

the tax cuts for those billionaires, but now they won't move a muscle to save families from skyrocketing healthcare costs.

Republican leaders can't be bothered. When billionaires have a tax cut expiring at the end of the year, it is all hands on deck for Republican leadership, even if it means throwing working families overboard with a trillion dollars in healthcare cuts families will need to cover out of their own pocket or go without coverage.

But when healthcare is on the brink, when healthcare premiums are being locked in right now—right now—and when they are going to double for our families, Republicans are nowhere to be found. I mean that literally. House Republicans have not been here all week. They are missing in action. They should be rushing back to work on a solution. But Republican leaders seem to be moving in the opposite direction, forcing a vote on the same failed partisan bill for the fourth time.

Mr. President, we are at the table. We want to be here. We want to find a solution. We want to reopen the government. We want to prevent families' costs from skyrocketing. I hope Republicans decide they are ready to join us.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 1337

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, earlier this week, I stood here and issued a very clear warning: Vital cyber security protections that have safeguarded our economy, our infrastructure, and our government for over a decade have now expired. For the past 10 years, these safeguards defended against increasingly aggressive and sophisticated cyber security attacks. Without them, there is no question our Nation is at greater risk of a major cyber security breach than ever before.

We didn't have to reach this point. Back in April, Senator ROUNDS and I introduced a clean, bipartisan 10-year extension of these critical—absolutely critical—security authorities. The Trump administration fully supports this effort. They fully support a 10-year extension. Businesses and stakeholders across industries who count on this law want to see a clean 10-year extension.

Over the past few months, we have heard from more than 100 of them urging us to pass legislation that will give them the long-term certainty of these protections. That is a key point, long-term certainty for these protections, so that they defend their systems and protect their customers.

Every single day we delay reauthorizing this law, we leave our hospitals, our power grids, our financial systems, and more increasingly vulnerable to cyber attacks. We must pass this legislation without delay to restore these vital defenses and protect our Nation. I urge my colleagues to immediately address this serious national security risk and pass this clean, long-term extension today.

Mr. President, as if in legislative session and notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S. 1337 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; that the bill be considered read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, it is good to see that fake outrage is alive and well in the Senate. We have Democrats coming to the floor worried about the government being shut down, although they are the ones that have shut the government down.

Ironically, every Democrat in this body voted for the exact same spending levels that are in this continuing resolution. Last December, these Biden spending levels were put forward by Democrats. Now, you have every Democrat who voted for the spending levels now voting against them without any rhyme or reason or explanation. So, really, to come to the floor and complain about the government shutting down a program when the Senator has every ability to vote in a few minutes to open the government back up is quite fake outrage.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. Let's be really clear, this has absolutely nothing to do with annual appropriations whatsoever. It doesn't have to do with the shutdown. This is a law that expired at the end of the fiscal year to protect our cyber security across the country. It is about restoring a law that has been in place for 10 years. It is not about the appropriations process.

This is simply about national security. So to use that as an excuse and to put our country at risk is simply unconscionable, given the broad bipartisan, bicameral support you have in the Senate and in the House and including the strong support from the Trump administration. This is simply irresponsible, and I think you will find it is basically one person standing in the way of providing critical protection for cyber security for the entire country. That is not the way this process is supposed to work.

I would hope folks would come to their senses, and we can provide this essential protection before it is too late.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, Donald Trump is sending \$20 billion not to America but to Argentina. Donald Trump is sending \$20 billion to Argentina to bail out their economy, and he wants to spend \$50 billion to clean up

the mess that he made by starting a trade war that crushed American soybean producers.

Let's be clear about what happened. It is not that the market is temporarily suspended. That market, in some cases, is gone. And during this period of time with—\$20 billion for the country of Argentina and \$50 billion for a tariff bailout—Americans are paying more for absolutely everything. Healthcare premiums for tens of millions of people are going to go up by a lot—not 10 percent, not 20 percent, not 50 percent—114 percent; 24 million Americans, 114 percent.

The bailout for Argentina is particularly absurd. Argentina is not a key security or economic partner. It is an economy that is in such dire shape that there is no guarantee that we will ever get our money back. It is a terrible investment any way you look at it under any circumstances but certainly in the context of Americans seeing their healthcare premiums increase by 114 percent right now.

You then have a separate bailout for American soybean producers totaling close to \$50 billion. And why? Because of the tariffs; because in one fell swoop, they wiped out half of the export market for American soybeans in China, and there is no way you can plug that gap. You can't come up with—I don't know what it would be—112 individual deals to kind of add up to the market-buying power of the PRC.

When you lose a buyer that also happens to be the biggest country in the world, you don't have a lot of options. At best, it is going to take you months or years to cut dozens of smaller deals, and it is not going to add up.

Just to recap, Trump is at the exact same time incinerating \$70 billion of taxpayer money. But what is the one thing that there is not enough money for? You. There is not enough money for you. There is enough money for a \$50 billion tariff bailout; there is enough money for Argentina; but there is not enough money for you.

They don't have enough money to help a family of four that is going to have to pay \$300 more per month to keep their healthcare plan. They have the money to cover for Trump's economic incompetence, but, apparently, they don't have the money to prevent a small business owner or a taxi driver or an early retiree from losing their healthcare.

This is not complicated at all. Donald Trump's economy is already hard as it is because of his choices to create shortages of electricity, of lumber, of food, of healthcare. Electricity prices are going up at twice the rate of inflation. Vegetables are up nearly 40 percent. Grocery prices are at their highest in 3 years now. People are supposed to find hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars to spare every single month or give up their healthcare coverage and hope they don't get sick.

We could end this shutdown right now if Republicans sat down and

worked with us to protect people's healthcare. By the way, the people who are being particularly hurt by these healthcare premium increases live in Republican States. Now, that shouldn't matter, but we are in politics. Just understand, we are standing here fighting for your constituents. If we were a little more cynical, we would let you stew in the most unpopular major legislation that has been passed in generations. But we want to solve this problem, not just for the 24 million people on the so-called exchange but for everybody who is about to see their premiums spike. Let's sit down and fix this.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, my position on government shutdowns is pretty well-known. There is absolutely nothing to gain in taking basic government functions hostage for eleventh-hour partisan demands.

I hope our Democratic colleagues will relearn that lesson in short order because the American people have plenty to lose from freezing important functions of the Federal Government. Here in the Senate, the Democrat shutdown is taking time we ought to be spending on important outstanding business, beginning with our obligation to provide for the common defense. In particular, our work to deliver full-year Defense appropriations is not finished.

So I would like to talk briefly about what must come next after interim government funding is extended and what is at stake for our national security. The U.S. military is not immune from the disruptive short-term consequences of a government shutdown. But the long-term consequences of going without robust full-year Defense appropriations are far, far graver.

I offered this warning in the spring when, for the first time, Washington told America's men and women in uniform to conduct today's operations and prepare for tomorrow's threats using yesterday's dollars. We put the national defense on a full-year continuing resolution and forced the military services to function for another year—another year—on the anemic defense budget signed into law by President Biden.

A full-year CR is the enemy of readiness, modernization, and efficiency. The armed services want to make their budgets simpler, more efficient, and more flexible by consolidating budget lines. But they can't do that under a full-year CR.

Punting new appropriations directly contradicts—directly contradicts—the Pentagon's stated goal of building a resilient, surge-ready munitions enterprise. The prohibitions on new program starts under a CR effectively put high-priority service modernization efforts literally on ice.

The administration says it wants “flexible and efficient” investments.

Well, there is nothing flexible, efficient, resilient, or lethal about running the national defense enterprise on a full-year CR, nor will a CR send the consistent signal industry and investors need to pour private capital into the long-overdue expansion of our defense industrial base. If you want to increase our Nation's capacity to produce munitions more quickly and in larger volumes, full-year CRs just might be the worst way to go about it.

I don't mean to sound overly alarmed. God willing, the House-passed, short-term funding extension will give Congress enough time to deliver full-year appropriations and release our military from the constraints of the Biden fiscal year 2024 budget. But I want our colleagues to understand what is at stake this fall.

The President has set some ambitious, important, and overdue priorities for America's national security, and none of them—none of them—come cheap: the Golden Dome for America, an American shipbuilding renaissance, sixth-generation stealth fighter aircraft, the long-overdue modernization of our nuclear force. Reconciliation isn't enough to support these major efforts, and neither is a perpetual freeze at the Biden fiscal year 2024 level.

Reviving the warrior ethos, rebuilding the military, reestablishing deterrence—these are priorities we hear about all the time from the President's advisers. I certainly have no problem with rowing in that direction. I am all for high standards of physical fitness, but pushups alone—pushups alone—aren't going to stop Chinese hypersonic missiles. The next major conflict will likely be a test of lethality at very long distances.

That is why I have spent years urging successive administrations to rebuild—rebuild—our global power projection and long-range fires. It is why I criticized the Biden administration for talking about China as the “pacing threat” but turning in defense budget requests that didn't even keep pace with inflation.

The administration cannot afford to make this same mistake. So, this week, I was encouraged to hear Secretary Hegseth proclaim a “Trump buildup” in the mold of the Reagan buildup that helped end the Cold War. For the record, my fellow defense appropriators and I have been ready to deliver such a buildup since day one, and our bipartisan bill speaks for itself in putting money where our mouth is.

Ah, but here is the rub: We can only make it happen if the administration moves from words to action, and an important step in that process is the national defense strategy.

Historically, the national defense strategy is what administrations use to define threats, identify objectives, and propose coherent plans for aligning resources to actually meet them. But this time around, the stakes are a lot higher. A shortsighted NDS that doesn't align with the President's vi-

sion of American greatness and peace through strength could wind up as the pretext to extend Biden-era constraints on our military indefinitely.

Unfortunately, early reports suggest that this risk may be real and that the NDS may turn out eerily similar to the rhetoric of Obama-era officials' who viewed their remit as managing America's decline amid a transition to a multipolar world.

If the NDS ignores the importance of maintaining American primacy, fails to account for the global nature of competition with China, or discounts the value of supporting and integrating allies and partners, it would risk further sabotaging the President's efforts to restore peace through strength.

So I will be interested to read how the Department is applying the lessons and dividends of security cooperation with allies and partners to looming challenges, how it plans to address critical munitions shortages even as its fiscal year 2026 request and reconciliation investment fails to maximize existing production capacity, and how it accounts for the increased likelihood of simultaneous conflict in multiple theaters.

If the administration means what it says about restoring deterrence, it would recognize how plans to reduce security cooperation with frontline NATO allies invite more brazen Russian incursions into the alliance's territory and airspace; it would recognize how China is watching closely for signs of weakening American commitments to European allies, to Ukraine, or to AUKUS partners.

Of course, responsible senior officials who understood the dividends of security cooperation would not have tried an end run around the President to freeze assistance to Ukraine. They certainly would have appreciated that cutting off intelligence sharing to the world's foremost experts in drone warfare might make it harder for the U.S. military to achieve drone dominance.

On that count, I was encouraged earlier this week that the President himself green-lit an expansion of the intelligence cooperation that members of his administration had actually wanted to end.

As our colleagues will recall, the President observed last month that Ukraine can win—the President said Ukraine can win—and unlike some of his advisers, the American people are indicating in clear majorities that they think we ought to help.

By one recent poll, more than 6 in 10 Americans support—support—sending more arms and military supplies to help Ukraine win. That includes—listen to this: A clear majority of Republicans support helping Ukraine. And the recent voting history of the House of Representatives indicates that poll isn't a fluke. Last month, House Republicans voted overwhelmingly—to reject an amendment to the NDAA that would have barred further

assistance to Ukraine. Listen to this: 72 percent of House Republicans—72 percent of House Republicans—including House leadership, said that continuing to arm Ukraine's defense was a good idea.

So the public is behind it. Republicans in Congress are behind it. We know it is the right thing to do.

Ultimately, the President knows that money talks. He understands that valuable things are expensive. What is true in property development is also true in military procurement. There is no way around it. Take the Golden Dome for example. Building anything close to a continental missile defense shield will, by reasonable estimates, cost several times more than was allocated this year in one-off reconciliation spending, every year, for decades to come.

If the Pentagon isn't even planning to max out its budget request for procuring critical munitions in the short term, why on Earth should our adversaries take any talk of long-term missile defense seriously? Likewise, why should they take American airpower seriously if we are only willing to develop sixth-generation stealth fighters for the Air Force but not for the Navy?

What good are multibillion-dollar aircraft carriers if we are not prepared to equip them with aircraft that can survive modern warfare?

At home and abroad, I am concerned that too many of the President's advisers are unwilling to acknowledge the gap between his stated priorities and what they are prepared to invest to achieve them. If you ask me, the name on the front door at the Pentagon matters a great deal less than whether the services inside are equipped and prepared to deter and win wars, and we are facing real, glaring gaps in critical capabilities.

The ink was barely dry on the One Big Beautiful Bill when senior Pentagon officials began to report to my colleagues and I on the Appropriations Committee that they still faced significant funding shortfalls. Given the high pace of operations in the Middle East and in the Western Hemisphere, it is safe to assume these costs are only going to continue to rise.

So there is a lot going on around this building, but, soon, I hope our colleagues will have an opportunity to go on record in favor of investing in peace through strength. We will have a chance to put our money where our mouth is on reestablishing deterrence and rebuilding the force required to back it up. Our investments in the common defense are a signal of our national resolve.

When the American people spoke last November, I don't think they meant for their leaders to mail in a third year of anemic—anemic—Biden-era top lines. I don't think the President assembled his policy and budget advisers with a mind to punt in the face of looming threats. When he hired civilian Pentagon leaders to restore deter-

rence, I think he meant more than just threatening adversaries with a catchy line on camera; I think he meant building the force that threatens them with its very existence.

So if the administration wants a Trump buildup, then let's build one, and once the Democrats' shutdown is over, let's start with serious, increased, full-year investments in our national defense.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. MOODY). The majority whip.

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, America is now in the middle of the Schumer shutdown. Two in three Americans oppose it. Democrats are holding the American people hostage. They are demanding \$1.5 trillion in new spending, and that is just to keep the government open for 4 short weeks. That amounts to \$48 billion a day.

Here is what the Democrats are demanding. They are demanding more taxpayer-funded healthcare for illegal immigrants. At the same time, they are taking away money from vulnerable hospitals in rural communities in my State and in yours.

Under Joe Biden, Democrats opened our borders. Ten million illegal immigrants flooded across. Under CHUCK SCHUMER, Democrats have now closed the government. They did it to give free healthcare to illegal immigrants.

Meanwhile, Democrats are demanding the repeal of \$50 billion of the rural hospital fund. This has been set aside as a lifesaver for our small community hospitals. That is who this fund has been set up to help, like the one I was at last week, in Pinedale, WY.

It is our first hospital in the county, ever. The closest hospital is 85 miles away. This is a needed, vital resource in rural Wyoming.

In addition, Democrats are demanding \$350 billion in permanent new spending for Biden's bonus COVID payments. They created these payments in 2021. They promised they would be temporary. They said they are there for the COVID emergency only. They extended them once so they would end at the end of this year. Clearly, COVID is over, and now they want these Biden bonus COVID payments to become permanent, to go on forever.

These payments are riddled with waste, fraud, abuse, and corruption. We have seen it. We have documented evidence.

Unlike most insurance, there are no premiums, there are no deductibles. Democrats also removed the income limit. The money goes straight from the government to the insurance companies. The bill goes directly to the hard-working American taxpayers.

The Democrats' price to reopen the government is all of those things I have mentioned, plus more.

What we are doing as Republicans is proposing to reopen the government for 7 weeks at the current funding levels. The House has already passed it. Republicans and Democrats have voted for it in the House and in the Senate. President Trump is ready to sign it.

It takes 60 votes in the Senate to reopen the government. We have voted repeatedly over the past several days. Each time, a few level-headed Democrats have joined Republicans in the vote. It is time for more Democrats to join us today.

There is only one person standing in the way, and that is the minority leader. He is holding the American people hostage. He fears retribution from the radical, socialist left. It is easy to see why. The radical socialist left—including Senator SANDERS, Senator WARREN, and AOC—they have become the Democrat leaders in this shutdown. They are the ones running the party.

While the government is stuck in this Schumer shutdown, the people paying the price are the American families. Veterans will face longer wait times for appointments. Members of the military and Border Patrol agents will continue to protect our Nation, but they will do it without pay. Some wildfire prevention, which is critical this time of the year, will stop. Wildland firefighters will remain on the job unpaid. Mothers will lose access to vital programs that help feed their children. Sick patients on Medicare and Medicaid may lose home healthcare services. Small business owners will not receive new Federal loans because the Small Business Administration is unable, during a shutdown, to process them.

The American people, all across this country, are feeling the pain of the Schumer shutdown. Their request is simple. They are asking Senate Democrats to do what they have done 13 times under Joe Biden—to vote for a clean continuing resolution that will reopen the government. All it takes is a few more Democrats—people who are willing to put the country first.

We are about to vote today on another clean continuing resolution, like the Democrats did 13 times when Joe Biden was in the White House, and that is the one to reopen the government. Republicans are going to vote for it.

Democrats have the opportunity today, in just a few short minutes, to do the right thing for the American people. Let's see if they do.

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. CORNYN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, here we go again. Three days ago, Democrats voted against a stopgap spending bill that would keep the government open for the benefit of 320 million American citizens. But because they voted against it, we are now in a government shutdown—something that should be a profound embarrassment to them, as it is to the rest of us who believe we were sent here to govern, not

to shut down the government and deny our own constituents access to the services that government necessarily provides in some cases.

If you listen to the media—not all of the media, but some of the media, particularly the sympathetic, leftwing media—you might think otherwise. But make no mistake about it. The blame for this government shutdown lies squarely on the Senate Democrats' shoulders.

Three Democrats voted to reopen the government the last time we voted, and other Democrats—we need five more—will have a chance to vote here in just a few minutes to reopen the government and to stop this charade.

But the facts of the matter are pretty straightforward. The reason we are in a government shutdown is because Senate Democrats refuse to vote for what is known around here as a clean continuing resolution, a clean CR.

As I mentioned, this is a stopgap procedure so we can then finish the work of the appropriations bills by November and, hopefully, pass bipartisan funding bills that will last for the remainder of the fiscal year, while we are doing other important work as well—hopefully, a National Defense Authorization bill; hopefully, other important legislation.

So why hold 320 million Americans hostage by denying them the benefits that their government is providing by shutting down the government? Why in the world would you do that?

I think, primarily, that this is because our friends on the other side of the aisle are afraid of their base supporters. We know that last time, the Democratic leader, Senator SCHUMER, the Senator from New York, agreed to a short-term CR, which we did 13 previous times because it is a stopgap spending bill. The last time he agreed to a continuing resolution, he was pummeled by his Democratic base, and he is worried that if he does that again, without shutting down the government, without showing some fight, he will be ousted out of his position as a Democratic leader and maybe even defeated in his next primary election by ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ, AOC.

But let's consider the consequences of this shutdown for some of the most vulnerable Americans, our seniors who rely on the Medicare hospital-at-home program and telehealth. Because of the government shutdown, CMS no longer has the authority to reimburse certain telehealth services.

Most of us were not particularly acquainted with telehealth before COVID, but Congress decided to reimburse healthcare providers for providing virtual visits with your doctors. In some cases, that is all people needed access to. So it is an important adjunct or supplement to our healthcare system. But that is no longer available because of the shutdown.

This will have a particularly severe impact on patients without access to reliable transportation, who will not be

able to see their doctor unless they can get access to telehealth.

Additionally, providers who participated in the Medicare hospital-at-home program no longer have the authority to deliver inpatient-level care in patients' homes. I know we are all concerned about the costs of healthcare, but if you can treat people in their homes, that is obviously a better place for the patient, and it is less costly healthcare. But that authority expired with the shutdown of the Federal Government. This means some of our most vulnerable Americans, sick and bed-ridden seniors, have been left without care or were unexpectedly forced to be transported to overcrowded hospitals when it may not be in their best interest to actually engage in that transport.

These are just examples of the real-life consequences of the unnecessary shutdown imposed on the American people by Senate Democrats, holding the American people hostage for their partisan political demands, which I will get to in a moment.

Democrats want Americans to believe that this is just about healthcare. They know that the particular healthcare benefit that they are most concerned about is a COVID-era plus-up of the Affordable Care Act's subsidies that were started back during the Biden administration. So even if these plussed-up benefits were to expire, people would not be denied the access to the Affordable Care Act if they happened to have a policy using that particular program.

So there is no imminent threat to these people or anyone else if we don't address it in the context of this shutdown. So it is a made-up crisis. We know that these provisions expire at the end of this calendar year, and there will be time—and we will take the time—to deal with those, as we should. But based on many of the stories of waste, fraud, and abuse associated with these plussed-up, COVID-era Biden subsidies for the Affordable Care Act, there is an important reason why we should take our time and look at these and reform them where necessary, and that is what we intend to do.

If Senate Democrats really cared about ensuring that the most vulnerable patients in America got access to healthcare, they would never have shut down the government. This shutdown is obviously not about healthcare if they are actually making healthcare worse by shutting down the government. It is simply a way for the Democratic leader to posture at length for his far-left progressive base.

It is unconscionable, if you think about it, that Democrats are holding the American people hostage and some of the very people they claim to be helping get access to healthcare. Yet they are framing it as though, somehow, Republicans are forcing partisan demands.

But the House has already passed a continuing resolution. The only thing

stopping this from making its way to President Trump's desk is a vote in the Senate. And we need 60 votes in the Senate, under Senate rules, and, right now, three Democrats have joined with virtually all Republicans to vote for this continuing resolution, which only will take us to November 20, to give us time to do the other appropriations bills that I mentioned a moment ago.

But the reason why I call the Democrats' demand a partisan wish list is because they are asking for the Sun and the Moon.

First of all, starting with their proposal, anybody listening is reminded of the fact that we just recently passed the One Big Beautiful Bill—since rebranded to the “Working Families Tax Cut Act.” But the proposal made by the Democrats in their alternative continuing resolution says they want to repeal it. They want to repeal the One Big Beautiful Bill, which cut taxes for every American, doubled the child tax credit, and provided innumerable benefits to the American people primarily by avoiding about a \$3,000 tax increase per family. They want to repeal it.

One of the provisions we made in that bill was to limit illegal aliens' access to Medicaid because some States were gaming the Medicaid Program. Not to get bogged down in the details too much, but this is a State-Federal program, and under the Affordable Care Act, the Federal Government pays 90 percent of the Medicaid.

Now, Democrats say: Well, it is illegal to provide free healthcare to illegal aliens under existing law, and it is. But what Democrats were doing in places like California, they were using that 10 percent State share to fund healthcare services for illegal aliens. And the One Big Beautiful Bill, the Working Families Tax Cut Act, put an end to that. So Democrats want to repeal that bill.

They also want to repeal the \$50 billion rural healthcare stabilization fund. Texas is a big State. We have urban areas; we have suburbs; and we have rural areas. We need to make sure that people living in rural areas—or, certainly, outside of urban and suburban areas—get access to healthcare. One of the things we did in the One Big Beautiful Bill is provide a \$50 billion stabilization fund to make sure they could get access to healthcare. But Democrats want to give that away. They want to repeal that bill in its entirety.

I have heard Democrats on TV and on social media say: We don't want to provide free healthcare to illegal aliens. But again, this is the provision that they want to change. They want to repeal this provision, “Alien Medicaid Eligibility,” which limited the ability to game the Medicaid Program, the State contribution to a State-Federal shared program to fund healthcare for illegal aliens.

Now, we know that there are a lot of reasons why people come to the country—our country—illegally. Many are drawn because they want to work. We

understand they want a better life. We understand that. But the right way to do that is through legal channels, not through illegal channels. But one of the magnets that draws people to come to the country is access to taxpayer-provided free benefits, like free healthcare.

But the States like California that game the Medicaid system are the worst offenders when it comes to providing free access to healthcare using this Medicaid Program. But this is the provision that Democrats now want to repeal, the prohibition we passed in the One Big Beautiful Bill, the Working Families Tax Cut Act.

What is more, Democrats are asking us to spend billions of dollars in new spending because they won't vote for a stopgap spending measure. So we know that the Affordable Care Act subsidies—in other words, ObamaCare—are enormously expensive.

I won't spend much time here talking about the false promises upon which ObamaCare was sold: If you like your policy, you can keep it; if you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor; and actually the claim that it lowered healthcare expenditures. None of that was true. And Democrats want to put those subsidies on steroids through the Biden-era, COVID, supercharged subsidy program. And they want to do it not just temporarily; they want to do it for the next 10 years, which will result in hundreds of billions—even a trillion-dollar-plus—of new spending.

Now, one of the things that we did in the One Big Beautiful Bill was we passed \$400 billion in deficit reduction. Why is that important? Because our country now owes roughly \$37 trillion. We are \$37 trillion in debt. And if we don't do something about that, we are going to be in deep trouble in the not-too-distant future. Right now, we pay more money on interest on the national debt than we do on defense, in a very dangerous world. That is unsustainable, and that is dangerous.

But the Democrats want to forget all that and spend hundreds of billions of dollars in new spending on a short-term, 9-week stopgap spending measure. And they say: If you won't agree with us, we are going to shut down the government.

The kind of spending Democrats have asked for would effectively erase all the savings we achieved through the commonsense spending reforms in the One Big Beautiful Bill. It is unconscionable that Senate Democrats are hurting the American people because they want more spending for their pet programs. Yet they are framing it as though Republicans are the ones forcing partisan demands.

That is false. All we are asking them to do is to keep the government open and pass the short-term continuing resolution that has already been passed by the House of Representatives.

The Democratic leader said, 2 days ago, on the floor:

Republicans have tried to stick us with a partisan CR that fails to protect Americans' healthcare.

Three days ago, the vice chair of the Appropriations Committee said:

Instead of talking with us about addressing healthcare . . . Republicans decided to pass a partisan continuing resolution.

Again, that is false. They said they don't want to fund illegal aliens. They say it is a partisan continuing resolution we insist on. Both of those are false. The continuing resolution proposed by Republicans has already passed the House of Representatives. It does not include partisan demands.

If Democrats do not want to pass a clean continuing resolution, what are they proposing? Well, a partisan continuing resolution. And I have talked about some of the provisions. The alternative continuing resolution that Democrats are proposing would not only repeal the One Big Beautiful Bill, effectively, but they make other partisan demands on top of that. The Democrat CR would eliminate provisions of the One Big Beautiful Bill that are critical to putting our fiscal condition back on track, as I mentioned a moment ago.

In the Medicaid Program, we tightened eligibility. We added work requirements for able-bodied adults. We required stricter eligibility reporting and ensured that illegal immigrants do not get free healthcare benefits. The One Big Beautiful Bill was a critical step toward ensuring that Medicaid is there for the people who truly need it: the elderly, children, the disabled, not able-bodied adults.

Democrats have claimed over and over again they are not attempting to fund healthcare for illegal aliens, but as I have demonstrated, that is not true. Their proposed continuing resolution repeals the exact provisions of the One Big Beautiful Bill that prevented illegal aliens from receiving those benefits.

Just for those who want to read it for themselves, this is section 2141 of the Democrats' proposed continuing resolution. It strikes section 71109 of the One Big Beautiful Bill. This is a provision that limits eligibility requirements and Federal payments to States that allow medical assistance for illegal aliens.

Medicaid has always been intended to be a lifeline to the most vulnerable Americans when it comes to their health insurance, but over the last decades it has become bloated with waste, fraud, and abuse. We cannot continue to serve the most vulnerable Americans for whom Medicaid was originally designed if we are going to be subsidizing other people, like able-bodied adults, who should be capable of contributing themselves. Further, extending these subsidies without reform would continue contributing to the ballooning costs of healthcare, now roughly 18 percent of our entire economy.

This is the same problem we have had with ballooning costs in higher education. The more the government subsidizes, the more bloated that industry becomes; and, consequently, the

providers raise prices, and those services become less affordable to ordinary middle-class Americans who would not otherwise rely on government benefits.

The Republican reforms to Medicaid in the One Big Beautiful Bill put the most vulnerable Americans first, but Democrats have refused to vote for a clean continuing resolution and, instead, demanded that Republicans repeal these monumental reforms before allowing the lights to stay on.

Democrats are also demanding to extend the enhanced Affordable Care Act subsidies, which are really Obamacare on steroids, which don't even expire until the end of this year. We will get to that, believe me, before the end of the year, but to hold this short-term stopgap spending bill hostage is really unconscionable.

To anyone who says that Republicans are proposing a partisan continuing resolution while Democrats are doing everything they can to keep the government open, I hope I have made it clear that the reality is just the opposite. Republicans do not want a shutdown.

Shutdowns don't benefit anybody, and the same problem that caused the government to shut down is there staring you in the face when government is reopened. I think we have learned that from hard experience.

A poison pill-packed continuing resolution is simply not the solution. So I hope we can get five more Democrats to join three other Democrats who have already voted to keep the government open to vote this afternoon in just a few minutes and reopen the government for the benefit of all Americans.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak up to 10 minutes prior to the scheduled roll-call vote.

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

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF CHOOSE RESPECT DAY

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam President, I am here on the floor today to ask unanimous consent to pass a very important resolution that I try to move forward every year. It is my Choose Respect Day resolution.

I want to thank Senator SCHIFF, my lead cosponsor on the other side of the aisle. And it is to kick off also Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

As a former AG like myself, this is really important to me and my State. I come down on the floor a lot to brag about the great State of Alaska in so many different areas, but this is one area where I don't like to brag about Alaska because there is not much to brag about. We have some of the highest rates of domestic violence and sexual assault than anyplace in the country—really bad.