

Proverbs 25:28:

He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.

Proverbs 11:14:

Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.

II Thessalonians 3:16:

Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

#### REAGAN NATIONAL AIRPORT MIDAIR COLLISION

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, before I start my remarks, I do want to note that we have had news just now of a terrible tragedy at DCA. There has been a plane crash. We do not know all the details yet, but it is fair to say that, here in DC and all around the country, we should all be praying for the loved ones of those involved in this crash, hoping for some positive news, but knowing that this was a very, very serious crash, and the news is not likely to be good as we learn more. Our hearts and our prayers go out to all of those affected.

#### TRUMP EXECUTIVE ORDERS

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I rise at this late hour to join my colleagues in expressing my grave concern—my alarm—at the new administration's attempt to discard the rule of law and expand Executive power and, in so doing, threaten the well-being of communities across the country, including in New Hampshire.

Typically, when Presidents are inaugurated, especially after a divisive election, they try to bring the country together. They focus on what unites Americans. President Trump campaigned on a platform promising to bring down costs for families. This is a priority of mine and a priority of Granite Staters, and I would welcome commonsense, good-faith efforts to work together to bring down costs.

Despite my deep and meaningful differences with the President, I am and remain willing to work together to help lower costs for families. But in the opening days of the Trump administration, it has been overwhelmingly clear that lowering costs is not one of President Trump's priorities.

This administration's priorities have ranged from the ridiculous to the reckless—unconcerned with delivering relief and results, more concerned with exacting retribution and revenge, pardoning violent criminals who attack police officers, firing inspectors general, who are the government's watchdogs, and freezing Federal grants—an illegal act that, should they go through with it, would be devastating for the lives of everyday Americans in every corner of our country and would signal

a break with our principles of self-government.

The President isn't going after high prices; he is going after the rule of law. He is going after our system of self-government. He is going after our government's ability to support communities and families across the country, and he needs to reverse course now.

In New Hampshire, our love of freedom runs deep. New Hampshire was the first colony to sign the Declaration of Independence. Patriots from New Hampshire, under Colonel John Stark, fought in one of the first major battles of the Revolutionary War—the Battle of Bunker Hill. It was Colonel Stark who, years later in a letter, wrote the words that would become our State's motto, a motto recognized by people in faraway corners of the world, including Ukraine—the words “Live free or die.” For us Granite Staters, these words represent an unwavering belief in the idea of self-government—that the government's powers derive from the consent of the governed.

We secured our freedom through the rule of law and our Constitution. We believe, as Americans across this country believe, that this great country of ours has no use for a king, nor do we have any use for anyone who confuses themselves with a king.

We secured these freedoms through the rule of law and our Constitution. We did all this not only because we believed that our values of freedom, the rule of law, and democracy are noble principles—although, indeed, they are—but because freedom, the rule of law, and democratic, small government are still the best means to improve people's lives.

Presidents from both parties have been committed to this principle, but the actions of the Trump administration have demonstrated a break with the rule of law and self-government that 10 years ago would have been impossible to imagine being tolerated by either political party.

Let me run through some of the most egregious priorities that this administration is advancing instead of doing what the American people expect them to do, which is working to lower costs for families.

As the first day of the new Trump administration drew to a close, the President chose to pardon the violent criminals who assaulted police officers, stormed these halls, and tried to overthrow our free and fair election. He has referred to these criminals as “patriots.” The patriots on January 6 were the Capitol Police who saved lives, including the Vice President's, and saved our democracy.

The violent criminals who assaulted police officers, who beat them with fists and flagpoles within an inch of their lives, do not deserve our praise, nor our pardon. To pardon them, as the President did, is to venerate lawlessness, reward violence, and betray police officers.

Police officers have some of the hardest jobs around. They deserve a Presi-

dent who has their backs. Instead, the President sent a message that violence against police officers is permissible, even laudable, if it is in his name or to advance his political cause.

I suggest that the President meet with the families of those officers and explain to them why these criminals deserved a pardon, why he thinks people who attack police officers are patriots.

The pardons have been issued. These violent criminals are now free. January 6 is now a part of our history, and time marches on. But the shamefulness of the President's decision will not fade away.

Of course, the pardons were only the beginning. By the end of the week, late on Friday night, the President attempted to fire at least 17 Federal inspectors general. Inspectors general offices are indispensable watchdogs who identify tens of billions of dollars in savings per year, and they crack down on fraud, abuse, and corruption. They hold big corporations to account, preventing those corporations from ripping off the American taxpayer, such as through overpayments on Federal contracts or Medicare reimbursement.

But in order to do their jobs effectively, inspectors general are supposed to be apolitical and independent. They need to be able to operate without fear or favor. Their job is not to serve the President's agenda; their job is to serve the American people. But President Trump, in a reckless, illegal, and politically motivated act, tried to reduce what is a pillar of government accountability to a rubberstamp for his agenda.

Even if one is not concerned with the illegality of this act—although you certainly would hope that the President would be concerned with following the law—this action to expand and consolidate Executive power does nothing to bring down costs and, in fact, will make government less efficient, open the door to rampant corruption, and waste more taxpayer money.

So why is an inspector general important? To begin with, the inspector general, tasked with finding ways to save taxpayer money, would not do so by releasing a memo freezing Federal grant funding across the board for every community in every corner of the country.

In a truly unprecedented act, President Trump ordered the freeze of nearly all Federal grant funding. This includes grant funding for firefighters, for police departments, for care and shelter for veterans, for disaster relief, for resources to fight the spread of fentanyl, for law enforcement fighting drug trafficking, for school lunches, for special education for students with disabilities, for small business grants, for community health centers—in short, for virtually every part of American life. Then the administration released a memo doubling down on these efforts and offering more chaos and more questions than answers.

Communities across the country began to scramble to find out if they were losing their funding and for how long. My office and the offices of every Senator and Governor in the country have been deluged with frantic calls from our constituents desperate for answers.

Since then, the administration announced that the memo was rescinded, and then the White House announced that rescinding the memo was “not a rescission of the federal funding freeze,” only further muddying the waters. The White House continues to send out confused and chaotic messages.

The administration has suggested that those of us who are speaking out about the devastating consequences of their actions are being alarmists. They have given glib assurances that the funding for particular programs will not be cut. This is, of course, ridiculous.

This is the White House’s mess. This is the President’s chaos. It is not on the American people to do the White House Office of Management and Budget’s job for them. It is not on the American people to determine how this order is being implemented and what funds are being impacted. It is on this White House. It is on this President to take ownership of a mess that started with the President’s orders—this self-inflicted disaster.

The alarm that I hear from my constituents is real because the devastating consequences to our communities and our families if these grants remain frozen are very, very real. These grants are not toys to be played with. They are not a political football to toss around. Behind every one of these grants are people whose lives depend on this funding. It is not OK, it is not permissible for the people who rely on these grants to be left waiting for clarity from the administration, hoping the President can summon enough magnanimity to restore this funding.

Let me talk for a moment about why these grants matter to people whose lives are being played with.

In New Hampshire, Granite Staters have been devastated by the fentanyl crisis. Everyone in our State knows someone or knows someone who knows someone who has been personally affected by this crisis.

Last year, a woman who I was talking with about the mental health of our young people in our schools approached me after an event. She told me she had lost three brothers to the fentanyl crisis—three brothers from one family.

Far too many young people have been lost to addiction. Far too many promising futures have been lost, young people with a lifetime’s worth of hopes and aspirations cruelly dashed by an overdose.

In New Hampshire, it has been a struggle just keeping our heads above water when fighting this crisis. Every time we begin to get a handle on it, a

new threat emerges. It is tough work that has required the dedication of public servants from across our community—law enforcement officers, addiction specialists, teachers and school administrators, veterans organizations, hospitals, and parents. It has required the uncommon devotion of everyone.

While we have made progress, the challenge is still as daunting as anything our State has ever faced. The progress that we have made, though, has been possible in part through Federal grant programs, including the State opioid response grant, grants to community health centers, funding for law enforcement, and recovery services block grants.

This funding across a range of sectors has allowed us to get more resources behind successful programs and strategies that have proven records of working. For rural communities in particular, these Federal dollars make an extraordinary difference. Lives have been saved because of this funding, but President Trump would end these grants.

Another grant which would be frozen by this order are grants for firefighters. The firefighter grant program has been invaluable in helping fire departments in big cities and small towns alike to modernize their equipment, hire more firefighters, and provide more training so that our first responders can do their jobs safely and effectively.

Being a firefighter is an unimaginably tough job. Every day, they know that they can be called to rush into danger to save lives.

I have had the privilege of visiting fire departments across our State that have benefited from this program, including in Berlin, where, thanks to Federal grant funding, they were able to secure a new engine, which will replace one that the fire department has had to rely on for 43 years.

Our firefighters need to remain on the cutting edge so that they can do their jobs and get home safe, but President Trump would end those grants.

Federal grants are also indispensable for keeping police departments fully funded. For instance, COPS grants are vital for giving departments the resources to remaining fully staffed. New Hampshire received a \$1 million COPS grant in 2023 to help develop an anti-heroin task force. At a time when police departments are often stretched to the limit, freezing these funds is reckless and dangerous.

Let me be clear on this point. I have proudly stood up to members of both political parties when they have attempted to defund our police departments. The most important job of government is keeping people safe. Defunding police departments is always wrong, and President Trump’s order to defund police departments is wrong now.

So perhaps we shouldn’t be surprised. After all, a President who would pardon violent criminals who assaulted

police officers can’t be trusted to put police officers first and his political ambitions second.

This is just a small sampling of the grants and people—people—who would be affected by an across-the-board funding freeze.

President Trump seems to spend most of his time with the multimillionaires and billionaires who want even more tax cuts for those already at the top. The President perhaps would know the dangers of his actions if he knew the Granite Staters that I know whom I have the privilege of representing.

The President has been to New Hampshire in the past and seen our State from the stage of his rallies. He has seen New Hampshire under the glow of television lights, under the gaze of cameras, surrounded by campaign signs emblazoned with his name. But perhaps if he knew the Granite Staters who have been writing and calling in alarm to my office, he would learn about the people whose lives would be hurt by this grant freeze.

If he talked with New Hampshire police officers, he would know they need every dollar they can get as they work to get fentanyl off our streets and as they try to keep our children safe from addiction, danger, and despair.

If he listened to the Granite Staters who volunteer at our homeless shelters, he would hear about how Federal funding is used to help homeless veterans, to ensure that our heroes have a place to rest their heads on a snowy, cold New Hampshire night.

Earlier this month, I had the privilege of visiting Sunset Heights Elementary School. I talked with students. They told me about what they were learning and why they loved their school. I saw firsthand how Federal funds help pay for their special education programs—programs that help ensure that every child counts, that every child has a chance to learn, to dream, to reach their full potential. It was a wonderful day. These were wonderful kids. And no one—no one—is made better off by having the funding for their special education programs jeopardized, frozen, or taken away.

Or perhaps, Mr. President, if you knew the Granite Staters who live in Berlin, in New Hampshire’s north country, you need not look further than the new breathing apparatus that they now have that sit ready for our bravest to grab as they run toward danger, to know why these grants matter and should not be frozen—because this act freezing these grants would prevent other stations from getting the help that the Berlin Fire Department received. Do you think it was a mistake that the Berlin Fire Department received this grant?

These are the people, the faces behind these grants, this Federal funding—our fellow Americans who live, breathe, and provide for their families within the margins of these budget lines, whose dignity and safety, whose

hopes and aspirations should be regarded as more than just the stitching of a political football.

Perhaps the administration will restore some or even all of this funding, but it shouldn't have to come to this. Even now, the American people don't know what funding is affected and what funding is not. The American people—the people whom the President serves—would like to know: Would this administration be inclined to make up their mind on precisely what funding they would like to freeze, what funding they would like to take away? The American people want to know what part of the American life is the President willing to devastate.

People's safety, their jobs, their health, their fire and police departments, their lives should not wait in the dock, subject to the confused wordings and impulsive whims of the next tweet, the next press release, the next ill-devised memo to be issued and reversed and reissued again. We work for the American people, and they deserve so much better.

President Trump's order will not only hurt the lives of Americans all across the country; the order is also illegal and at odds with our American belief in self-government. The President does not have the authority to freeze or take away funds that have already been allocated by Congress. It is Congress—not the President—who makes laws, and that is not a technicality. That is what separates democracies from authoritarian states, Presidents from Kings.

So even if the administration announces that they will restore every dollar of funding, even if they do not threaten any grant in the future, let's be clear: The money is not the President's to restore, freeze, or take away. It does not belong to him. It belongs to the American people.

If the President can unilaterally take away funds from any program he disagrees with, why should we pass laws at all? Why even have a legislature? When a President seizes legislative power for himself, it makes one wonder whether or not this President—a President who tried to overturn a free and fair election—truly believes in self-government.

Now, some of my Republican colleagues are inclined to give the President the benefit of the doubt, to voice their concerns but to dismiss the President's actions as perhaps confusing but not wrong. I think that, in a sense, sells the President short. He didn't issue this order by mistake. He is the President of the most powerful country on Earth, and his choices are his own.

The President's actions to grab power were not an elaborate accident. The President didn't pardon the January 6 rioters by accident. The President did not try to fire 17 inspectors general by accident. The President did not order the freeze of all Federal grants by accident. The President deserves the respect to be treated as a

leader who is responsible for his own actions.

If the White House didn't want confusion regarding the freezing of these funds, they wouldn't have issued the order. If the White House didn't believe that the President has the unilateral power to take away funds allocated by Congress, then they wouldn't insist that he has the authority to do so.

And let me be clear. Leaders who respect the values that define us as Americans—freedom, democracy, the rule of law—they don't confuse violent criminals with patriots. And leaders who intend to govern above reproach do not fire the people's watchdogs in the cover of night.

The President is using his opening days in office to test our society's capacity of outrage, to test the loyalty of the Republican caucus, and to push the limits of the rule of law and self-government to, in short, see how far he can go, perhaps even hoping that, in this relentless tumult, we become accustomed to the bending and breaking of the law.

I understand that my Republican colleagues support the President. I understand that they support much of his agenda. But this is a pivotal moment. My Republican colleagues need to decide just how far they are willing to go. If they are not concerned by the President's actions, I urge them to consider the precedent that President Trump is setting up.

Would they be comfortable with a future Democratic President purging the government of all of its watchdogs? Would they bestow on a Democratic President the power to unilaterally defund programs that Congress passed into law? Because this will not be the last time that President Trump will test the limits of what my Republican colleagues are willing to swallow.

That is, of course, the problem with appeasement. Once the bully is appeased, the bully simply demands more and more. And even if the President restores all of these grants, even if this entire episode is mere sound and fury, that restoration offers no promises for tomorrow. When a leader gains a power, history tells us that they are inclined to use it and they are certainly not inclined to give it away.

The decision to give the President the power of the legislature to control the purse will live on beyond this night. My Republican colleagues have to decide if abdicating their authority as the people's trusted representatives to make laws is a bridge too far or is merely a lamentable but acceptable burden to appease this President.

So it is unfortunate, to say the least, that we are mired in this chaos. We live in such a great country. America is positioned to outcompete our rivals. We have the best scientists, entrepreneurs, workers, and fighting force in the world. What more could we do, what great things could we accomplish if we were not devoting our energies to overcoming chaos of our own making,

of President Trump's own making, of devoting all of our hours to binding self-inflicted wounds?

I know that both parties and the President can find ways to work together. We have done it before during the President's first term—for instance, to end surprise medical billing, get more resources to tackle the fentanyl crisis, and to deliver for veterans. I am always willing to put in the work to do what is best for New Hampshire and the country.

In this moment, perhaps above all else, the people want us to work together to bring down high costs, and it is remarkable to me that the President and his party have declined so far to introduce a single piece of legislation to lower costs.

Make no mistake, pardoning violent criminals who attacked police officers doesn't lower costs for families, nor does removing the portraits of decorated generals from the Pentagon, nor does removing security details from the President's political foes, nor does firing the people's watchdogs or freezing funding for veterans, for police departments, for firefighters.

No one's rent will be easier to pay. No one's grocery bill will be any lighter. The President's actions will not bring down any costs for families. But that doesn't mean that they come without a price. The price is the millions an inspector general might have saved. The price is paid by the families who will be hurt. The price is paid by our police officers who may lose funding. The price is paid by the families of Capitol Police officers who the President of the United States has let down.

The price we the people are asked to pay is our commitment to self-government, our commitment to the notion that inspired delegates in a hall in Philadelphia that, in America, we do not seek to be ruled, that we are capable of solving problems and making decisions, and that no one is above the law because here we believe in government of, by, and for the people.

The price is, in short, all of the beliefs that inspired us who serve in this Chamber to enter public service. The price is nothing less than the very ideals that make us proud to call ourselves Americans.

As we near midnight, we will mark the birthday of another President: Franklin Delano Roosevelt. It was Roosevelt who, when speaking of the freedoms enshrined in our Constitution, said:

Those who have long enjoyed such privileges as we enjoy forget in time that men have died to win them.

We have come too far and sacrificed far too much for freedom and for the miracle of self-government for us to discard these ideals for political expediency, to dispense with the rule of law as the latest casualty of the President's self-described quest for retribution.

I hope my Republican colleagues tell the President that he went too far and

that they reverse course. But for now, the President should know that, no matter what he does, we are not going to grow accustomed to illegality. We will not resign ourselves to the lives of our fellow Americans being imperiled for his political gain.

If he wishes to fire the people's watchdogs in the black of night, then he can expect us to stand here on the floor and speak out as the clock strikes midnight. The President will do whatever he does, but he will not do so to a silent Chamber.

We still believe in self-government. It has been nearly 250 years since we declared our independence, but we have yet to gain an appetite for a King. In the "Live Free or Die" State, we remain a freedom-loving people. We know that problems get solved for real people, for real families; that prices get lowered; that people have a chance to build a future, to own a home, to save for retirement, to send their kids to college, to have a vacation, to live a life that they build in the way that is best for them.

We know that the way to do that is to ensure that our democracy serves the people, that our democracy preserves their power, that public servants are accountable to their constituents. That is how we make sure that the American dream continues.

I urge the President to reverse course, to get to work on a bipartisan basis, to stop the uncertainty and unpredictability that so many people are

faced with right now as they try to make decisions about keeping a daycare center open, hiring new police to keep our streets safe, hiring nurses to keep our rural hospitals open.

Those are the decisions, the day-to-day decisions that are being impacted by the President's recklessness. I urge the President again to reverse course, to get to work on a bipartisan basis, to do what he needs to do to listen to people, bring down costs, and deliver for the American people.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

#### TRUMP EXECUTIVE ORDERS

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, it is a somber night as we pray for safety and recovery and thank the first responders and we wrap up for the evening.

We will be back tomorrow and as long as it takes to reverse this Federal funding freeze. Today was a good day. It was a small victory for the reversal of this illegal act. But I think the most important thing for everybody to remember on both sides of the aisle is that nobody is unconstrained by the law.

We have three separate and coequal branches of government, and I think people on both sides of the aisle consider this President sort of unusually not constrained by political outcry or legal constraints.

I think the most important thing for all of us to remember is that the laws

of gravity apply to all of us, and the laws of the land apply to all of us. So if you are on the left and you are worried about what is going to happen, it is important to know public outcry works; the law still stands; the Constitution still stands.

If you are on the right, you should also remember that the door swings both ways in Washington, DC, and elsewhere. You probably want to be careful about how much power you delegate away from the Congress to the Chief Executive of the United States.

So we will be continuing to talk about this. This is not a 1-day thing. This is not a 1-week thing. This is not a 1-month thing. We are in this for the long haul.

I yield the floor.

#### ADJOURNMENT UNTIL TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 12 noon tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 11:02 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, January 30, 2025, at 12 noon.

#### CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate January 29, 2025:

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

LEE ZELDIN, OF NEW YORK, TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY.