

all the energy—alternative energy—that we can create. It means conservation, and not necessarily conservation promoted by government but individual conservation. And, of course, nuclear, and nuclear brings to our attention a whole new generation of ways to produce nuclear energy. That is “all of the above.”

And, of course, we ought to, in order to accomplish that, cut back on Biden-era regulations. These regulations seem to be very opaque. And, consequently, we would forge a fiscally sound path forward in regard to everything that less regulation would bring us.

I believe that Mr. Burgum understands the need to support an “all of the above” approach to energy policy, given his leadership on that issue as Governor of the State of North Dakota.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The majority leader is recognized.

REAGAN NATIONAL AIRPORT FLIGHT ACCIDENT

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, before I begin, I want to comment on last night's horrific tragedy. As most now know, last night, around 9 p.m., a passenger flight out of Wichita, KS, coming into Reagan National Airport collided with a Black Hawk helicopter based out of Fort Belvoir.

As recovery efforts continue, authorities confirmed that they do not expect any survivors.

Mr. President, there are few words in instances like this, only our heartfelt prayers for those who have received unbearable news over the past few hours and our gratitude for rescue personnel who spent the night searching for survivors and remain on the river.

It is too early to know why last night's crash occurred, but we are going to find out. Congress and Federal Agencies will be closely examining this tragedy to ensure that America's skies are safe.

My prayers today are with all those suffering, with our first responders, and with our Kansas Senators and everyone affected by this terrible event.

NOMINATION OF DOUGLAS BURGUM

Mr. President, later today, the Senate will vote on former North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum's nomination to be Secretary of the Interior.

Governor Burgum knows that America's natural resources are our greatest national asset. And in the spirit of Teddy Roosevelt, he believes energy can be a big stick to promote peace and prosperity. But we have to be able to leverage our resources.

Too often, under the Biden administration, the Interior Department was

the tip of the spear in restricting development of America's resources. The Biden administration seemed to believe that land use and conservation were mutually exclusive. But people in places like my State and Governor Burgum's, where the land is part of our way of life, know that the farmer, the rancher, the forester, and other landowners are some of the best conservationists.

And I am pleased that Governor Burgum is committed to restoring the multiple-use approach to managing public lands.

I might argue with Governor Burgum over whether North Dakota's Badlands are, in his words, “significantly badder” than South Dakota's, but I can't argue with his record of success. He literally bet the family farm on a small technology company, and he grew it into a major player in a then-nascent sector.

When he turned his sights on public service, he made a huge impact on North Dakota. He leveraged the State's natural resources to grow its economy and attract talented people to move to the Great Plains, and he will bring the same data-driven, consensus-based, “think big” work ethic to his work as Secretary of the Interior.

I look forward to working with him to protect our public lands and leverage some of America's greatest assets for a safer and more prosperous future.

TRIBUTE TO U.S. CAPITOL EMPLOYEES

Mr. President, I have said it before, and I will say it again: Not one of us would last a day here in Congress without our staffs. But it is not just our staffs; there are a lot of other people on this campus who are essential to ensuring the continued running of this institution: the men and women who clean our offices, who perform ongoing maintenance around the Capitol Complex, who ensure that Members and staffers have some place to get food, who issue ID badges, who run the Press Galleries, who maintain our historic buildings, who set up for events—sometimes very big events—and then break things down afterwards.

The list is long. Day-to-day operations in the Capitol Complex are significant in themselves, but there have been some particularly noteworthy events recently: President Carter's lying-in-state, a Presidential visit, and President Trump's inauguration. Every one of these events required substantial planning and coordination and a lot of extra work for a lot of people, and today, I want to say thank you.

There is no way to name all of the people who were involved in pulling off these events, but I want to make sure to recognize the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies, ably led by Senators KLOBUCHAR and FISCHER and by Mike Wagner and Julia Daniel, executive director and chief of staff of the committee. The inauguration would not have happened without these folks, and I am very grateful for their work.

I also want to thank the Architect of the Capitol, Tom Austin, and his incredible staff. From preserving the historic treasures in this building to tending the gardens around the Capitol Complex, staff of the Architect of the Capitol Office make sure that our Capitol continues to stand as a visible beacon of freedom and the rule of law. The work they did for the inauguration and for President Carter's lying-in-state was tremendous.

From building an inaugural stage and then another inaugural stage once freezing temperatures forced the inauguration indoors, to setting up chairs, providing support for TV and press operations, and decorating the building, Tom and his staff worked tirelessly.

I want to give special thanks to Raynell Bennett in Tom's office, who plays a key role in ceremonial events here in the Capitol and whose unfailingly can-do attitude makes planning these events a lot easier.

In addition to the Architect of the Capitol Office, I also want to recognize Jennifer Hemingway, the Senate Sergeant at Arms, and her office. Members of the Sergeant at Arms Office perform essential security and preparedness functions in the Capitol. They monitor the doors to the Senate floor, maintain order in the Galleries, and they are custodians of Senate protocol, including providing key ceremonial support when dignitaries visit. They were essential to both the inauguration and President Carter's lying-in-state, and I am very grateful for their work.

I also cannot fail to mention the Secretary of the Senate's Office as well as members of my staff, who worked on both the lying-in-state and the inauguration.

My deep thanks to all those who maintain the cleanliness of the Capitol and Senate buildings and ensured that so many spaces were ready to welcome visitors.

Finally, I want to recognize all of the women and men of the Capitol Police who stand on guard for us every day but whose workload was vastly increased by these events. They put a lot of effort and a lot of overtime into ensuring safe and successful events, and I am grateful every single day for their service.

Thanks is also due to other law enforcement agencies and officers who contributed to these events, including the Secret Service as well as members of the National Guard. I am grateful for every man and woman in this country who put themselves on the line to protect their fellow Americans.

TRIBUTE TO KAREN PAUL

Mr. President, before I close, I want to mention another Senate employee, the first and so far only archivist of the Senate, who is retiring after an incredible 40-plus years. As the first-ever Senate archivist, Karen Paul has played a significant role in creating archiving standards for the Senate and in drawing attention to the need to preserve records of the work we do for posterity.

Her publications as archivist include the "Records Management Handbook for United States Senators and Their Archival Repositories" and the "Records Management Handbook for United States Senate Committees"—key references for Senate staffers working to ensure that the documents of democracy are preserved for the long term.

I want to thank Karen for her decades of work and her dedication to the Senate. Not everyone can say that he or she has played a key role in safeguarding the history of an American institution, but Karen can, and I wish her the very best in her well-deserved retirement.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

REAGAN NATIONAL AIRPORT FLIGHT ACCIDENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, this morning, our hearts go out to everyone impacted by the horrible, heart-breaking incident at Reagan Washington National Airport last night. I have been briefed on the horrific incident at DCA and have continued to monitor the situation. My heart goes out to everyone who was impacted by this incident. I am praying for the victims, their families, and our brave first responders as we monitor the situation.

But I have to tell you, I just watched President Trump's news conference. Listen, it is one thing for internet pundits to spew off conspiracies; it is another for the President of the United States to throw out idle speculation as bodies are still being recovered and families are still being notified. It just turns your stomach.

In the meantime, we are keeping the families and loved ones of the victims in our prayers, and we are keeping our brave first responders in our prayers as well.

NOMINATION OF RUSSELL VOUGHT

Mr. President, now on OMB and Russell Vought, this week, the American people saw firsthand just how destructive the impact of Project 2025 could be. In the blink of an eye, President Trump ordered OMB to illegally freeze trillions of dollars in Federal funding for families and kids, for hospitals and fire stations and police departments, impacting almost every single community in the United States.

Thankfully, the American people fought back and made their voices heard. Trump was forced to retreat, rescinding his disastrous memo—for now. But make no mistake, as long as Russell Vought is Donald Trump's pick for

OMB Director, the American people can bet he will try again to illegally seize the funding for their communities.

Now that Donald Trump rescinded the OMB order, he should rescind the nomination of Russell Vought as well. The chaos of this week should be a lesson to President Trump: Following Russell Vought and Project 2025 is a loser. It is a loser, of course, for the American people, but it is also a loser for Donald Trump, as this week has shown.

Given the unlawful behavior of OMB this week, Senate Democrats will not move to advance Mr. Vought's nomination any further until he gives the American people more answers.

If Mr. Vought, the chief architect of Project 2025, intends to continue breaking the law at OMB and harming our communities in so many ways, he should return to the committee and explain himself. He should answer for the mess he launched upon the American people this week. The committee's hearing was held last week, before the funding freeze was issued. The American people need new answers. And if he is doing the right thing and communicating what he is going to do in this powerful position at OMB, he should return to the committee for another hearing.

Mr. Vought tried to hide the truth during the hearing last week, but the truth of his plan was on full display this week.

The future of our hospitals and schools and food banks should not be in the hands of an ideologue who substitutes the rule of law for his own ultraright ideology. This is bad faith, and Mr. Vought needs to return to the committee to give the American people some honest answers—or at least some comprehension as to what the hell happened this week and what is the plan for moving forward.

Until then, I stand with Ranking Member MERKLEY and my colleagues when they said that they should do nothing to advance Mr. Vought and not go to the markup today which is, at best, premature. I support them fully in what they have done.

STATE AND LOCAL TAXES

Mr. President, SALT. This week, House Republicans released their laundry list of priorities for this Congress. What Republicans included on the list is truly awful—draconian cuts, tax breaks for the ultra-, ultrarich, and the same ultraright ideology that most Americans, even most Republicans, reject.

But what is equally bad is what House Republicans left off their list. SALT, state and local tax, and that is what I want to focus on today. Republicans are saying that they don't have any plans to get SALT done this year, to get rid of the cap this year, and that should leave a bad taste in everyone's mouth, especially for New Yorkers in higher cost areas like Hudson Valley and Long Island, especially for police

officers and firefighters and teachers who work hard, who are middle class, and get clobbered by SALT and the cap on the deduction.

With the absence of SALT from House Republicans' priority list, it is clear that the upcoming budget will be nothing more than a Trump budget grab. By omitting any SALT fix, this is what Republicans are telling hard-working Americans in New York, in Massachusetts, in California, and so many other States. It is saying: We don't give a hoot about lowering your costs. In fact, let's raise them. Imagine that. Imagine that.

Any Republican, particularly those in New York or New Jersey, who claim to care about helping our teachers, our firefighters, our police officers, our construction workers save money should be outraged. They should be blasting this proposal and calling on House Republicans to eliminate the SALT cap. But so far, all we hear is crickets or sort of shoulder shrugs of reassurance. Oh, it will work out. My question is: For who and when?

These Republicans from New York should listen to their constituents because New York taxpayers and other taxpayers across the country are sick and tired of unnecessary costs by the unfair SALT cap. People who live in the Hudson Valley, people who live on Long Island, and in many other places are severely affected by the cap.

And we should hear from our Republican colleagues that they won't vote for any tax package unless it eliminates the cap, which is a dagger at the heart of New York.

I will continue to do everything I can, first, to remove the entire SALT cap tax; and, second, to never let a new proposal that, for the first time, imposes SALT cap on businesses, small and large, to be put into effect.

CABINET NOMINATIONS

Mr. President, OK. On the Patel and Gabbard nominations, today the Judiciary Committee, Senate Judiciary, is hearing testimony from Kash Patel, President Trump's nominee for FBI Director. The hearing is still ongoing, but it is already very clear Mr. Patel is not remotely prepared to serve as FBI Director.

Mr. Patel has failed to answer how his confirmation as one of the Nation's chief law enforcement officers will make Americans safer. He has failed to convince Americans that he will serve their interest and not Donald Trump's. It is no wonder that so many of Patel's colleagues from the first Trump administration have spoken out against him, saying he has ludicrous ideas and "virtually no experience . . . to serve at the highest level of the world's [most prominent] law enforcement agency."

No one who has a long history of spreading lies about the FBI and smearing the public servants who work there like Mr. Patel should be the FBI Director.

And, today, another nominee that defies belief and imagination, the Senate