

But instead of working with us to lower costs and avoid a shutdown, Donald Trump has refused to even sit down and talk about it for weeks until just today, barely 24 hours before the deadline. He would rather watch the country inch closer to a shutdown than to try to figure out solutions.

It is going to be everyday Americans who pay the price, your constituents and mine. In Arizona, more than 379,000 people have reduced premiums through these tax credits. It lowers their premium by an average of about \$475 every single month. So if those tax credits are allowed to expire, that means their healthcare premiums for next year go up as much as 55 percent. That is hundreds of dollars every single month.

And that blows a huge hole in the family budget. It means canceled family trips. It means not being able to sign your kid up to a sports league. It means taking on more shifts just to cover this added cost. And for a lot of folks, what this means is they will not be able to afford health insurance at all.

The estimate is that more than 109,000 people in Arizona alone would be unable to afford coverage. In the richest country in the history of the world, there is no reason why somebody who is working full time shouldn't be able to afford basic health insurance. No one should be one accident or one unexpected illness away from financial ruin. No one should be unable to take their kid to a doctor when they get sick.

But here we are because of Donald Trump and Republicans. This would hurt even harder in rural Arizona and small towns—places like Cochise, Apache, Navajo, and Santa Cruz Counties where there are fewer large employers who offer health benefits. But these are counties with higher poverty rates. It will hurt families across Arizona who finally—finally—got access to care and now they are being told that it may disappear.

It doesn't have to be this way. There is still time to extend the premium tax credits and protect families from higher costs while keeping the Federal Government open and serving Americans.

Mr. President, we can do this. We just have to be willing to sit down and work to figure it out. I know I am.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. JOHNSON. We are behind schedule, so I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 25 minutes before taking the vote.

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

ELIMINATE SHUTDOWNS ACT

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I will ask you, I ask anybody in the Chamber, anybody who will listen to me on C-SPAN: Aren't you getting sick and tired of these government shutdown showdowns—with the drama, the turmoil, partisan bickering, the holding American people and our economy hos-

tage for demands for billions and billions of dollars and more spending that we can't afford?

I know I am. This madness doesn't have to continue. We can begin ending this madness tonight by voting on a very simple piece of legislation: Eliminate Shutdowns Act.

Again, it is very simple. All it does is say, if we don't pass appropriations bills for all of government or any department, we don't shut those departments down. We don't shut all of government down. We do, literally, what the State of Wisconsin has done since the 1950s: We keep spending at last year's levels. I mean, how more common sense can you get?

We accomplish that by enacting 2-week rolling continuing appropriations to fund all of government or any part of it that doesn't have an appropriation passed for it on a rolling basis. I ask the Chamber: Who could be opposed to something so simple that, again, it prevents all this turmoil, all this drama, all this partisan bickering?

Well, my guess is Democrats will oppose it. My guess is also some of our appropriators will oppose it. I have heard some of the rationale. I don't think it really holds water. But what one point made is the problem with continuing resolutions is they fund programs that should be reduced or canceled and prevent important new programs from being started.

Well, again, that will create the incentive—I agree with that, by the way; I don't like CRs either—that will create the incentive, under these automatic rolling 14-day continuing appropriations, to pass appropriations bills. It doesn't in any way, shape, or form diminish or detract from the authority of appropriators or the Appropriations Committee.

I also heard the appropriators want the pressure of government shutdowns to allow them to pass appropriation bills. I guess I somewhat understand their point. But I would like to point out that pressure certainly hasn't worked.

I got here in the year 2011. I don't think anybody can dispute the fact that at least since that point in time—and probably before that—the appropriations process is broken. It is dysfunctional.

In 15 years, what we should have done in Congress is pass 180 appropriations bills during those 15 years: 12 a year times 15—180 bills. Do you know how many we actually have passed? Six—six bills—one for fiscal year 2017, five for fiscal year 2019—six bills. That is a 3.3-percent success rate or, stated a better way, that is a 96.7-percent failure rate of the appropriations process.

During that 15 years, we have had three shutdowns, and we have passed 55 continuing resolutions—55. And people are going to oppose an automatic rolling continuing appropriation? By the way, this year, the continuing resolution that we did pass took us 6 months. It took us 6 months of dysfunction be-

fore we finally passed the appropriations for this year, which, of course, is going to end in a day and a half.

What the shutdown pressure did produce is the pressure to mortgage our children's future for it. It produced the pressure to pass multiple, thousand-page omnibus spending bills. We have increased or suspended the debt ceiling 12 times in those 15 years, since I have been here. Our debt has gone from \$14 trillion to over \$37 trillion. Clearly, this is a broken process. Spending is completely out of control.

I don't think it is going to surprise anybody to find out that I brought a couple of charts to basically make my point. I would like to talk about a few facts, a few figures. This Chamber is generally not really interested in talking about, like, figures, but with my accounting background, I would like to. So let me give you a little history lesson. This dates back—these are 4-year average deficits going back to the year 2001.

You will see, in the two terms of President Bush's administrations, average deficits were \$200 billion and \$300 billion. So the average over his 8 years is \$250 billion worth of deficits. Again, those were unacceptably high back then. That is when \$100 billion or 2, actually, was real money. People were concerned about it.

President Obama came into office with the great recession. As his adviser Rahm Emanuel said, "Never let a good crisis go to waste." And he didn't. So, in his first term, President Obama's average deficit was \$1.27 trillion. That sparked the Tea Party movement. I am part of that. When the Tea Party came, we actually made a difference. We did dig our heels in on that out-of-control deficit spending. So for President Obama's second term, deficits averaged \$550 billion. Again, \$550 billion—that is a lot of money, except in Washington, DC.

President Trump came into office with a divided government, and he had to do deals to get spending bills passed. So his deficit increased to \$810 billion for the first 3 years. Then COVID hit. We went on a massive, bipartisan, "uniparty" spending spree: a \$3.1 trillion a year deficit—\$3.1 trillion. We went from \$4.4 trillion in spending to 6.5 and never looked back.

Now, responsible leaders would have recognized that that was an aberration. We can't keep spending once the pandemic has passed.

You know, back in World War II, we had responsibilities. We started World War II by spending 11.7 percent of GDP. During World War II, that increased to 41 percent for the war effort, but responsible leadership brought that spending back down to 11.4 percent of GDP, after the war, in 1948.

That is not what the Biden administration did. They kept spending at pandemic levels. We averaged, during the Biden administration, deficits of \$1.9 trillion, and we will have a deficit this year of about \$2 trillion.

And the very sad fact is, over the next 10 years, based on the CBO's most recent figures, the total 10-year deficit is going to equal about \$26.4 trillion. That is \$2.6 trillion per year. It starts out at about \$2 trillion and ramps up to over \$3 trillion by the year 2035.

Most of our party leadership says the problem here is we have a spending problem. We don't have a revenue problem; we have a spending problem. Let me just prove that point.

This is one of my favorite charts. It literally shows that no matter how much we try and punish success with the top marginal tax rate—we had, back in 1959, a top marginal tax rate of 91 percent. How much would you work if the Federal Government took 91 cents of every dollar you made? I wouldn't work very hard, personally. It has been as low as 28 percent. I would say, for a brief period of time, we were 72 percent free under Ronald Reagan. Now we are at 37 percent for the top marginal tax rate. But, again, you can see the ups and downs.

What is noteworthy about this chart is that no matter how much you try and punish success, over time, it has been very consistent. We were able to extract 17.1 percent of the American economy in Federal revenue. We have had a high of 20 percent, but that was after the dot-com bubble, and that quickly came back down to a 17.1-percent average.

It is time we recognized that reality. If we ever balance our budget, what we need to do is get spending under control. We have a spending problem, which I think this chart clearly demonstrates.

Back in 2000, we spent \$1.8 trillion—\$1.8 trillion. That was 17.7 percent of GDP. That was the year that we had 20 percent of revenue. We had a surplus for 4 years. We had a surplus for 4 years, and we frittered that all away. We finally broke the \$2 trillion mark in the year 2002, after 9/11. All of a sudden, we were on a war footing. We had to spend more to defend this Nation. Again, we have never looked back.

The absolute high point—other than World War II, the high point in spending was with President Obama, after the great recession, at 24.4 percent of GDP. By the way, that year, because of the recession, revenue went down to 14.4 percent. That is what produced those massive deficits of \$1.2 trillion, \$1.3 trillion.

In 2014—again, as a result of the Tea Party—we pretty well held spending flat at about \$3.5 trillion for about 5 or 6 years. So spending, as a percent of GDP, which is a relevant figure, dropped down to 20.2. This year, we are going to be spending over \$7 trillion—greater than 23 percent of our economy—and we are going to collect about 17.1 percent. We have got in excess of a 6-percent structural deficit. It is clearly unsustainable.

I hear a lot of talk about, "Well, RON, it is all mandatory spending," which is a problem. All of these government

shutdowns are all about 25 percent of Federal spending—the discretionary accounts. We have 75 percent of our spending in mandatory, but you have to understand this is not all Social Security, Medicare, or even Medicaid.

Over the decades—I am researching to see exactly how this happened—we have transferred what I would consider and what probably formerly was discretionary spending into other mandatory. So, this year, we will spend about \$1 trillion in other mandatory spending. What this chart shows are the variants between 2019 spending, plussed up for population and inflation, leaving Social Security and Medicare and interest alone with spending at 2025 levels. If we were to do that, instead of spending \$7 trillion this year, we would be spending about 6.5. In other mandatory—again, not Social Security and Medicare or even Medicaid—we are spending \$239 billion more than inflation and population adjusted for 2019 spending. I don't think we were spending too little in 2019. Nondefense discretionary is up about \$145 billion over fully inflated 2019 levels. So that is not the problem.

There is just one other fact I want to dispute, particularly for defense hawks in my party, because I hear it a lot.

Well, the good news is we have got parity between defense spending and domestic spending. I don't know what figures they are looking at, but if you only consider nondefense discretionary—yes, it increased from Bill Clinton—it is pretty close to 1 to 1. But that was before 9/11, before we were on a war footing. Under Trump, it is 1.64 to 1. But, again, you can't ignore the other mandatory—that other trillion dollars—nowadays. If you factor in nondefense discretionary and other mandatory, we have increased spending on domestic programs 2½ times to 1. In defense, from Obama's spending, the increase is 3½ times to 1. Under Trump, it is 3.65. So we don't have parity.

I am sorry, defense hawks. You have had—you know, lights out. You have lost that battle. We are not even close to parity. Whatever you think you are getting in defense, they are getting 3½ times that in domestic spending. Again, we can't afford it.

So, again, those are just some basic facts, some basic figures that explain our current fiscal situation. Let me go back to where I started.

Here we are again in another shutdown showdown. The Democrats' opening bid, by the way, was: OK, well, we will give you a 4-week CR—4 weeks—and all we are asking is for another \$1.5 trillion in spending. So we are willing to end the turmoil, and we will quit playing games with people's lives for 4 weeks, as long as you agree to roll back everything you passed in the One Big Beautiful Bill and increase spending by \$1.5 trillion.

Is that a serious starting negotiation point? I don't think so.

What I am asking from all of my colleagues is, please, imagine a world in

which these ridiculous shutdowns are no more than a ridiculous relic of the past, where we are not wasting our time and effort and energy and angst over this partisan bickering.

Again, I have to remind you that the Eliminate Shutdowns Act does not diminish the authority of the Appropriations Committee. If we do these rolling continuing appropriations, now the appropriators can get together, and they can find areas of agreement, like we did in this Chamber on Veterans Affairs and Military Construction, in that minibus. Where there are areas of disagreement, we will take some time and find the compromises.

As I said, I agree with the point that the problem with CRs is that they fund programs that should be reduced or canceled, and they prevent important new programs from being started. There, again, is another incentive to do appropriations, and now you have the time to do it. We won't be wasting our time and effort and energy and angst on these charades. These are charades.

I can't predict exactly what will happen if we pass the Eliminate Shutdowns Act. Nobody can. I can predict we will never have another shutdown—ever—in the Federal Government. I am OK with that. Again, I don't like CRs. I don't like our current spending level. I am willing to concede much higher spending levels than I think we can afford to eliminate government shutdowns for all times. So I can predict that.

But here is something else I think could happen: If we are not wasting our time on this partisan bickering over shutdowns, there have been so many discussions about bipartisan appropriations and budget reform, things like 2-year appropriations cycles, where, instead of 12 bills, which, obviously, we can't pass, how about doing 6 and making it manageable? In the year you don't appropriate for an account, you are doing oversight, and just reverse the cycle. I mean, I would even consider 3-year appropriations bills—4 a year—but that could impinge on future Congresses.

Again, I understand there are complications to all of these things, but think positively about what ending shutdowns could do for this body, for this government, for people's lives.

Passing the Eliminate Shutdowns Act, eliminating shutdowns for all time, would be a signature achievement of this Congress. Think of that. We together, on a bipartisan basis, can say we are the group after the horrible assassination of Charlie Kirk. Recognize this is the moment to come together as a nation, as a Senate, as a Congress. Do the right thing for the American people. End government shutdowns. That would be a signature achievement in this Congress, and I am hoping and praying that we do that. But let me be honest. Voting no on this bill—voting no is basically voting yes for continuing the chaos and for continuing to play partisan games with

people's lives and our economy. That is what a "no" vote is. Voting yes would help cement this as a lasting legacy for this Congress.

So, again, I urge all of my colleagues, please put the partisanship aside. Recognize the value of eliminating shutdowns and vote yes on this very simple, very commonsense bill that I think quite honestly the American people want to see passed.

With just a couple more minutes, I sat in the Chamber, and I listened to all the arguments about the ObamaCare subsidies—the temporary, COVID, enhanced ObamaCare subsidies. Nobody is talking about doing away with the ObamaCare subsidies. But for sure it should be pointed out that the reason health insurance is so expensive on the individual market is because of the faulty design of ObamaCare.

We had high-risk pools to take care of people with preexisting conditions. It needed a couple of tweaks to cover everybody. But that wasn't good enough for Democrats because they want a single-payer system, so they threw out and outlawed high-risk pools, and in its place forced people on the individual insurance market to pick up the full cost of covering people with preexisting conditions. That caused insurance rates on the individual market to skyrocket. That is why insurance prices continue to skyrocket on the individual market in particular.

What Democrats did during COVID is they basically removed any participation in the ObamaCare exchanges from many millions of people who qualified. The result of that is massive fraud. You have unscrupulous agents and brokers who are signing people up, just using their name and their birth date, for health insurance that these people don't even know they are signed up for. So they don't make claims. Something like 12 million people on the ObamaCare exchanges out of 20½ million had no claims. It is typical that maybe 10 to 15 percent of people on insurance don't make claims because they are healthy but 12 million out of 20½? That means 6 million don't even know they have a policy.

So we are literally pouring tens of billions of dollars per year into insurance companies for policies for people that they don't even know they have and they don't use them, while we are paying commissions to those dishonest brokers. That is a massive level of fraud that apparently Democrats have no problem perpetuating. Republicans have a problem with that. We want to lower premiums by doing commonsense reforms and repairing the damage done by ObamaCare.

Again, I think what I heard on the floor needed some response. That is my response to that.

I will just end again by encouraging all of my colleagues—the American people don't like these shutdowns. They want them ended. We have a very simple bill—not partisan—that really

offers no advantage to anybody, which is perfect. It just keeps the government open. It gives appropriators time to do appropriating, appropriate those Departments, and end all the chaos and all the turmoil and all the playing games with people's lives.

With that, I yield the floor.

VOTE ON WALTZ NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Waltz nomination?

Mr. JOHNSON. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

The result was announced—yeas 54, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 532 Ex.]

YEAS—54

Banks	Fischer	Moody
Barrasso	Graham	Moran
Blackburn	Grassley	Moreno
Boozman	Hagerty	Mullin
Britt	Hawley	Murkowski
Budd	Hoeven	Ricketts
Capito	Husted	Risch
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Collins	Johnson	Schmitt
Cornyn	Justice	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Kelly	Scott (SC)
Cramer	Kennedy	Shaheen
Crato	Lankford	Sheehy
Cruz	Lee	Sullivan
Curtis	Lummis	Thune
Daines	Marshall	Tuberville
Ernst	McConnell	Wicker
Fetterman	McCormick	Young

NAYS—45

Alsobrooks	Hickenlooper	Reed
Baldwin	Hirono	Rosen
Bennet	Kaine	Sanders
Blumenthal	Kim	Schatz
Blunt Rochester	King	Schiff
Booker	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cantwell	Lujan	Slotkin
Coons	Markey	Smith
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Murphy	Warner
Durbin	Murray	Warnock
Gallego	Ossoff	Warren
Gillibrand	Padilla	Welch
Hassan	Paul	Whitehouse
Heinrich	Peters	Wyden

NOT VOTING—1

Tillis

The nomination was confirmed.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be 2 minutes of debate, equally divided, prior to this cloture vote.

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

ELIMINATE SHUTDOWNS ACT

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, this bill has a very nice-sounding name, but that is about the only good thing you can say about it because what it really does is hand over Congress's power of the purse to Donald Trump and Russ Vought.

If this bill passes, it won't just be Democrats' voice in funding that gets squashed; Republicans will be cutting themselves out of funding decisions because the bill extends government funding indefinitely so Donald Trump and Russ Vought never have to worry about Congress again.

If this bill were to pass, Trump could quite literally refuse to sign every funding bill—even a bipartisan bill—unless it met all of his demands. And Congress would then have to override his veto with a two-thirds vote in both Chambers if we ever wanted to get off the "forever CR" this bill would put in place. No way.

There is a very simple way to avert a shutdown. It starts with Republicans working with Democrats to hammer out a solution. It is time to do that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I will ask you, I will ask everybody in the Chamber, everybody listening to me on C-SPAN: Aren't you getting sick and tired of the shutdown showdowns? I am. In 15 years, we should have passed 180 appropriations bills before the end of the fiscal year. We passed six—3.6 percent. That is a 96.7-percent failure rate.

I am sorry the appropriations process is broken. This bill does nothing to diminish the authority of the appropriators. What it does is it removes all the turmoil, all the disruption of people's lives. It takes away the partisan bickering, and it just—every 14-day rolling appropriations bill to keep any Department open, where we haven't passed an appropriations bill, gives appropriators time to find areas of agreement and work on compromise in disagreement.

Let me be clear, a vote against the Eliminate Shutdowns Act is a vote to continue the chaos and to continue the partisan game playing with people's lives.

And by the way, this won't be the only time we will vote on this. I will guarantee you that if we go into a shutdown. Please, do right by the American people. Vote for the Eliminate Shutdowns Act. We can do away with shutdowns for all time. A simple vote yes will do that.

I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the