in trouble.

In the last decade since ObamaCare became law, over 100 rural hospitals across the country have closed. Only 10 new ones have opened. Hundreds more are now at risk of closing due to the financial strain. The \$50 billion rural hospital fund was created to address just this crisis. Every single Democrat voted against helping rural hospitals. Now they want to eliminate the fund designed to help our rural hospitals regardless of the damage that it will do to healthcare all across America. With their actions yesterday here in the U.S. Senate, Democrats would make our healthcare system weaker—weaker—for those who need it the most.

EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS

Now, Mr. President, I would like to turn to the issue of nominations.

Yesterday, Leader Thune filed cloture on a number of nominations, one of whose is Brian Nesvik. Brian is the nominee to be the Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

The people of Wyoming know Brian very well, and they know him as a fierce advocate for Wyoming. He is the definition of qualified, and he is one of the very best of Wyoming. He has been the director of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department since 2019. He has served in the Wyoming Army National Guard since 1986—a brigadier general and a Bronze Star recipient.

As the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Director, Brian is going to play a critical role in conserving our natural resources. He is going to take the reins at a time when politics, not science, has too often driven decisions by the Agency. I look forward to working with Brian to restore science to conservation policy.

Brian isn't just the man for the job. I will tell you that I really like and admire him. I met him overseas when he was commanding our troops. I think it was in Kuwait in 2013. He was respected by the troops and then was respected as Wyoming's Game and Fish director. So I look forward to his confirmation.

Congratulations, Brian.

You know, I had the honor of introducing him at his confirmation hearing in March. The committee approved his nomination. And that was 112 days ago, which is the issue of nominations in general.

The people of Wyoming ask me on weekends: Why hasn't Brian been confirmed yet? He had his hearing. We saw it on television. It was passed by the committee. That was almost 4 months ago. Why isn't he on the job today?

Let me tell you why. It is because of really unprecedented Democrat obstruction.

For 7 months, Senator SCHUMER and his band of Democrat obstructionists have thrown the kitchen sink at President Trump's nominees. That is why, right at this moment, 161 highly qualified nominees like Brian have not yet come to the Senate floor for a vote. I am talking about nominees who have had hearings, have had their paperwork done, have had FBI background checks, and have been approved by a positive vote of a committee of the U.S. Senate. Many of these received Democrat support in the committees. Each and every one of them is now stuck in what I consider to be Senate procedural purgatory. They have been stalled. They have been stonewalled and systematically delayed by Senate Democrats.

This isn't advice and consent. No. This is obstruct and delay. If President Trump nominates you, they are against you. That is the new litmus test: Nominated by Trump? Not good enough for the Democrats. Some people call it Trump derangement syndrome.