

Under President Biden, he encouraged the States not to check income eligibility; just take everybody's word for it. Well, you know, you have probably heard me say this before. I trust people, but I also—when I play poker, I play with friends. They are good friends of mine, but I always cut the cards. I believe in the old adage "Trust in God, but tie up your camel anyway."

If the President sends the message to the States "Don't worry about checking if people are making too much money," guess what—some people are going to cheat, and they do. I wish they didn't, but they do.

Back in my State of Louisiana, our legislative auditor, Louisiana's legislative auditor, which audits all the spending in the State, found—they did an exhaustive audit of our Medicaid Program. They found back in 2019 that 1,600 people had been signed up for Medicaid who were making over \$100,000 a year—1,600 people making over 100 grand a year.

Yes, CBO, they are going to lose their Medicaid. They weren't entitled to it in the first place.

The legislative auditor went on to point out that Louisiana paid \$85.5 million in Medicaid payments for patients who weren't eligible for coverage because they made too much money.

My legislative auditor in Louisiana—we have a lot of people on Medicaid. He couldn't go through the numbers for each and every one of them, so he had to do a statistical sample. He listed—I won't show you the list of all of them; you could stand on the thing and paint the ceiling. But he found, for example, on our Medicaid rolls in Louisiana, someone making \$111,785. Here is another person on Medicaid making \$126,284 and another making \$104,921 and another making \$114,797. This is Louisiana. Our median family income is only \$56,000. These folks aren't qualified for Medicaid. They are taking money away from people who deserve it.

So, yes, CBO, which on this issue is giving us their advice—I am going to say it again: It is like asking a nun for advice on sex.

CBO is not telling us the full story. Yes, they are going to lose their Medicaid. They are not qualified for Medicaid. They are cheating.

Let me talk about a third way that CBO is misleading us. And I am not saying CBO is doing it intentionally. Some may say otherwise, but I am not saying that. I am just saying they need to explain their answer.

If you say we are throwing 10½ million people off of Medicaid, you know, you have got to give us the rest of the story. It is not fair to just take that out of context.

Technically, they may be right, but did I mention—I can't remember if I mentioned this—these 10½ million people weren't qualified to get Medicaid in the first place.

We also put in our reconciliation bill—the President calls it the Big

Beautiful Bill—a work requirement. Sometimes—not always but sometimes—the best way to get back on your feet is to get off your ass.

The American people are the most generous people in the world. We spend trillions of dollars helping our neighbors. In our country, if you are hungry, we will feed you. If you are homeless, we will house you. If you are too poor to be sick, we will pay for your doctor. That is why we have Medicaid. That is why we have Medicare. But those who can work should work.

Our social programs were not meant to be parking lots; they were meant to be bridges. Sometimes. It is not always. If you are disabled, you should be on Medicaid. If you are too poor, you should be on Medicaid. But we have a lot of people on Medicaid—we are not sure exactly how many—who could work. They choose not to.

So when we passed this bill, my Democratic friends opposed us every step of the way, but we passed, over their objections, a work requirement.

Now if you are on Medicaid, the expansion part of Medicaid—I don't want to digress here, but if you signed up on the expansion part of Medicaid, if you are 19 to 64 years old, if you are not disabled—so I am not talking about a mother with a sick child in her arms—if you are 19 to 64, if you are not disabled, if you are healthy, and you don't have a child at home under 14, we are saying: We will give you Medicaid, but you have got to work—not 40 hours a week; 80 hours a month. For 80 hours a month, in return for the free medical care, you have to go try to get a job, get a job. You can go to worker training or you can do community service. Hopefully, you will become gainfully employed and you won't need Medicaid, because a person without a job is not healthy, he is not happy, and he is not free.

We don't know exactly how many people are on the Medicaid expansion who can work and aren't working. There have been some estimates. I have seen them all over the map. I was looking at one in *The Economist* recently. They estimate that 6 percent of the 71 million people on Medicaid are able-bodied and could work but choose not to. That is 6 million people. That is 6 million people.

The average amount spent per person on Medicaid was \$9,000 a year. So if we could ask—get—all of those 6 million people to work—and we will help them find a job—we would save \$64 billion a year. That is a half a trillion dollars a year over a 10-year period.

So, yes, CBO, it is true that if someone is covered by the work requirement and they say, I don't want to work; I choose not to work, then they are going to lose their Medicaid. And again, we are not talking about somebody disabled or somebody pregnant. We are not talking about a mother with three young children. We are talking about able-bodied adults 19 to 64; they are healthy, and they don't have

kids at home. All we are saying is: Come join the American dream and get a job. So, yes, CBO, they will lose their Medicaid. They weren't eligible for it in the first place.

So I just want to say to my friends at CBO—I don't mean any disrespect. I don't. They are really smart people. But when you are going to throw these numbers around like 10½ million people are going to be thrown off Medicaid, you ought to explain why. So the CBO report, as far as I am concerned, is all salt and no tequila. They don't tell us why 10½ million people are going to lose their Medicaid. And unless you have an opium habit, you will see, if you drill down and understand and try to understand, that those 10½ million people—God bless them, but they weren't eligible for Medicaid in the first place.

And these reforms we are making to Medicaid are going to be able to provide much more money for the disabled Americans, the truly impoverished Americans, the truly sick Americans, the children who are too poor to be sick in our country. We are going to take this money that we are saving and give them the quality healthcare they deserve.

And even after all these reforms, guess what—and I hope you are listening, CBO—we aren't cutting Medicaid. Even after all these reforms, Medicaid is going to go up 20 percent over the next 10 years. And that is the rest of the story.

My work here is done.

I yield the floor to my good friend, Harvard graduate—he went to Harvard; smart as a whip, mind like a steel trap—Senator TOM COTTON.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

GAZA

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, well, here we go again. Hamas is on the verge of defeat, so it has cranked up the propaganda machine once again. Now Hamas wants the world to believe that Israel has undertaken a campaign of deliberate starvation of the Gazan population, and as usual, Hamas can count on an international media and political chorus to fight their battles for them and try to bully Israel into submission. So I would like to set the record straight.

First, let me observe that no decent person wants to see innocent children caught in the crosshairs of war and suffering and hunger and malnutrition. Israel agrees, of course. That is why, since Hamas started this war with its brutal atrocities, Israel has helped bring into Gaza approximately 96,000 trucks containing nearly 1.5 million tons of food, 46,000 tons of medical supplies, 60,000 tons of water, and around 170,000 tons of shelter equipment.

Put simply, children in Gaza aren't going hungry because of lack of supplies from Israel; they are suffering because Hamas uses food and humanitarian aid as a weapon to stay in power.

Now, you may see these easels next to me and believe I am about to show you heart-wrenching images of malnourished kids. That is what some more gullible Senators have done lately—and I am afraid to say, gullible might be a charitable way to describe their motives—much like the New York Times buying hook, line, and sinker the images of Gazan children afflicted with terrible diseases but passed off as malnourished.

But, no, I have other images to show; namely, the immense volume of food that is being ruthlessly withheld from the children of Gaza. Pallets and pallets of United Nations aid are just waiting to be distributed to the children of Gaza. Some of these contain canned goods such as chickpeas, white beans, green peas, and carrots. But these supplies, at this very moment, are sitting and baking in the hot sun instead of feeding hungry kids.

While the situation is shocking, it is not at all surprising. After all, Hamas's infiltration of U.N. aid mechanisms is well-documented. Time and again, we have seen Hamas terrorists divert aid shipments to themselves or loot delivery trucks, only to resell the supplies on the black market at outrageous prices.

Last year, this terrorist-infiltrated aid system managed by the U.N. and others allowed Hamas to rake in more than half a billion dollars in profit—profits that fund Hamas's campaign of terror against Israel and its own people.

How critical is this systematic theft to Hamas's grip on power? Well, one of Hamas's chief demands in recent cease-fire negotiations has been the dismantling of the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, a new charity created specifically to end Hamas's stranglehold on aid and supplies. The foundation has even offered to distribute U.N. aid for free, despite the risk to its own people. And much of this aid, which is sitting in the sun and partly taxpayer funded, is already inside Gaza; it simply needs to be picked up and distributed.

But the offer has fallen on deaf ears because Hamas uses humanitarian aid as a tool to fund, facilitate, and fight its war against innocent children, against Israel, against the civilized world. And Hamas's cheerleaders, apologists, and dupes in Europe, in America, and, sadly, here in the U.S. Senate once again turn a blind eye to Hamas's crimes, blaming, instead, Israel and the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation.

They demand that Israel agree to a cease-fire that preserves and rewards Hamas while also delivering even more humanitarian aid to Gaza for Hamas to steal and exploit. They expect Israel to feed the very people who attacked, raped, and murdered innocent Israeli men, women, and children on October 7 and—I would remind everyone—not a few American victims as well.

Once again, Israel is facing demands placed on no other nation in the world.

I don't recall from my history lessons, for instance, the United States providing humanitarian aid to Germany and Japan in World War II. On the contrary, the Allies imposed naval blockades that led to widespread shortages in those enemy nations.

When, in the annals of history, has the victim of an unprovoked war of aggression ever been held responsible for the nutrition of the aggressor? Put simply, Israel doesn't have any responsibility to send a single loaf of bread to Gaza.

I wonder why so many Senators, pundits, podcasters, and European politicians impose this unique standard on the Jewish nation. Why could it be? But despite all that, despite the brutal slaughter of nearly 1,200 Israelis on October 7, despite Hamas's continued repression of its own people, Israel is still delivering aid to Gaza while Hamas rips it from the hands of hungry children.

Once again we see very simply and very clearly in this war who is on the side of justice and who is on the side of evil. And I would ask anyone who places these singular demands on Israel: Whose side do you want to be on? And if you truly care about the children of Gaza, as I do, as Israelis do, as any decent person surely does, I would encourage you to support President Trump's statement of moral clarity and strength from earlier this morning:

The fastest way to end the Humanitarian Crises in Gaza is for Hamas to SURRENDER AND RELEASE THE HOSTAGES.

Mr. President, 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. WARNOCK. 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 Senator from Georgia.

Mr. WARNOCK. Mr. President, I rise today in the wake of the ongoing humanitarian catastrophe unfolding before our eyes in Gaza. As we say in my church's preaching tradition, "Let me make it plain!"

It is wrong to starve children to death. It is wrong to starve people to death.

Yet, in this moment, we are witnessing a famine unfold among children and innocent men and women in Gaza, the world's largest open-air prison, a pit of human misery.

Reports estimate 18,500 Palestinian children have been killed in the conflict. Over 20,000 children were treated for acute malnutrition between April and mid-July of this year, and at least 3,000 children were severely malnourished.

In Gaza today, starvation is being weaponized. Famine isn't a forecast but a fact, despite the denials of the Netanyahu government.

So I rise today not only as a Senator but as a pastor, as a pastor of a church where Martin Luther King, Jr., served who told us that "we are tied in a single garment of destiny caught up in an inescapable network of mutuality. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly."

I rise today as a father to say there is devastating starvation going on right now, and all of us—the State of Israel, the United States, and the world—cannot turn our eyes away. We must get to these people the food, the medicine, the dignity that their humanity requires.

The images of mass starvation are sickening. Children with no family, bare feet, empty bellies, hollow eyes who are seeking aid only to be trampled to death by other desperate people. And in their most desperate moments, some have been met not with mercy or medicine but with malice. Young people seeking bread have been met with bullets.

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu must stop using indiscriminate bombing and forced starvation and instead focus on lasting, moral peace that secures the return of the remaining hostages while respecting the dignity of Palestinian families and children who want the same peace as our Israeli brothers and sisters. All of us are children of the living God. In the eyes of suffering children, we see a glimpse of God's face.

After an international outcry and public shaming, it was a welcomed announcement that Prime Minister Netanyahu would allow more aid into Gaza and enact military pauses to allow food to reach people, but what has been delivered so far is just a drop in the bucket of what this moment required.

The people of Gaza deserve the same access to food and medicine we want—any one of us would want—for our own children.

Now, there is no question that peace in the Middle East is a tough issue. If it were easy, it would have been resolved by now. And we cannot forget about what happened on October 7, and we must continue to call on Hamas to free the hostages. These folks deserve to go home. They deserve to be home with their families.

So we call on Hamas to release the hostages. And as I have said time and time again, including in the wake of October 7, Israel has a right to defend itself.

But what is happening now? Children are being wounded. Many of them have been orphaned. Pregnant and nursing mothers are having to navigate a war zone while nourishing their children. And beyond the obvious moral atrocity, the question is, How has this continuing bombing and mass starvation made our friend Israel safer? How has this made Israel safer? And at what cost?

I urge President Trump, who has said that there is "real starvation" in Gaza,

to leverage American leadership to bring an end to this human suffering. Human lives are at stake, and America's moral credibility is on the line.

Inflicting human misery for its own sake is not a strategy. Starving the people of Gaza has not released any hostages or gotten us any closer to a cease-fire. The current trajectory is unsustainable.

I do not believe that the answer to death and destruction is more death and destruction. There is this phrase in Gaza. It is an acronym. WCNSF: Wounded child, no surviving family. I can't think of a worse way to begin your life than to be a child or a baby wounded with no family. This phrase takes on new meaning as we are hearing stories out of Gaza of parents starving to death to give what little food they have to keep their children alive.

So here is what I believe. I believe in the humanity of all of God's children, and that is why I pressed the previous administration and the Netanyahu administration to get more humanitarian aid into Gaza. I voted to give \$10 billion in humanitarian aid to Gaza and other humanitarian crises. And just this month, I joined more than 40 of my colleagues calling for the large-scale expansion of humanitarian aid, and I urged the Trump administration to resume diplomatic efforts to end this war.

I also called on the administration to end the U.S. support and financing for the shady, private organization that has been connected to deadly violence against starving people seeking food in Gaza.

We must instead resume support for the existing U.N.-led aid efforts with enhanced oversight to ensure that help reaches those in need. My North Star in this whole conflict is a world that embraces the children on both sides of this conflict because here is the thing that even mortal enemies have in common: All of us want our children to be OK. We all want our children to be safe.

And I said this on the floor of the Senate when I called for the cease-fire at a time when folks felt like you couldn't even say the word. This pressure has prompted temporary pauses in violence and some aid, but it is clear that these piecemeal steps are failing.

America is Israel's friend. However, being a friend to Israel does not mean being complicit in its government's immoral actions unfolding even as I speak. Israel's strength is rooted in its allies, but allyship—true allyship—involves accountability.

Here is when I know I have got a good friend; good friends tell you the truth. We must tell Netanyahu he must change course. The Israeli Government's current path is hurting the country's global standing and support in the world.

So in the end, this growing humanitarian crisis is not good for Israel. Good friends tell you the truth, and

that is why, yesterday, I voted in favor of the joint resolutions of disapproval.

I have been thinking of the words of my mentor, my hero, who happened to also be my parishioner, the late, great John Lewis. John Lewis said that when you see something is not right, not fair, not just, you have to speak up. So I am speaking up. I am speaking with my lips and my legs because the acid test of your faith is your commitment to the most marginalized members of the human family. We must work toward saving lives and centering our common humanity, returning the hostages home to their families, and securing peace and safety for all those in the region.

Last year, I had the honor of meeting with the late pontiff, Pope Francis, at the Vatican. And I was struck by something the Pope said to me. He said to me that there was a small parish in Gaza that he called practically every night just to check on them, just to pray for them—leader of Catholics all over the world. He called that little parish to pray with them.

Well, the other day, that church was bombed. As it turns out, there was no sanctuary for them even in the sanctuary. So tonight, I am going to say a special prayer not only for the people of that parish but for the people all around me. I am going to pray for peace, but we don't just pray with our lips, we have to pray with our legs.

We have to work for the world that we dream of for our children. History may not remember the debates that we had in these Chambers, but it will remember whether we acted when children were starving and hostages were languishing.

Silence is complicity. Inaction in the face of famine is a choice. So let us choose life, dignity, and a peace worthy of the ideals we claim to pursue.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

#### NOMINATIONS

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, it is Thursday afternoon here in the U.S. Senate, and I am going to come down and talk about the Alaskan of the Week. It is the best speech of the week, I think—the pages would agree; they are all nodding—because it talks about someone who is really amazing. This week is a really impressive story, I will tell you.

Normally, the "Alaskan of the Week" is kind of the wrapup bell, signal, for the Senate, for the press. They kind of know the week is coming to an end. But not today. We are still working before the summer August work period to try to get some of President Trump's nominees confirmed—it is a huge part of the Senate's duties—and we are trying to get cooperation from our colleagues on the other side of the aisle.

Now, why am I talking about this? Because I know the "Alaskan of the Week" speech—you know, millions of Americans tune in. It is like must-see

TV when they are all watching. The press watches. So I just want to explain a little bit of what is going on here because we have this unprecedented blockade by Senate Minority Leader CHUCK SCHUMER—that is not good for the Senate as an institution, and by the way, all the Democrats know that; it is not good for the country—to getting the President—his people—confirmed to help run the government.

It has never been done before. What do I mean? The way the Senate works—it is a really important chart here. The way the Senate works is, when we go to confirm nominees—you know, Cabinet officials and very important nominees; some who are controversial, some who aren't—a lot of times, the Senate moves, because there are so many of them, with a package of nominees. We usually take a big package, negotiate it, and then they come to the floor as a package agreed to by leadership, and we do what is called a unanimous consent request. We don't vote on each one. It might be a package of 100. And the majority leader will say: I move by unanimous consent to confirm these hundred nominees.

This happens all the time. This has been happening for hundreds of years in American history. Guess who stopped that tradition? The current Senate minority leader, Senator SCHUMER of New York.

Now, why would he do that? Look at these numbers. In George H.W. Bush—during his first term, 98 percent of the people confirmed for that administration—Democrat, Republican—were done by this unanimous consent model. We package them up, we bring them to the floor, we do a unanimous consent, and they are all passed. Nobody objects. This is the way to do it.

So, remember, this is cooperation. You need Democrats and Republicans in this great institution, the U.S. Senate, to do this to help the government work.

OK. President Clinton, same thing. Republicans did unanimous consent requests on 98 percent of the people in the Clinton administration—civilians, not the generals and admirals.

George W. Bush got a little smaller—still 90 percent. So the Democrats worked with George W. Bush to confirm all his nominees.

Obama. Republicans worked with President Obama to confirm 90 percent through unanimous consent—big packages of nominees to get confirmed so the government can work.

President Trump's first term was a lot less. So all of a sudden, the Democrats are saying "We are not going to cooperate as much during Trump 1," but still 65 percent of the nominees were packaged up, brought to the floor, unanimous consent. Let's move them. Did that. OK. You know, so there was a little bit of like, hey, you didn't help President Trump too much.

So with President Biden, it was less, but it was still way more than half—almost 60 percent. President Biden's guys