

needs of the Nation when it comes to justice but also respects the integrity of the U.S. Senate.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I am sorry for the objection.

I would agree with continuing to work to see if we can find a solution on this. Public safety is such an important issue. U.S. attorneys are central to such public safety, and we should get them approved. I hope we can get something worked out.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

## RECESS

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess until 4 p.m. today.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 12:16 p.m., recessed until 4 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. SCHMITT).

## NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026—Motion to Proceed—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip.

### ONE BIG BEAUTIFUL BILL ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, over the August recess, I traveled across Illinois and found out what folks were thinking. There was one answer I heard more than any other; it was a concern about the healthcare cuts contained in the so-called Big Beautiful Bill. You remember that was the Trump budget that passed the Senate here with a party-line vote.

Their concerns, I think, are justified. This bill will cut Medicaid by \$1 trillion over the next 10 years. It will cause up to 17 million people to lose their healthcare.

I just learned this afternoon that premiums paid for dental insurance are likely to go up as much as 90 percent because of the big beautiful Trump budget bill—90 percent. It is likely that 4 million Americans will lose dental insurance on top of the health insurance losses I just mentioned.

This means millions of Americans will no longer be able to afford prescriptions, hospital visits, surgeries. It is going to take its toll on America's population, and it won't just be the uninsured who are affected. I have heard from hospitals across my State that these healthcare cuts will force them to close.

Republicans tried to use the August recess to convince Americans that these cuts are worth it because they will see big tax breaks and economic growth, but they are wrong. Working families making less than \$35,000 a year will see a tax break of \$150 a year—\$3 a week. Most of the tax breaks will go to

billionaires making much more money, like Elon Musk who could see tax breaks of more than \$300,000—\$6,000 in tax cuts a week. And \$3 a week for working families at the low end; \$6,000 a week for the richest people in Illinois and the Nation.

Republicans claim to be the party of fiscal responsibility. And over the next decade, this big beautiful Trump budget law will add a whopping \$3.4 trillion to the national debt. This President is going to take the prize again. In his first term in office, in 4 years, he added more debt to the U.S. Treasury than any President in history. Now he is going to break his own record.

That means that while corporations and the ultrawealthy receive giveaways, working families will see higher inflation and prices due to this foolish trade war the President has initiated. Combined with healthcare cuts, working-class families are going to be the losers.

You know what I think? Instead of playing golf one day, the President should spend a day with real families in America. Most families now are preparing for the school year to start. Last month, students across Illinois returned to the classroom for the start of the school year. New school year comes with a new list of school supplies—backpacks, binders, notebooks, pens, pencils, tech, and more. For working families, especially those with several children, and for the teachers who go above and beyond by dipping into their own pockets to help the kids, that tab can add up quickly.

But thanks to Donald Trump's numerous trade wars, families and teachers are actually feeling the squeeze in households across America. That is because prices on school supplies have risen under Donald Trump by more than 12 percent, \$73 million compared to last year.

Donald Trump campaigned on lowering costs on day one. Remember when he said that over and over again? And he promised his tariffs would somehow liberate American taxpayers. In reality, his misguided tariff wars left fear, uncertainty, and higher prices for American consumers.

You wonder how he comes up with these numbers for tariffs. It sounds like it is a free association every morning: Should it be 25? Maybe 50. Let's try 40. No, let's do 35.

This uncertainty is leading to chaos across the world. It is not just school supplies; costs are up across the board on nearly all everyday products. I will show you. I go to my local supermarket in Springfield to make sure that I am in touch with what real prices are for at least a number of food items. Fresh vegetables are up more than 16 percent since June. Coffee is up nearly 30 percent. A carton of eggs is more expensive than it was last year. That is not all. The cost to repair your car, heat or cool your home, pay for formula, diapers, clothes for your kids—all up thanks to this President's policies.

American businesses Trump claims to be helping cannot plan because of the chaotic tariffs and their jarring impact on supply chains.

President Trump's reckless tariffs—the highest rates in nearly a century—are projected to cost American families thousands of dollars. These tariffs are sales taxes that consumers across America have to pay. That is not liberation; that is a tax increase on every American family, and that is the President's plan.

But the impact of these tariffs stretches beyond prices. It is also hitting American manufacturing. The uncertainty of Trump's tariffs has frozen the job market, driving investment away from U.S. factories and workers. Under this administration, the United States is set to lose another \$500 billion by 2029 in manufacturing investment. Remember, these tariffs were supposed to create new manufacturing. We are still waiting. That hurts longtime manufacturing powerhouses like the cities of Peoria, Decatur, and Rockford that I represent. They rely on good-paying manufacturing jobs to foster local business groups, support families, and drive innovation.

Now, some targeted tariffs in areas where there is unfair foreign competition can be warranted, but that is not what is happening. What we have is chaos. Everyone knows the sloppy approach by this administration is bad for the American people and yet another example of Executive overreach by the President, which is why the courts have ruled these tariffs are illegal. But instead of respecting the courts, President Trump has doubled down.

On a Truth Social post, he said:

Without Tariffs . . . our Country would be completely destroyed, and our military power would be instantly obliterated.

That quote is from the President. The problem is, these tariffs, as we have shown, are already destroying the economy.

On the issue of military readiness and foreign policy, imagine what happened this week. The leaders of China, Russia, India, and North Korea all decided to have a summit meeting in China to announce some new arrangement where they were going to work together. Donald Trump has brought our adversaries together in a way I never dreamed was possible.

Trump's tariffs are reshaping the global order in a dangerous and unprecedented way. Just last week, Vladimir Putin of Russia and President Xi of China—our biggest adversaries—were seen smiling with Prime Minister Modi during this trilateral meeting. President Trump's tariff policies pushed India away from us and toward our rivals. Tariffs were “supposed” to strengthen our hand; instead, they are weakening our position around the globe. These tariffs mean higher prices, less opportunity, and a weaker standing abroad.

It is time to put American families and workers first and reverse course on this failed policy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, over the last few weeks, I have spoken with countless Tennesseans who are really appreciating the One Big Beautiful Bill because they are learning of the impact that it is going to have on their families, on their businesses, and on their pocketbooks. Tennesseans are telling me—once we talk about this bill, they are telling me how this law will help them make their business more successful, their community better, and will indeed end up leaving more cash in their pocketbook.

Thanks to the law, Tennessee families will save an average of \$2,600 next year on taxes and see a take-home pay increase of as much as \$10,000. This is going to give some much needed relief after 4 years of Bidenflation.

Over the August work period, it was absolutely wonderful. I met with restaurant businesses and servers, and they talked about the law's reduction on taxes on tips and overtime and how that is going to help them keep more money in their pocket.

Going from one side of the State to the other, I heard from seniors who are talking about how they are going to be able to lower their tax burden. That is because we have the \$6,000 bonus deduction per senior, per year. When you are a couple, married filing jointly, that \$12,000 bonus deduction for our Nation's seniors is basically going to remove the income tax from most of the Social Security payments for about 88 percent of our Nation's seniors.

Millions of hard-working families are planning for the future thanks to the law's enhanced child tax credit and expanded childcare access, and we have done this through the employer-provided childcare tax credit.

I appreciate my colleagues in Senate Finance working with me as we sought to get that into the legislation, as we sought to put in place the bonus deduction for seniors. These are things that are really going to serve so many Tennesseans so very well.

We had meetings with chambers and met with many in the business community. Hearing from so many of these small business owners, what they wanted to talk about was how, after the 2017 law was passed, they started hiring staff and growing that business. Now they are able to continue to keep this staff, to purchase new equipment, and to invest in their communities.

By making these tax cuts, the 2017 tax cuts, permanent, the estimate is that we will be protecting about 100,000 jobs in Tennessee. Much of this is because of the bonus depreciation, that 100 percent bonus depreciation deduction, immediate expensing of research and development, interest deduction, and 199A for passthroughs. These companies are looking at how they grow.

They are looking forward to this growth.

I also had the opportunity, whether I was at the State fair or meeting with some members of the ag community or the Farm Bureau—we talked about the provision that we have in the law that raises the estate tax exemption to \$15 million or \$30 million for a couple. What this does is to allow these family farms, generational operations, to be passed on to the next generation so that that legacy of farming and hard work can continue.

We know that for small businesses and so many of our Nation's small business entrepreneurs, they have worked hard. They have built a business. They have built a manufacturing firm. And to know that they can pass it on to the next generation without fear of that generation having to sell the business in order to pay the tax.

This provision—raising that death tax or estate tax exemption—is going to prohibit double taxation. There are about 2 million family farms that this is going to affect, and we know they are appreciative of this.

For our military communities in Tennessee—and we have some wonderful military communities. We have Fort Campbell, which is primarily in Tennessee. We have Millington Air Naval Station. We have Arnold Engineering. We have the National Guard. We have such a strong presence in our State. This legislation, the Big Beautiful Bill, has \$150 billion in a boost to our national defense funding. This is a way we can push forward with modernization and make certain that we remain the strongest lethal fighting force on the face of the Earth.

There is also funding for the Golden Dome missile defense system. This we are beginning to see a good bit of work in when you talk about the low Earth orbit satellites and beginning to build out this Golden Dome defense system to protect our country.

In addition to this, we have provisions in there for our military families to strengthen healthcare and childcare and improve housing and education for our servicemember families.

For 4 years under President Biden, Tennesseans suffered because of his anti-America energy policies. This sent the cost of electricity and gas soaring. So the Big Beautiful Bill ends these far-left mandates and regulations and provides made-in-America tax breaks to support energy production right here at home.

You know, Mr. President, when I talk to Tennesseans, they want us to be energy independent. They don't want us having to depend on other countries to be able to get oil and gas. They don't want us to have to import that. They want energy independence.

President Trump's pro-energy policy and this agenda is the reason why over this Labor Day weekend, our gas prices at the pump were at the lowest level that they have been in 5 years—the lowest level. This is something that

people were noticing. They could feel that impact in their pocketbook.

The border and border security is vitally important to Tennesseans, and this legislation in the Big Beautiful Bill that is now a law has \$75 billion in funding to hire additional ICE agents. And we have seen the results that have taken place—the Homeland Security being out there, working with law enforcement, conducting raids, apprehending these criminal illegal aliens.

People have wanted to see this done. You know, Mr. President, I have not talked to one single person who has said: I want MS-13, I want Tren de Aragua living in my neighborhood. We want them buying a house here. We want them setting up shop here. But what they do say is this: Thank goodness MS-13, Tren de Aragua, and these other violent gangs are being apprehended and they are being deported. That is what the Trump administration is doing, and it is exactly what the American people want to see done.

We also have provisions in the big beautiful law that will go back to building the wall and securing the southern border so we never have an open border like we had during the Biden years, where people are running across that border—as many as 160,000 a month. That is a population size larger than most cities in Tennessee.

There is also some money in this that is going to deal with transportation. Everybody knows that infrastructure is vitally important, and I want to touch on what is happening with aviation there. This is important to Tennessee.

The Nashville International Airport, in June, welcomed more than 2.4 million travelers. That was an alltime-high number. And that number, we know, is going to continue to grow. So the bill provides \$12.5 billion to modernize our Nation's air traffic control system. That is going to help improve safety, speed, and efficiency. And we are appreciative that Secretary Duffy is putting his attention on how you modernize this system so it is more safe, secure, and efficient.

One of the provisions that I had the opportunity to work on was the Rural Health Transformation Program. In Tennessee, we have 95 counties; 78 of those 95 counties are deemed rural. And this Rural Health Transformation fund is a \$50 billion fund. It is there to strengthen access to healthcare in rural areas.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and Dr. Oz, who is our leader at CMS, has launched a web page for this program. It is going to reward innovation. Part of the money is going to be a payment to these hospitals, the other part—that \$25 billion—is going to be, How do you innovate? Here is the money to innovate. How do you increase access?

And our rural hospitals and health clinics who are working on this issue can go to CMS.gov, and they can pull down the information for how to apply

for these grants; how to make certain that they are using the resources that are there; learning more about this program and how it is going to be able to help them increase access to healthcare; how they can focus on workforce development and retention; and how they can look at innovative new processes and use technology.

We are looking forward to good results coming from that because smart, good people who are focused on delivering healthcare are going to have the opportunity to apply for these grants and to focus on how they make healthcare more accessible in these rural areas.

As you can see, there is so much in here that is a positive that will improve the lives of so many Tennesseans. And as I said, they are beginning to see it in their pocketbooks. They are seeing it at the gas pump. They know that their taxes—we have made those tax breaks permanent. And they know this is going to benefit their communities because you will see businesses grow, and you will see businesses hiring new workers.

I think that as people have celebrated Labor Day, they know that this is the time where they have a President in the White House who is putting them first. He is putting them and their future and the future for their kids—he is putting that first, and he is pushing forward with making certain that America and all of our States, our communities are going to be safe, secure, and prosperous.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MORENO). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

NOAA

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, this is a photograph of the alien from the movie "Alien."

This is what you could end up looking like if you eat some of the raw frozen shrimp being sent to the United States by other countries. Now, let me tell you what I am talking about.

In late August, the FDA found that raw frozen shrimp from Indonesia was being sold in Walmart—specifically, in Walmart stores in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, Mississippi, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Texas, and West Virginia—was being sold under the Walmart label called the Great Value label. If you eat it, how could you end up looking like the alien in "Alien"? Because the shrimp was radioactive. I kid you not. It had a radioactive isotope in it called cesium-137. It will kill you. Even if it doesn't turn you into the alien if you eat this stuff, I guarantee you will grow an extra ear.

That was bad enough. Obviously, the FDA issued a recall. A few days later,

it happened again. The FDA and NOAA, which I will talk about in a second, found that there were 26,460 packages of shrimp cocktail and 18,000 bags of frozen cooked shrimp being sold, once again, at Walmart and at Krogers throughout the United States containing the same radioactive isotope.

How could this happen in America? This is unconscionable. I will tell you how, because that shrimp, that shrimp from other countries, which don't abide by the same rules that we abide by in America, which, if you eat it, may turn you into an alien or, at a minimum, will cause you to grow an extra ear, is not being inspected. It is supposed to be. It is supposed to be inspected by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association—we call it NOAA—as part of the Department of Commerce.

And, yes, they are inspecting some of it, about 1 percent; on a good day, 2 percent. The United Kingdom inspects 50 percent of the farmed seafood coming into its nation. Even China does a better job than the United States of America. This is unconscionable. There is no excuse for it. There is no excuse for it.

This shrimp—and I am not just picking on Indonesia; it is other countries. This shrimp is grown in conditions that you can't possibly imagine: dirty water. They shoot the shrimp full of antibiotics.

I confess, I didn't know they were shooting them full of this radioactive isotope. But the normal antibiotics that they put in these foreign shrimp are bad enough that if you eat enough of the foreign shrimp, you become resistant to certain bacteria here in America because the antibiotics don't work on it anymore because you have eaten so many shrimp that contains the antibiotics. This is unconscionable, and it should not be happening in the United States of America.

Now, I am biased. I believe in home-grown Louisiana shrimp, fresh out of the gulf, not radioactive. But I understand that some stores prefer to buy foreign shrimp because it is cheaper. Now we know why: The damn stuff is radioactive.

NOAA needs to do a better job of inspecting the shrimp that is sold from other countries that don't abide by the same standards we do to the consumers of the United States of America.

IRAN

This second topic, Mr. President, I want to touch on real briefly.

We haven't heard much about Iran lately. Iran has been busy, though. Just recently, Australia expelled Iran's Ambassador, and they designated the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, which is part of Iran, as a terrorist organization. Why is that? Because people connected with Iran firebombed a Melbourne synagogue, and then, a few months later, they struck a kosher deli in Sydney, Australia. Iran is still there, and it is still spreading terrorism.

Iran has also been in the news just recently. The United Kingdom and

France and Germany have announced that they are going to trigger snapback sanctions on Iran. What do I mean by that? You will recall that, in 2015, President Obama made a deal with Iran. We called it the JCPOA. And the JCPOA just said to Iran: If you will stop moving toward a nuclear weapon, we—meaning the United States of America and the other countries that are part of the United Nations—will remove the sanctions that we had placed on Iran for trying to develop a nuclear weapon.

So Iran said: Pinky promise, we will stop building a nuclear weapon. You remove the sanctions.

President Obama agreed. He was naive. We removed the sanctions. The United Nations removed the sanctions. The United Kingdom, Germany, and France removed the sanctions. And, of course, the Ayatollah and Iran continued to develop a weapon.

Just because we have destroyed—"we" meaning the United States of America—many of Iran's facilities to make that weapon does not mean that the issue has been resolved. Iran has refused to come to the table, even still, to negotiate a settlement, a new JCPOA. And as a result—and I am very proud of them—the United Kingdom and Germany and France have said: OK. We are going to reimplement those sanctions that we agreed to take off of Iran when they signed the first nuclear deal, which Iran welched on almost immediately. And, again, I want to thank our friends in Europe. They supposedly are going to reimplement those sanctions at the end of this month, and I hope they do.

Of course, my preference would be to have Iran come to the table again before then and sit down with the United States and other members of the United Nations and resolve this issue of them having a nuclear weapon, but I don't expect that to happen.

So I know I have said it, but I want to say it again. Thank you, United Kingdom and Germany and France, for doing this, but we need to talk about the rest of the story. The sanctions, which will be on Iranian banking, on Iranian shipping, oil, and arms are only part of the story. These are U.N. sanctions. But just because the sanctions have been brought back on Iran, that doesn't mean that they will be enforced.

Now, these are United Nations sanctions on shipping and banking and oil and arms, so normally there would be a United Nations committee to enforce the sanctions. I hope there is, but I doubt it because I think that Russia and China are going to block a United Nations committee to enforce the sanctions.

What is my point? My point is that just because Europe and, of course, the United States of America have agreed to reimpose those sanctions, we have still got to enforce them. We have still got to enforce them. And the United States needs to take the lead on doing

that. Joining with the United Kingdom and with Germany and with France, we need to make sure that the world understands that these sanctions are real and that we, as part of the West, are going to enforce them.

This is important. I don't want to see this get lost in our discussion about the importance of the Ukraine situation and other issues of national security. I don't want this to get lost. What you allow is what will continue. What you allow is what will continue. And unless you have an opium habit, you know that is just a principle we all have to learn the hard way.

So I am hoping that the President and our friends in Europe will take the lead and not only snap back these sanctions but then enforce them. And unfortunately—I wish we didn't have to do it because I feel for the Iranian people. I don't feel any sympathy for the Ayatollah. We are just going to have to choke him to death.

I thank the Presiding Officer for his patience.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Vermont.

#### HEALTHCARE

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, all of us are back from being at home for the past 30 days. In my visit in Vermont, my time in Vermont visiting with Vermonters, one issue that came up over and over again is incredible concern about healthcare.

The cost of healthcare is beyond affordability, and this is really an existential moment for our healthcare system.

Let me just talk about that in general but also with respect to the impact of the One Big Beautiful Bill. Under that legislation, 45,000 Vermonters are going to lose healthcare, literally lose it altogether. More than 26,000 Vermonters will lose access to premium subsidies which make the Affordable Care Act plans more affordable.

Just let me give an example that I found shocking. A family of four in Vermont who makes \$82,000 a year—right now, their premium is about \$7,000 under the Affordable Care Act. That premium will increase by \$23,600.

So the premium will then be \$30,648. They have done nothing. They have done nothing, and they have no control over what the healthcare expense will be. But their premium, when they wake up on January 1, is going to go up \$23,600, and that is on income of \$82,000. And, by the way, Vermont does not have high income.

And in that respect, I know you are concerned about your folks in West Virginia.

That is not affordable. It just isn't affordable, and the citizens have no control over what those costs are. They just have to pay the bill.

The other thing that is happening is that our rural hospitals, they are going to lose \$1.7 billion because of lost revenue. All those folks that lose Medicaid coverage are going to show up and get care. And our community hospitals, they will provide care for folks who are sick. But if they don't get paid, they can only do that so long before they go out of business.

And our rural hospitals are like the rural hospitals in West Virginia. They are like the rural hospitals all around the country. They are operating on a very thin financial margin. They are in great jeopardy. So we are going to have rural hospitals that close.

The other issue, we are all concerned about substance use disorder. Because of the cuts in Medicaid, about 8,000 Vermonters are at risk of losing access to the treatment that has been very effective. For the first time in years, the numbers of deaths has been going down, not up. And much of that is attributable to the fact that services were available to people who wanted them, needed them, and took advantage of them.

You know, this is not me talking. This is Vermonters talking. I had a healthcare listening session. And the thing that folks, just as I mentioned, were really concerned about, worried about, is healthcare. And it was everyday care, care for their kids, care and access to healthcare, including care for new mothers and women who are giving birth. And we are in the process of having one of our hospitals, for financial reasons, have to shut down, a much utilized and much revered birthing center.

So my view is we should repeal the so-called One Big Beautiful Bill. It is not a working-families tax plan. I mean, unless you mean taxes are what we do when we increase the premiums that our families have to pay.

My view, we should absolutely be passing policies that help working families, and I have got bipartisan bills to do that. But we can't move forward without addressing these real threats to our healthcare system. And the repeal of healthcare provisions in the One Big Beautiful Bill—that is what we have to do.

My longtime preference is that we have a healthcare system that covers everybody—regardless of age, regardless of income. It is what every other nation does. What we have is a system that is kind of a single-payer system in a variety of ways you can have it. But what we have is a system where we try to control costs by literally taking healthcare insurance away from people, as if taking away their healthcare insurance means they won't get sick. They are going to get sick.

We have got to support Medicare and Medicaid. We need to extend the Affordable Care Act's premium tax cred-

its so those Vermont families and families in every State across the country—red State, blue State—don't get hammered with these multithousand-dollar premium increases.

I serve on the Finance Committee, and tomorrow I am grateful to Chairman CRAPO for inviting Secretary Kennedy in to report on "progress in the healthcare system."

I don't have that view of his tenure. My view, Secretary Kennedy has undermined, severely, vaccine research and vaccine delivery. My view, his policies have undermined rural health. My view, Secretary Kennedy should resign.

We need a healthcare Secretary and a White House that is actually committed to practical ways to lower cost of healthcare, and we need leadership that cares about the very real and very painful structural issues that are making our healthcare system unaffordable and inefficient and out of reach for so many people. And that is true whether you are a lower income person who gets Medicaid benefits, you are a senior who gets your well-earned Medicare benefits, you are a private family trying to buy your own healthcare, or you are an employer where you really care about your workers—you want to provide employer-sponsored healthcare but you are getting hammered with these 10-, 15-, 25-percent premium increases.

Healthcare is an essential concern of every single American family, and the concern is that it costs too much, access is too difficult, and the provisions in the One Big Beautiful Bill have set us back. They have not moved us ahead.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

#### GOLDEN DOME

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, President Donald Trump's so-called Golden Dome for America is the latest reincarnation of President Ronald Reagan's "Star Wars" fantasy: thousands of space-based missile interceptors supposedly capable of stopping a missile strike from any adversary anywhere in the world.

President Trump suggests it could protect the United States from a nuclear attack. But in reality, the Golden Dome is fool's gold. It will make us poor, less secure, and more isolated. It is a gold-plated boondoggle that will enrich defense contractors and ignite a new nuclear arms race.

The Golden Dome is a trillion-dollar mistake in the making. It will be much more effective at wasting taxpayer dollars than wasting any missiles. It is a defense contractor's dream and a taxpayer's nightmare.

The potential costs are astronomical. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimated that even a limited system against just two—two—incoming missiles, let's just say from the Soviet Union—would require 2,000 space-based interceptors and can cost as much as \$542 billion. The American

Physical Society estimated that to counter a larger attack of 10 missiles, we would need a system of 40,000 interceptors, costing about \$1 trillion. And a system to defend against hundreds of incoming missiles from Russia or China would cost trillions more.

As Senator TIM SHEEHY from Montana said, the system “will likely cost in the trillions, if and when, Golden Dome is completed.”

President Trump has pitched this Golden Dome as a \$175 billion project and, so far, Congress has approved \$25 billion as part of the reconciliation bill, plus billions more in the Defense authorization bill. And that is just a drop in the bucket. But by the way, the bucket has a hole in the bottom. So this money is just going in and going to waste.

They want to add trillions more to something that won't work; it will make us more vulnerable; the Soviets and the Chinese will be responding; and it is just going to cost more money with less protection for the security of the American people.

Even worse, experts say that Trump's Golden Dome would be ineffective and alarmingly easy to defeat. And these are three main reasons why it would be easy to defeat: First, space-based interceptors, like all satellites, would be sitting ducks for anti-satellite weapons. Russia and China already have anti-satellite weapons they could use to attack our space-based interceptors. And Russia is reportedly developing a nuclear weapon that could be deployed in orbit around the planet and detonated in space to destroy satellites.

We cannot count on space-based interceptors to protect us because in a crisis, one of the first things Moscow and Beijing would do is to destroy them. And we just saw Putin and President Xi shaking hands this past week—just shaking hands.

Second, Moscow and Beijing have already started to develop new systems to get around U.S. defenses, including Russia's nuclear-powered cruise missile and China's fractional orbit bombardment system. Whatever new space-based defense system we deploy, there is a cheaper way for our adversaries to get around it.

Third, Golden Dome would be no match for our adversaries who could overwhelm the system by simply building more and cheaper missiles.

If we build a system to stop 500 missiles, they will field 600 missiles. In fact, the Golden Dome would push Russia and China to do exactly that—expand their arsenals, reject arms control treaties, and plunge the world into a terrifying new nuclear arms race.

Instead of making America safer, we would be inviting a catastrophe, not just for the United States but for the entire world. That is particularly true given that the last remaining U.S.-Russia arms control treaty, New START, will expire in just 6 months, leaving us with no limits on Washington and Moscow's nuclear arsenals for the first

time in 50 years—no limits on either country. And China wants to move to catch up fast.

Who benefits? Not the American people, not our troops, not our allies. The real winners are defense contractors. SpaceX, for example, led by Elon Musk, is a frontrunner for Golden Dome contracts.

Meanwhile, even if the system could work in theory, we can't trust the Trump administration to build it. The Pentagon is gutting its independent testing office, the very entity that tells us whether these high-priced systems actually work. The office was targeted specifically to limit scrutiny over Golden Dome because, according to one official, the program has “to be successful for Mr. Trump.” So it is going to be in darkness. We won't actually know what is going on because they have to get it done for Mr. Trump.

But that just leads to problems because, ultimately, overconfidence breeds hubris and hubris breeds disaster. That is what they are setting up. That is not national security; that is corruption, pure and simple.

History should have taught us this lesson. We have seen this movie before. The original Reagan-era “Star Wars” program burned through \$400 billion without producing an effective defense for our country. Forty years later, despite decades of research, technology still can't deliver on the fantasy of a perfect missile shield. Golden Dome is just “Star Wars” with a brandnew name but a much higher pricetag for the American taxpayer with the same limited security for our people.

What is worse, it violates decades of bipartisan policy. Since 1999, Congress has agreed that U.S. missile defenses should only be designed to stop limited threats, like those from North Korea, not the much larger nuclear arsenals of major powers like Russia and China.

Golden Dome blows up that carefully drawn line with no plan, no strategy, no regard for the consequences because we shouldn't be kidding ourselves. Russia and China will move. It is only going to make the world more dangerous because the system Donald Trump wants to build will not work.

Golden Dome is science fiction, not effective missile defense system. Systems like Israel's Iron Dome have proven useful against short-range conventional rockets. But deploying weapons in space to counter hundreds of strategic nuclear missiles is not only impractical, it is dangerous.

Republicans already increased defense spending by \$150 billion in Trump's Big Beautiful Bill. It is not beautiful, though, to trigger a nuclear arms race. It is not beautiful to have paranoia be built into the Russians and Chinese that have been building even more and more nuclear weapons themselves. That is not beautiful for the American people; that is bad for the American people.

GOP really stands for “Grotesquely Overfunded Pentagon,” without any ef-

fective weapons in their defenses ultimately emanating.

Instead of chasing an impossible dream that risks bankrupting us and destabilizing the world, we should be investing in what actually works: diplomacy, arms control, smart defense. Think of what we could do with \$1 trillion instead of wasting it on Golden Dome: fund up to 2,500 new hospitals in the United States—at \$60 million apiece, we could have 2,500 new hospitals; forgive the loans of nearly 4 million students—average student debt is \$37,850; cancel medical debt for 68 million Americans—\$2,200 a person or at least 230 billion across 100 million Americans. We could get that done. We could help people pay their medical bills. We could build 650,000 affordable housing units in our Nation with that trillion dollars that we are going to waste in outer space. We could build 60,000 new wind turbines to have our electricity come from offshore wind, onshore wind to power our vehicles and the homes which we have in our country. We could provide 37.5 billion meals to school kids across our country. We could fund universal pre-K for the next decade. Congressional Research Service reports from 2021 said it would cost \$109 billion over a decade to feed all the kids in America that need food.

We need to fund education, not annihilation; Medicaid not missiles.

It is time Republicans understand the reality that national security also means health, housing, and financial security. But no, the Republicans and Donald Trump want to spend more on a “Star Wars” missile defense and the nuclear arsenal, among many other things.

We have seen this Republican playbook before. They claim we must cut spending on education, on healthcare—like Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act—on housing, on foreign aid, on climate solutions, but when it comes to defense contractors, they open the purse strings, pouring billions of dollars into the pockets of their well-connected friends.

It is just shameful that they want to cut Medicaid, Medicare, wind, solar, Pell grants for kids to go to school and then say unlimited funding for the Defense Department for a Golden Dome in outer space that is not going to work.

President Trump says his Golden Dome will “complete the job” Reagan started. Well, it is not going to complete the job; it is just going to start the same job all over again because it never worked for Ronald Reagan. What it will really do is bury arms control negotiations between the United States and Russia and the Soviet Union. It will balloon the deficit. It will boost the bottom line to billionaires and make our country less safe.

That is why I am offering my “Golden Dome is Fool's Gold” amendment to the Defense authorization bill to be considered out here on the Senate floor. No taxpayer dollars should be spent on space-based interceptors until

the Secretary of Defense submits to Congress: One, a plan describing Golden Dome and how much it will really cost; two, a certification by the President that Golden Dome won't start a new arms race with Russia and China; three, a written commitment from the Pentagon's testing office that will have the resources it needs to provide effective oversight of a space-based interceptor program; four, an independent technical review by the National Academy of Sciences on the military and cost effectiveness of Golden Dome.

Before we waste a trillion dollars on an outdated idea that history tells us is a fool's errand, we owe it to the American taxpayers to have a plan, to know how much it will cost, and to ensure that it will work. How can anyone oppose this? Anyone who does is not serious about protecting our country. They are selling you fool's gold.

Sadly, we listened to another fool before. We paid \$400 billion for Reagan's Star Wars fantasy and got nothing. Are we really going to buy into that same program again?

This is dangerous spending: nuclear weapons we don't need and missile defenses that don't defend but will provoke others into building more nukes and aiming them directly at us. Real security means investing in our hospitals, our pharmacies, our community health centers, our schools, our communities, our climate change response, to a real threat to America and a real threat to the planet—climate change. That is what we should be doing.

Real security means funding public schools, hot meals for students so they can learn and grow.

Real security means tackling the climate crisis head-on—building a clean energy future here at home and breaking the grip of the fossil fuel companies that they have over the Trump administration.

The doomsday that Americans fear in the 21st century isn't being vaporized by a nuclear bomb. It is the doomsday diagnosis of cancer, that is what people are afraid of at home as the Trump administration slashes NIH funding for cancer, for Alzheimer's, for Parkinson's, for diabetes. That is what people are afraid of. That is where the real security is that people want in their homes, where the cures for these diseases are being found—not an evisceration of mRNA research to find a cure for cancer and other diseases.

This medical debt that people are running up, the rent payment that people have to make, the loan payments, the grocery bills, electricity bills—that is what we should be focused on here. That is the real security that people are calling upon the Senate to provide for them.

So let's finally put people before the Pentagon, nurseries before nukes, buses before bombs. Let's not trade real security for a tarnished gold illusion. We must put a stop to this reckless plan before it launches America into the next unwinnable nuclear arms race.

When those Russian missiles are coming across the North Pole aimed at the United States, the least that we should be able to say is that we tried, we really tried to end the nuclear arms race.

That is not what the Golden Dome is going to accomplish. It is going to accomplish just the opposite. It is going to make that nuclear war more likely. It is going to make the Soviet Union and China more paranoid and bring us closer to that day when we see that catastrophic set of mushroom clouds exploding, not just in the United States but all across the planet.

This is the time, this is the place, we are the people here on the Senate floor who have to make the decision to kill this idea before it winds up killing millions of Americans and others around the world.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

### ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act requires that Congress receive prior notification of certain proposed arms sales as defined by that statute. Upon such notification, the Congress has 30 calendar days during which the sale may be reviewed. The provision stipulates that, in the Senate, the notification of proposed sales shall be sent to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In keeping with the committee's intention to see that relevant information is still available to the full Senate, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the notifications that have been received. If the cover letter references a classified annex, then such an annex is available to all Senators in the office of the Foreign Relations Committee, room SD-423.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

DEFENSE SECURITY  
COOPERATION AGENCY,  
Washington, DC.

Hon. JAMES E. RISCH,  
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations,  
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, we are forwarding herewith Transmittal No. 25-69, concerning the Army's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of Ukraine for defense articles and services estimated to cost \$179.1 million. We will issue a news release to notify the public

of this proposed sale upon delivery of this letter to your office.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL F. MILLER,  
Director.

Enclosures.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 25-69

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended

(i) Prospective Purchaser: Government of Ukraine.

(ii) Total Estimated Value:  
Major Defense Equipment\* \$0.  
Other \$179.1 million.  
Total \$179.1 million.

Funding Source: Foreign Military Financing.

(iii) Description and Quantity or Quantities of Articles or Services under Consideration for Purchase: The Government of Ukraine has requested to buy equipment and services to support sustainment of its Patriot air defense systems.

Major Defense Equipment (MDE): None.

Non-MDE: The following non-MDE items will be included: classified and unclassified spare parts; maintenance support; classified and unclassified software and software updates; system modifications and associated modification kits; test equipment; communication equipment and associated accessories; integration services; repair and return; storage; tooling; Field Surveillance Program; International Engineering Services Program; maintenance support equipment; U.S. Government and contractor representative technical assistance; training; engineering and logistics support services; classified and unclassified publications and technical documentation; classified software; and other related elements of logistics and program support.

(iv) Military Department: Army (UP-B-UDC).

(v) Prior Related Cases, if any: None.

(vi) Sales Commission, Fee, etc., Paid, Offered, or Agreed to be Paid: None known at this time.

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology Contained in the Defense Article or Defense Services Proposed to be Sold: None.

(viii) Date Report Delivered to Congress: August 29, 2025.

\*As defined in Section 47(6) of the Arms Export Control Act.

### POLICY JUSTIFICATION

#### Ukraine—Patriot Air Defense System Sustainment

The Government of Ukraine has requested to buy equipment and services to support sustainment of its Patriot air defense systems. The following non-MDE items will be included: classified and unclassified spare parts; maintenance support; classified and unclassified software and software updates; system modifications and associated modification kits; test equipment; communication equipment and associated accessories; integration services; repair and return; storage; tooling; Field Surveillance Program; International Engineering Services Program; maintenance support equipment; U.S. Government and contractor representative technical assistance; training; engineering and logistics support services; classified and unclassified publications and technical documentation; classified software; and other related elements of logistics and program support. The estimated total program cost is \$179.1 million.

This proposed sale will support the foreign policy and national security objectives of the United States by improving the security of a partner country that is a force for political stability and economic progress in Europe.