

To put him in such a powerful position as OMB, to put the man who was the architect of Project 2025 as head of OMB, to put the man who has one of the worst ideologies in the worst position is just a real dereliction to what America needs and America believes in.

I strongly urge my colleagues to reconsider and vote no.

I am proud that every Democrat will vote against this awful, awful choice.

Mr. President, now, I yield 5 minutes of my postcloture debate time to Senator WARNER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right.

The Senator from Delaware.

TRUMP EXECUTIVE ORDERS

Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER. Mr. President, I would hope I would be standing here today talking about lowering costs for Americans or tackling the housing crisis. Or, as the former secretary of labor in Delaware, I thought I would be standing here talking about jobs and the economy.

Unfortunately, the actions over the last 2 weeks have cast a long shadow over our work and our discourse in this body, and instead of speaking about lowering the cost of goods or the housing crisis or jobs, I stand before you armed with the voices of Delawareans. Instead, today, I am speaking about the actions of the Trump administration that are sowing fear, confusion, and chaos in homes and workplaces across America and around the world.

But know this: I stand before you filled with a spirit of love for my constituents and my great State and also for my country. Like many of my colleagues here today, my goal is to highlight how these things that are occurring are impacting my State but also to instill some hope.

In the tradition of my faith, there is sort of like a prescription. There are some things that you should not forget. The first is that trouble don't last always. The second is it won't last always if we walk together and don't get weary. And then the third is that joy comes in the morning.

So I am speaking to you, America, as we face these precarious times, at a moment when instead of having a President to bring us all together, many feel divided. But if we hold on together, the morning will come.

I was first elected to the House of Representatives in 2016 and began serving in 2017. It was after finding and marrying and then losing the love of my life to blood clots. My husband Charles went on a business trip, played a game of basketball, ruptured his Achilles tendon, and blood clots went to his heart and lungs. And at the age of 52, this vegetarian who worked out every day left my life. I remember that pain, that heartache, like it was yesterday. I understood viscerally what the word "heartbreak" really means.

But almost a year after Charles's passing—it was the fall of 2015—I was sort of just on autopilot in the grocery

store, and I saw a dad with three kids in front of me put back grapes because they were \$9. It snapped me out of my own pain, and it made me realize how blessed I am—I am going to be OK—but a lot of other people were hurting, a lot of other people were struggling.

And I decided at that time, having never run for anything in my life, to run for the House of Representatives. And I won.

Today, I stand before you, and I see that dad and those kids, and I think about all that we have been through over the past couple of weeks and ask: Have these actions made his or his children's lives better, more prosperous, safer, or at peace? I would venture to say no.

Let's recap just a small portion of the past few weeks in the Trump administration 2.0. Last week, the administration sent a memo—here is the memo—from the Office of Management and Budget directing critical Agencies to freeze Federal tax dollars, the taxpayers' dollars, from being spent on critical services and programs approved by Congress.

This blatantly unconstitutional directive had and has the potential to cause massive harm to Delawareans and has sown nothing but confusion and chaos for all Americans. Police and fire departments up and down the State of Delaware could go unfunded. Military families stationed at Dover Air Force Base could lose access to critical programs. Construction projects with shovels in the ground could go unfinished as workers are laid off. Community health centers may be unable to provide critical primary care.

As a matter of fact, just yesterday, as I gave a speech before the National Association of Community Health Centers, the health centers in the State of Florida were closed.

Opioid overdoses could rise as prevention programs end. Children of working families could go hungry when free lunch programs stop.

These are not partisan programs. In fact, many of these are popular bipartisan initiatives. They are exactly what the vast majority of Americans want our government to be funding. But with the stroke of a pen, President Trump tried to defund programs already signed into law, making Delaware and every other State across the country less safe, less healthy, and less stable.

And to make matters worse, when the pressure mounted from the people, Members of this Chamber, the attorneys general around the country who fought in the courts, Federal judges stepped in and halted the freeze, and then the administration doubled down on their decision.

Here is what the White House Press Secretary, Karoline Leavitt, posted on X:

This is NOT a rescission of the federal funding freeze. It is simply a rescission of the OMB memo. Why? To end any confusion

created by the court's injunction. The President's EOs on federal funding remain in full force and effect, and will be rigorously implemented.

Let me be clear. If the President wants to have his Federal budget reflected in his priorities, he is able to. He should submit a budget proposal to Congress like every other President has done.

Beyond this unlawful budget freeze, this administration and an unelected and unchecked billionaire have threatened and, in some cases, delivered on massive civil servant layoffs and unconstitutional firings. Because of this, almost 1,500 calls alone have come into my office about "Elon Musk taking over the government."

In Delaware, there are thousands of civil servants who have dedicated their lives to public service, people who care deeply about ensuring we have meals for seniors, services for our veterans, and educational opportunities for our children.

This past year's budget was debated, negotiated, and agreed upon on a bipartisan basis. I remember it clearly, as negotiations lasted right up until almost Christmas Day. While I was still a Member of the House, we worked to avoid a harmful government shutdown.

That brings us to this moment. Tonight, this Chamber will vote on the leading architect of Project 2025. The actions we are seeing are part of the blueprint. The funds are critical taxpayer dollars used to conduct vital services that our communities rely on.

Yet this administration is disregarding the law and the Constitution. Why? Some say to give tax breaks not to all, but to billionaires—or, as I call it, reverse Robin Hood. From USAID to the Department of Labor to Treasury to the thought of abolishing the Department of Education, everyone will be impacted.

Let's take a look at what could be on the chopping block if those things that we already approved don't go into effect.

Public safety: Grants for law enforcement and homeland security activities will cease.

Disaster relief: As many communities are struggling after severe natural disasters, most recently in Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, and California.

Infrastructure projects: Our roads, our bridges, our ports, and more. Public transit could be halted, including projects already under construction.

Combating fentanyl: The crisis that we see right now in our communities of substance use disorders, this could be impacted.

Biomedical research: There will be immediate pauses on all funding for critical health research, including research on such important diseases like cancer, Alzheimer's, and diabetes.

Head Start and childcare could be affected: Funding for Head Start Programs that provide comprehensive early childhood education for more

than 800,000 kids and their families could be cut off. Teachers and staff would not get paid, and programs may not be able to stay open, even in our K-12 systems. The programs for children with disabilities, the children who have needs, will be impacted.

And as the former secretary of labor in Delaware, I can tell you our higher ed and our job training programs could be affected, from student loans to Pell grants.

Health services: Federal funding for community health centers that provide healthcare for over 30 million Americans will be immediately frozen, creating chaos for patients trying to get their prescriptions, a regular checkup, and more. These health centers that are trusted by so many are concerned and fearful that they might not be able to provide the care that they know their patients need and deserve.

Small businesses: The Small Business Administration would have to halt all of their services to small businesses that might be in ravaged communities like North Carolina, Texas, and Florida.

Our veterans, who have served us so mightily: Federal grants to help veterans in rural areas access healthcare and grants to help veterans get other critical services, including suicide prevention resources, transition assistance, and housing for homeless veterans could be cut off.

Needless to say, this freeze would cause devastation in our communities.

Last week, my colleagues in Delaware, as part of our congressional delegation—Senator CHRIS COONS and Congresswoman SARAH MCBRIDE joined with myself; our Governor; our mayor; our attorney general, Kathy Jennings; our Governor, Matt Meyer; and over 250 other statewide officials and leaders to talk about what we were hearing from Delawareans.

These folks in State and local government, education, the nonprofit sector and more were concerned about this directive, and we assured them that we are working to address their concerns together.

Again, I just want to say that again. Overnight, 250 organizations and partners got on a Zoom to talk about the impact and what we can do together.

We had spoken to our attorney general, Kathy Jennings, about her prompt legal action against this unconstitutional directive and are grateful for her partnership, as well as all of the attorneys general across the country who are fighting back in the courts.

And the phones in our offices have been ringing off the hook. We are hearing from Delawareans that are nervous about how these things will impact their everyday lives.

I would like to share just a portion of what my team and I have heard.

First, from our Attorney General Kathy Jennings. She provided a statement:

For Delawareans, federal funds are not just money on a balance sheet. They are public

safety. They are health care, housing, and heating. They are preschool and infrastructure. They are the medical research that gives our loved ones a glimmer of hope when they get sick and conventional treatment fails.

This is not a game. These are promises that the United States made to Americans. Breaking those promises is stunningly indifferent to millions of people's lives, including millions across the country who voted for President Trump.

The impact in Delaware has not just been seen as hypothetical.

On Tuesday, February 4, the Delaware Department of Natural Resources & Environmental Control received an e-mail [from] the U.S. Department of Energy . . . requesting receipt of its earlier directive to cease federal funding. So eight days after issuing the OMB memo, six days after trying to walk it back, and four days after being told by a judge to cease and desist, the Trump administration is still creating confusion and uncertainty regarding our ability to draw on obligated federal funds.

That's not all. As of yesterday, as of February 5, the Delaware Department of Health & Social Services still could not access grant funds to protect children from lead paint poisoning. Let me repeat that: one week after the administration supposedly rescinded its OMB memo, and four days after a federal judge told them to cease and desist, the Trump Administration was still withholding funds that keep five-year-olds safe from lead paint. Not Democrats, not Republicans—five-year-olds.

This kind of gamesmanship is no way to run a government. It is immoral. It is illegal. And it is going to hurt people.

The second is a letter from our Governor Matt Meyer:

Honorable Members of the United States Senate,

I write to you today not as a blue or red state governor but as a public servant. I am deeply concerned for the well-being of the people of Delaware and our nation. President Trump's recent executive order freezing federal funding has the potential to place an unprecedented strain on our communities, our institutions, and our citizens, who rely on these critical resources for their daily lives.

This funding freeze has already reverberated throughout our state, creating chaos at the thought of jeopardizing essential programs that serve our most vulnerable populations. Federal grants supporting healthcare, education, infrastructure, and public safety are at stake—potentially leaving our agencies scrambling to provide the services our people need and deserve.

This topic is not a matter of political ideology, but of governance, responsibility, and duty to the American people. The federal funds in question are not mere numbers on a budget sheet; they represent meals for children, medical care for seniors, and security for families. A prolonged freeze on these resources will only exacerbate economic instability, stifle job growth, and erode our people's trust in their government.

I am going to say that one again:

A prolonged freeze on these resources will only exacerbate economic instability, stifle job growth, and erode our people's trust in their government."

I urge this Senate to act swiftly and decisively to mitigate the potentially devastating impact of this funding freeze. Whether through [legislation], bipartisan negotiations, or direct engagement with the administration, we must ensure that our states have the resources to serve the people effectively.

Delaware cannot afford to wait. The American people cannot afford to wait. I implore you to put aside political differences and work together in the best interest of the citizens who have entrusted us with their futures. The time to act is now.

The third is from Dr. Tony Allen, president of Delaware State University, our HBCU, a premier HBCU in the country. And I will read some excerpts from his statement:

On the federal grant pause, the short-term risk is upwards of \$10 million [for DSU], which would significantly impact our ability to operate through the end of [this] fiscal year. Delays impact cash flow.

In the long term, though, our \$30 million in federal grant funding, including almost the whole of our research portfolio, would have devastating impacts on undergraduate research experience and faculty scholarship, not to mention the related contributions to the local community.

Finally, financial aid is a big mystery and could be over \$75 million if not dealt with effectively. We have drawn down most of our financial aid for the year. We do have tranches that can be included before June 30.

But Dr. Allen describes the impact on these pauses and the grants and the loans, and if this continues, what it would mean. It would be significant.

For context, about 71 percent of [Delaware State University's] students are Pell eligible.

This could have impacts not only for those students in this present moment, but as Dr. Allen said, even for the surrounding community to the school. Whether they have the students there who can then go on to patronize different restaurants and shops and be a part of society; the professors who are there, whether they will have the dollars to do the research that is necessary.

This will have profound impacts on all of us.

I also want to share a statement and information from our—it is called the Delaware Alliance for Nonprofit Advancement. We affectionately, in Delaware, call it DANA, and DANA is headed up by Sheila Bravo, the president, and she sent a few-page letter with some of the impacts and some of the concerns that the nonprofits in our State have.

Delaware nonprofits have shared the following impacts to their organizations and the people they serve should their federal funding be reduced or eliminated.

And I just want to say, as a person who headed up a nonprofit in the State of Delaware—I was CEO of the Urban League—as a nonprofit, you depend on some stability, just like the for-profits, just like a big business. You need stability. You need to know what to expect from your budget, how to hire people, and so how to even provide the services.

These groups are impacted on a daily basis in the lives of Delawareans.

Providing vital assistance to at-risk and vulnerable populations, including our seniors, children, new mothers, the unhoused, and those dealing with substance abuse issues.

For many of these groups, federal funding is a lifeline that allows them to continue

serving these residents. Any decrease or elimination in funding could be catastrophic. Should these organizations close their doors, seniors would go hungry, people facing mental health crises would not have critical assistance, at-risk children would be more vulnerable to abuse, justice-involved individuals would be far more likely to re-offend, and sexual assault survivors would be forced to deal with their trauma alone.

Please note, that some of these stories below have been submitted anonymously for fear of retaliation for vocalizing their concerns.

That is another big concern to folks. They are concerned that if their information—their private information—is available to folks that don't even have security background clearances or who aren't trusted, what might that mean to them, what might that mean to their organization.

Anonymous:

The two [Victims of Crime Act] grants covered the personnel cost to two sexual assault therapists who service victims and survivors, including teens. The [Sexual Assault Services Formula] grant [program] covers the personnel and operational costs to the Crisis Helpline and Rape crisis service that includes four staff members listed on the grant.

So imagine—imagine a victim of sexual assault not having a hotline to call into. There not being someone there who is trained and understands and can provide the resources and the services. Imagine that.

What they said at the end of their comments to me was “no funding, no service.”

Another was Impact Life. They said to me:

The loss of federal funds would significantly impact our ability to continue offering vital programs such as Harm Reduction, Pregnant & Parenting Women, and Building Communities of Recovery, as well as halt the building and renovation of two new recovery homes.

Now, I don't know about you, but I think every single person has been touched in this country by someone who has been a victim of substance use disorders. And so the thought of these programs not being there is unconscionable.

These programs are essential to the health and well-being of our community, and the loss of funding would make it incredibly difficult, if not impossible, to continue or supplant them.

Nearly 60 percent of our organization's programs are at risk, which would drastically reduce our capacity to serve those in need. Last year, Impact Life served over 16,000 people in Delaware.

So 16,000—that might not be a lot to some other States. That is a lot of people to the State of Delaware. That is a lot of families that will be impacted.

Without these crucial federal funds, we would be unable to provide the level of support and resources that our community relies on, leaving many without access to services they need for recovery and wellbeing.

The Delaware Community Reinvestment Action Council:

We will not be able to sustain tax representation impacting hundreds of low-income families awaiting a refund.

So, again, here is an organization that actually helps individuals to get their refunds. It helps individuals to really take advantage of programs that have been in place for years to help strengthen our economy.

And yet and still, this money—because when those refunds go out, that helps support that family. That family can then buy shoes for their kids. They can then pay the rent. So, again, the impact is real.

This one is from Prevent Child Abuse Delaware:

We face the prospect of potential layoffs of at least two personnel of our team of nine.

So they have only got a team of nine, and they are dealing with preventing child abuse, and they could lose two of the nine.

The prospective partnerships which are currently in development with the Department of Public Health and Department of Education in the area of infant early childhood mental health consultation would likely not move forward.

These are things that we already funded and agreed to that these organizations are depending on to serve families and children.

Community programs building protective factors for at-risk families would cease and more children would have increased susceptibilities for abuse and neglect as more parents and caregivers experience adversity and stress increasing their likelihood of entry.

So imagine, not only are we going to cut the programs, but then we are also going to lay off or fire their parents, which would, I think, lead to more trauma and more stress and more economic hardship and also lead into the child welfare system and the criminal justice system.

If we say we are about second chances, if we say we are about making sure that our country is one where bills like my Clean Slate bill—which is bipartisan, which allows those returning citizens to have an opportunity—why would we endanger these programs?

Then there is The Way Home. According to The Way Home:

We service individuals coming out of prison that represent at-risk populations that are currently being targeted. With money being frozen across the board, their basic needs (housing, transportation, and food) make them extremely vulnerable to violate their probation and be placed back into prison.

The Delaware Regional Dream Center, which also talks about their staffing needs; Project New Start, which also talks about 100 percent of the justice-involved individuals that they serve by their agency, it is provided by this Federal funding.

And the Modern Maturity Center in Delaware:

Without the funding identified above, the Modern Maturity Center will not be in a position to provide adult day care services, caregiver resource services, or senior employment opportunities. The administration of the SNAP program will have to be discontinued. This would remove the opportunity for Seniors to apply for the supplemental

food assistant at the Modern Maturity Center. The largest impact on the community will come through the Nutrition Services program. Every day, the Modern Maturity Center provides meals to approximately 2,000 Seniors in Kent County [DE]. Without this funding . . . [it] could be discontinued.

I could go on. The Coalition For a Safer Delaware: Delaware relies on it for suicide prevention, domestic violence intervention, community violence programs. We passed legislation in a bipartisan way to deal with safer communities. They need the money.

And then the Freedom Center For Living Independent—again, they will feel the impact; our citizens with disabilities as well.

The HELP Initiative is also another one. I told you how these misguided actions would impact families, workers, seniors, people with disabilities, and many others in my State. But we must meet these words with action. We must keep the pressure on because we know that, in this moment, it is all hands on deck.

Delawareans know that I have a proven track record of working across the aisle. It has been my top priority in serving in the House to find bipartisan solutions and to work on behalf of Delaware and the American people. And my top priority is to continue to do that and have it front and center in the U.S. Senate.

It is why, after seeking out the voices of Delawareans and asking the President's nominees the questions that we needed to ask, I am so committed to making sure that we continue this fight.

Within the past few weeks, many promises have been broken, and we see the recklessness on display of these harmful things and what they will do to our communities. So I stand here today to say that I am voting no on Vought. I am voting no on Vought.

And I will do everything—everything—in my power to stand up for the people of Delaware and to deliver—even when it feels dark—bright hope.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF THE VICTIMS OF THE TRAGIC MID-AIR COLLISION BETWEEN AMERICAN AIRLINES FLIGHT 5342 AND UNITED STATES ARMY AVIATION BRIGADE PRIORITY AIR TRANSPORT 25 ON JANUARY 29, 2025

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I appear before the U.S. Senate today to ask for support and for adoption of a resolution honoring the memory of 67 lives that were lost in a tragic accident that occurred last week over the Potomac River and to recognize the heroic efforts of hundreds of first responders who supported the rescue and the recovery operations in the aftermath.

Last Wednesday, January 29, American Airlines flight 5342 traveling from Wichita, KS, to Washington, DC, and