

Second, we know shutting down USAID puts American security in danger. USAID programs preserve America's influence in Africa, Asia, and regions across the world. Our humanitarian efforts are critical for fighting Ebola, which is spreading in Uganda right now. It is essential for countering terrorist activity. At the time of soaring egg prices, shutting off USAID programs that fight the global spread of bird flu is utterly asinine.

If America retreats from the rest of the world, China will fill the void; Russia's influence will grow; hatred against the U.S. will keep rising; our diplomatic influence will disintegrate.

Third, we know that unilaterally closing USAID is illegal. Donald Trump does not have the authority to erase an independent Agency created by Congress, nor can the Department of State absorb USAID, especially because now there is, basically, nothing left to absorb.

We also know this is just the beginning. If DOGE attacks USAID today, then you can be sure they will move on to another target tomorrow. Who knows, maybe it will be the Postal Service or the IRS or even the Social Security Administration—they could be next—or maybe our National Security Agencies.

We also know something else, by shutting down USAID, DOGE is doing the work of Russia and China at the expense of the United States. In 2 weeks, DOGE has done more to erode American global influence than Russia and China have been able to accomplish in a long time, for Russian President and Putin ally, Dmitry Medvedev, even celebrated DOGE's activities online. Russia is elated by what DOGE is doing.

Both Russia and China hate the work of USAID because it limits their own influence on the world stage. Now China and Russia have, in effect, their own propaganda machine within the Federal Government.

This is dangerous. This is against America's interests. And President Trump needs to show some leadership and rein in DOGE before it inflicts more harm on America's national security.

Finally, DOGE's behavior is part of the troubling pattern of Russian and Chinese communist sympathizers increasing their influence on American foreign policy. A few days ago, Donald Trump named Darren Beattie as acting Under Secretary of State. Mr. Beattie has long pushed the Chinese Communist Party line on the Uighur genocide. He has repeated Russia's propaganda on the Ukraine war. He has even advocated that the U.S. make a deal to allow China to take over Taiwan. And now he has one of the most senior positions within the Department of State and oversees a large swath of American diplomatic work.

Make no mistake: DOGE's conduct cannot be allowed to stand. Republicans in Congress must join us to take

action to restore the rule of law and stop any potential lawbreaking by DOGE. DOGE is spreading across the Federal Government like a virus, and it is the American people who will pay the price when their benefits and payments are illegally taken away.

On Treasury, last Friday, DOGE forcefully gained access to the Treasury Department's payment systems and to the most sensitive information of virtually every U.S. citizen. Donald Trump basically handed DOGE the Social Security data of virtually every American citizen. He gave DOGE access to America's personal tax refund data. He gave DOGE access to American people's Medicare and Medicaid benefits, disability data, veteran benefit data. Worst of all, we don't know what DOGE intends to do with this information.

If you want to know how an unelected shadow government operates, look no further than DOGE. DOGE staffers, whomever they are, now have unprecedented access to the most sensitive payment data in the entire Federal Government; unprecedented access with no transparency, with no guardrails, and, guess what, the one independent watchdog who could have provided oversight was fired by Donald Trump over a week ago.

The Treasury Secretary must revoke DOGE's access to the Treasury payment system at once. If he does not, Congress must act immediately.

That is why Leader JEFFRIES and I will work together on legislation to stop unlawful meddling in the Treasury Department's payment systems.

We must protect people's Social Security payments, Medicare payments, and tax refunds from any possible tampering by DOGE or other unauthorized entities, and that is what Leader JEFFRIES and I will work to do.

Let's be very clear: DOGE is not a real government agency. It has no authority to make spending decisions. It has no authority to shut programs down or to ignore Federal law. DOGE is operating, in essence, as a shadow government without accountability or transparency or regard for the rule of law. The American people did not vote to let DOGE get ahold of people's Social Security numbers. To give DOGE a choke hold on Treasury payments is outlandishly dangerous. It is like letting a tiger into a petting zoo and hopping for the best.

It is impossible to overstate that this is playing with fire. The Bureau of the Fiscal Service, which oversees these Treasury Department payments, executes over 1 billion transactions a year worth over \$6 trillion. If these payments were ever intentionally or even accidentally halted or manipulated, it could paralyze the economy if we are not careful. One mistake, and people's Social Security benefits could freeze. Disability payments, aid to veterans, loans to small businesses—they could all be in danger. The Treasury Department is already using extraordinary

measures to ensure we do not default on the debt. If DOGE's careless meddling were to cause us to default, it could trigger a financial crisis around the world.

This all begs the questions:

What does DOGE really want with all of this data? What possible reason is there to give rightwing extremists people's Social Security payments, Medicare payments, and personal information?

Will DOGE try to halt Social Security or Medicare or Medicaid? God forbid.

Will DOGE cut funding programs approved by Congress that Donald Trump decides he doesn't like? What about cancer research? food banks? school lunches? veterans' aid? literacy programs? small business loans?

How do we know DOGE won't use its access to the Treasury to enrich Donald Trump's billionaire friends?

What if they go after the business competition of DOGE's leadership? It is laughably naive to look at the wealthy billionaires who run DOGE, who make enormous sums through government contracts, and take them at their word that all they care about is efficiency. Give me a break.

The immense danger is that we have no clarity, no explanation, no details for what DOGE is truly after. The potential for corruption is too great. The Treasury Secretary must revoke DOGE's access to the Treasury payment system at once.

As I mentioned, Democrats in the House and Senate, Congressman JEFFRIES, and myself will introduce legislation to take action. We must halt this unlawful and dangerous power grab. DOGE has no business being anywhere near the Federal Government's payment systems nor Americans' private data.

#### TARIFFS

Mr. SCHUMER. Finally, Mr. President, on tariffs, this weekend, President Trump kick-started a golden age of higher costs for American families with his 25-percent tariffs on Canada and Mexico—two of our four biggest trading partners.

By issuing his tariffs, Donald Trump is yet again rigging the game for his billionaire friends while doing nothing to lower costs for American families. Thankfully, President Trump got immense blowback, and for now, he has decided to back off his nonsensical trade war with Mexico, but President Trump's retreat is not enough. He must also back off his tariffs on Canada or everyday Americans will see prices going up.

Listen to this: Economists predict that President Trump's tariffs are going to raise prices on American families by as much as \$1,200 a year. Let me say that again. President Trump's tariffs are going to raise prices on families by as much as \$1,200 a year.

To President Trump and his billionaire buddies, \$1,200 may be chump

change, but to most Americans, a \$1,200 increase cost would be devastating. For most families, \$1,200 could be the difference between putting food on the table or not, between affording medications or doctors' appointments or having to skip them.

Americans, do you worry about car prices? The Trump tariffs will raise your car prices. Do you use a car to get to work? The Trump tariffs will make gas prices go up.

And we should not listen at all to Donald Trump when he says it is about stopping fentanyl. That is nonsense. There are other ways to stop fentanyl without making inflation worse and raising costs on the American family. But Donald Trump clearly doesn't care. He said the American people need to suck it up and to accept that there would be "some pain" after his tariffs go into effect. That is outrageous. That is what an out-of-touch billionaire says.

Meanwhile, both sides of the ideological spectrum know the damage of these tariffs. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce—hardly a liberal group—said President Trump's tariffs "will only raise prices for American families and upend supply chains."

Even The Wall Street Journal Editorial Board—again, no friend of liberals—said that President Trump's tariffs will result in "the dumbest trade war in history." That is what this would be, as The Wall Street Journal Editorial Board said, "the dumbest trade war in history."

This is not what the American people want. Senate Democrats are not going to stand quiet as Donald Trump makes inflation worse. We will push legislation soon to protect people's bottom lines and stop the President from unilaterally plunging us into a trade war with our own allies.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip.

#### TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, 2 weeks. It has been 2 weeks with the new President. The inauguration seems so far in the distant past. It is hard to believe. What this administration has tried to do during the first 2 weeks is almost impossible to describe in a very short period of time—so many Executive orders, so many changes, so many speeches by the President, so many threats, so many changes in the way this government is run—and many of them raising serious questions that even go to the heart of the Constitution.

Since President Trump took office 2 weeks ago, he has sown chaos across the Federal Government, but despite his campaign promises, something has been conspicuously absent from his agenda: lowering the cost of living for Americans. The unprecedented, economically questionable tariffs he announced on Friday on three of Amer-

ica's largest trading partners—25 percent on Canada and Mexico and 10 percent more on China—show just that.

I said to my staff, when they handed me a copy of this speech which was written this morning, that there have been some developments during the course of the day when it comes to Mexico—at least a postponement of the imposition of tariffs on Mexico for a month. Canada is still a work in progress, as far as we know. Despite campaigning on a promise of lowering prices, these tariffs will not do that. They will do just the opposite. American families will find things more expensive.

Don't take my word for it. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce said that tariffs will "only raise prices for American families and upend supply chains." That is the Chamber of Commerce.

The National Association of Manufacturers said:

Ultimately, manufacturers will bear the brunt of these tariffs, undermining our ability to sell our products at a competitive price and putting American jobs at risk.

The President himself even admitted that these economic measures will cause pain for many American families.

Trade between my home State of Illinois and Canada and Mexico are essential to the strength of our economy. More than 1 out of 10 workers in Illinois works for the export market. Illinois is the fourth largest exporter State in the Nation. And what are our first and second largest export markets? Canada and Mexico.

As a result of these tariffs the President is proposing, working families will feel the pain. These tariffs will drive up costs for manufacturers; it will disrupt our supply chain; and they have already inspired retaliatory tariffs which American consumers will feel at the store. Clearly, our outrage at this senseless policy may be working. Today, the President announced he will delay the tariffs with Mexico for a month. I am glad to hear that.

Let's be clear about one thing: Unless you are a tech billionaire or you are helping someone to get rich through the crypto market, the President does not care about making your life better. He only cares about enriching himself at the expense of everyday Americans. So, when you wonder why the stock market is dipping and the price of eggs and potatoes goes up at the grocery store and when your oil change is marked up, know that it was because of the policy of the new President who has been in office for 2 weeks.

#### NOMINATION OF PAMELA BONDI

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, on another equally important matter, this week, the Senate will vote on the nomination of Pam Bondi to serve as Attorney General.

Given the Trump administration's ongoing purge of Justice Department officials, I urge my colleagues to look

very carefully and closely at Ms. Bondi's nomination. President Trump has repeatedly made it clear that he values loyalty above all else when it comes to Attorneys General.

Don't take my word for it. Look at what happened in his first term. He fired his first Attorney General and forced out a second for insufficient loyalty; and he said as much. President Trump has said time and again he expects the Justice Department to seek "retribution" on his behalf. In Ms. Bondi, I am afraid, the President has finally found someone who passes his loyalty test.

Now, look, if you look at the resume of Pam Bondi, you will find that she served as attorney general for the State of Florida for two terms. She has experience as an attorney general of our third largest State. You are not only going to hear that over and over, but it appears that she is prepared to break with bipartisan tradition when it comes to a nonpartisan Department of Justice—one that upholds the rule of law and is free of undue political influence from the White House.

I am not convinced that she is dedicated to these ideals. She was the leader in an effort to overturn the 2020 election. To this day, she still clings to the basic loyalty oath that was required of those who were a part of that effort. She refuses to acknowledge that Joe Biden won the Presidential election in 2020—she can't get over it—and she echoed the President-elect's calls for prosecuting his political opponents, including a pledge she made publicly that the "prosecutors will be prosecuted, and the investigators will be investigated."

Sadly, Ms. Bondi's threat is already coming to fruition. Since President Trump's inauguration, his administration has purged dozens of senior career civil servants at the Department of Justice and the FBI, including longtime nonpartisan leaders of the government's counterterrorism and counterespionage efforts. These career civil servants are responsible for coordinating the Justice Department's fight against international terrorism and foreign spies. These removals substantially diminish America's ability to respond to national security threats. Quite simply, they are a danger to the public. The Trump administration's purge of these officials is a naked political move.

In firing a dozen career prosecutors, the Acting Attorney General issued a memo that said in that memo:

Given your significant role in prosecuting the President, I do not believe the leadership of the Department can trust you.

How blunt can you be?

Line attorneys and agents are similarly being bullied now simply because their assigned tasks were linked to the criminal investigation of the President or the January 6 riots—one of the largest prosecutions in the history of the United States when an insurrectionist mob came to the floor of this Senate,