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Senate

The Senate met at 11 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Our Father, be with us not only in great moments of experience but also during mundane and common tasks.

As Thanksgiving beckons, may our Senators mount up with wings like eagles, running without weariness and walking without fainting. Give them the wisdom to be patient with others, ever lenient to their faults and ever prompt to appreciate their virtues. Lord, rule in the hearts of our lawmakers, sustaining them in all their tomorrows. Surround us all with the shield of Your love, as You provide us with mercy, grace, and perseverance.

We pray in Your sovereign Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT RELATING TO "BUFFALO FIELD OFFICE RECORD OF DECISION AND APPROVED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT"

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of H.J. Res. 130, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 130) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Bureau of Land Management relating to "Buffalo Field Office Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan Amendment".

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The President pro tempore.

CNH INDUSTRIAL

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, CNH announced its closure of their Burlington, IA, facility in June next year. This plant has been in Burlington since the 1950s and is a mainstay of the Greater Burlington area.

As a result of this closure, more than 200 workers will be losing their jobs. I have received pink slips before—twice in 1960 from Universal Hoist in Cedar Falls and another time in 1971 from Waterloo Register in Cedar Falls, IA. For these 200 workers and everybody else who gets a pink slip, it is a stressful time for families.

My office has been in communication with the local union, the United Auto Workers there. We have also talked to CNH to encourage future investment in Iowa and urged CNH to be sure to take care of their employees as the employees and the company part ways.

I always say if I could put two words on an Iowa license plate to describe our

workers, it would be these two words: "productivity" and "quality."

I want the people of Burlington to know that I will keep fighting for their community in the Halls of Congress during this stressful time.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. President, on another matter, in this Congress, many of my Democratic colleagues have alleged that President Trump nominates historically bad judicial nominees. Along this line, one member of the Judiciary Committee even described President Trump's judicial nominees as "the most extreme and unqualified judicial nominees ever considered [in] the [U.S.] Senate."

So are my Democratic colleagues right? Well, based on a recent study by professors at New York University and the University of Virginia, the answer is a resounding no. Their study considered objective and nonpartisan metrics to determine a judge's productivity, a judge's quality, and a judge's independence. The study then compared the results across the first Trump administration, the Biden administration, and the Obama administration.

According to the study, President Trump's judges "dominate the field." In fact, the study found that the top 10 most productive judges were all Trump nominees. And, of course, productivity isn't the only metric where Trump-appointed judges outperformed.

Let's take judicial independence. After all, my Democratic colleagues frequently allege that President Trump only picks loyalists. Surely, this must be where President Biden and President Obama's nominees would surely shine and stand out. The answer is the same: No. Again, they don't stand out. Trump's nominees dominate the field. All of the 10 judges rated on independence were nominated by President Trump.

And that is not all. On the metric of partisanship—meaning whether judges voted in alignment with other judges nominated from the same party—

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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Trump appointees win again. Eight of the ten least partisan judges were nominated by President Trump.

In short, President Trump has a history of nominating highly qualified jurists to the bench.

Today, the Judiciary Committee voted for a few more out here for us to consider on the floor of the U.S. Senate. I am proud to say that under my chairmanship, the Judiciary Committee has and will continue to advance highly qualified nominees to serve the American people.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip.

OPERATION MIDWAY BLITZ

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, you heard the speeches. We all did. Donald Trump, the President of the United States, speaking to cheering crowds at rallies, he would say, inevitably: Murderers, rapists, terrorists, the criminally insane, sexual predators that came into this country illegally, we are going to remove them.

He made that promise over and over again. Well, in Chicago, IL, we have seen what those words have led to.

For almost 3 months, Chicago, in my home State of Illinois, has been under attack by President Trump since he launched what he calls Operation Midway Blitz.

During that time, chaos and terror have reigned supreme. This operation isn't just targeting the "worst of the worst"—the rapists, the murderers, the terrorists, the criminally insane. That is what he promised. But American citizens—legal residents of the United States—and immigrants who have built their lives and raised their families here and pose no threat to public safety have been the actual targets.

A court forced the administration to come clean on this: Just how many of these dangerous, worst-of-the-worst criminals are you arresting, deporting in the process of Operation Midway Blitz?

The administration finally released their numbers. Six hundred people have been arrested under Operation Midway Blitz: 600 terrorists, rapists, murderers, criminally insane—except that is not the truth at all.

During Operation Midway Blitz, 16 people out of the 600 actually had a criminal history that poses a high risk to public safety—3 percent, less than 3 percent of all of those arrested. What about the rest?

These violent raids by ICE agents aren't just targeting adults; they are targeting families. I want to tell you the story.

Two weeks ago, Raphael Veraza and his 1-year-old daughter Arianna—both citizens of the United States—were enjoying a shopping day at Sam's Club. The little girl is barely 1 year old. Who would have thought that a simple father-daughter trip to Sam's would turn into a trauma that these two people will never ever forget? But the Verazas became a target for ICE for obvious

reasons: He was shopping while being Hispanic. Enough said.

Listen to what happened to this dad and his daughter because of Operation Midway Blitz of this administration. Mr. Veraza and his family said they were in their car when they heard a helicopter and cars honking. With the uptick in raids in the Chicago area, Mr. Veraza knew those sounds signaled that ICE agents were nearby. To keep his family safe, he decided to leave.

Unfortunately, before this American citizen and his 1-year-old daughter could drive away, a masked agent—masked agent—pointed a pepper spray gun through the family's open car window and fired the weapon at close range. The pepper spray hit Mr. Veraza in the face, and his daughter also breathed it in.

Because of this violent, unprovoked action from ICE agents, both Arianna and Raphael were briefly hospitalized. He told reporters after the incidents happened:

My daughter was trying to open her eyes . . . She was struggling to breathe.

Does this incident seem like a Federal immigration agent setting out to make America safer? Does this man look like a rapist, a murderer, a terrorist, criminally insane, worst of the worst? What was his crime? Being an American citizen shopping at a local Sam's Club? His only crime was he appeared to be Hispanic.

Pepper-spraying a 1-year-old little girl and her father during a shopping trip is shameful and outrageous. If it happened to any of us on my side of the aisle or the other side of the aisle and you heard about this family, your heart would go out to them.

This man was doing nothing wrong. Yet he was treated like a common criminal because he is Hispanic.

President Trump is turning Federal immigration officers into his own secret, masked police force. I see it every day in the city of Chicago as reported. He is violating the rights and liberties guaranteed by the Constitution to all of us, including the right to due process and the rule of law.

Let me be clear. The President and his administration's actions are not about politics, nor about public safety. It is time for all of us in Congress, Democrats and Republicans alike, to put politics aside, speak up, and condemn this growing threat to our democracy. If it happened in your hometown, you would be outraged, and you should be. It is happening in Chicago almost every day.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. President, on a separate topic, America is facing a healthcare crisis that is unnecessary, and it is happening under this President's watch. Congressional Republicans spent the summer slashing more than \$1 trillion from the Medicaid Program. This will threaten healthcare for 11 million people and jeopardize rural hospitals all across America. Smalltown hospitals—many of them will not survive.

Despite the President's promises, prescription drugs are still unaffordable, and Big Pharma continues to rip off American patients. And now, in just 6 short weeks, more than 20 million Americans will see their health insurance premiums double or even triple.

Imagine, if you will, when you take a look at what you paid last month for health insurance, that it is going to double on January 1 or worse. Tens of millions of Americans are terrified to look at their premium notices because Republicans have refused to extend the enhanced premium tax credits that made insurance affordable. In red States and blue States, for families, small business owners, farmers, and Americans nearing retirement, the peace of mind that health coverage brings will soon be out of reach.

With these tax credits set to expire, 4 million people will lose their insurance because their premiums will become unaffordable. They will be one sickness, one accident, one diagnosis away from absolute financial ruin or worse. Housing, utility, and grocery prices have gone through the roof already. Who can also afford to see their healthcare costs for their family double or triple? But President Trump and his billionaire buddies are out of touch. They don't have a clue what it is like to live paycheck to paycheck and what the loss of health insurance means to a family.

As U.S. Senators, we can change that. We have the power to prevent these dramatic premium increases and avoid a healthcare catastrophe, but to use that power requires both courage and compromise.

As part of the agreement to reopen the government, which I voted for, the Republican leader promised to put a bill on the floor—one chosen by the Senate Democratic side—to extend the enhanced premium tax credits. So shortly after Thanksgiving, after we have enjoyed the holiday with our families, Senators will come back to Washington and make a fateful choice for American families across the Nation: Will we sit idly by while millions of Americans lose their healthcare coverage, or do we sit down, Republicans and Democrats, and solve this problem?

Why were you sent here to the Senate? Each Senator has their own explanation. I believe I was sent here to make life better for the people who live in my State and this Nation.

Can we find common ground? Can we reach an agreement? Can we do something that really makes a difference in the lives of our constituents? If we do it, they will be absolutely mystified that what they believe to be an incompetent Congress could rise to the occasion. The answer to this question is going to be closely watched by millions of Americans.

With each monthly premium payment or skipped doctor's visit, patients will be reminded of what we here decided to do.

Wouldn't it be amazing to end this year and start a new one by doing the right thing for these people who are victims of legislative decisions?

I was on the floor of this Senate 15 years ago—it was one of the most important votes I cast, to create the Affordable Care Act. Do you remember what life was like before the Affordable Care Act? I can tell you a few highlights.

If you had a preexisting condition or even a hint of such a condition, you either couldn't get insurance or it was limited in its coverage to a ridiculous level. You also had a situation where most health insurance policies never covered mental health or addiction.

I remember what happened on the floor of the Senate when we debated this issue. Why wouldn't it be covered? Why wouldn't we take mental illness as an illness and not a curse and something that could be treatable?

Well, two Senators stood up and argued to do that. One of them was Paul Wellstone—he used to sit right back there—from Minnesota. He was a character. I loved him. We all did. He was a college professor who took a beat-up, old schoolbus and got elected to the Senate from Minnesota.

A member of his family had a mental illness, and Paul Wellstone argued that we ought to do everything we can to help them and, first and foremost, make sure basic health insurance policies must cover mental health and addiction.

He had an unlikely ally who used to sit in that seat there to my right—Pete Domenici from New Mexico. He had been in the Senate for quite a few years, a Republican Senator, highly respected. He was one of the leaders in the Senate and had a child born with a mental illness.

He teamed up with Wellstone. What an odd couple politically. They got it done, so that you couldn't buy a health insurance policy in this country that didn't cover mental illness and addiction.

They didn't know at the time—none of us did—that we were going to face an opioid crisis and that addiction problems would not be confined to poor minorities but would touch many families who thought they were well beyond the reach of that scourge.

That provision was guaranteed by the Affordable Care Act. The insurance companies did not want to include it in their policies. We forced them to do it. Now to walk away from that kind of protection is unthinkable.

There was also a provision which was basically practical. We said: If you have a family health insurance plan that covers your children, it will cover them until they reach the age of 26.

Why would we want to extend to age 26? Because during that period of time, your son or daughter will be finishing college, looking for their first job, maybe struggling to make student loan payments and trying to get off on their own, and we would give them a helping

hand by allowing them to stay on mom and dad's health insurance plan. It is very simple, it is very logical, and it works. Are we going to give that away as part of the war against the Affordable Care Act? I certainly hope not.

We can make the Affordable Care Act better, that is for sure. There are things we can do to reduce the cost of healthcare in America. One of them is pretty obvious.

Ever turn on the television recently and not see an ad by a pharmaceutical company? I doubt it. Almost every minute, night and day, they are running ads trying to entice Americans to ask for expensive prescription drugs. It is one of the main drivers in the cost of healthcare going up in America.

How many countries allow the pharmaceutical companies to advertise on television like we do in the United States? Only one other country in the world allows that—New Zealand. New Zealand.

Why do pharmaceutical companies want to do that? They want to entice you to ask your doctor to prescribe a drug that may help you. It has reached a point where Americans across the board cannot only pronounce but can spell Xarelto. We have heard it so often, over and over again. To ask a doctor for that drug is not uncommon because it has been suggested to you three times a day, every day, for months.

The American Medical Association and others say this is wasteful. People should be prescribed drugs they actually need rather than those that just might help them in remote circumstances. Little things like that can make a difference.

Senator CHUCK GRASSLEY and I introduced a bill to stop direct consumer advertising on television. It actually passed the Senate a couple years ago. Let's go back and make this part of the future of healthcare in America after—we have restored the tax credits that families desperately need immediate help on.

There is no excuse. We are going to have a new year coming soon, just a few weeks away. Families look forward to it and the opportunity. Give them a better life for millions of Americans by giving them help with tax credits to pay for their health insurance premiums. That is the reality of where we are.

I am committed to this cause because I know that it really makes a difference. As I said before on the floor, at one point in my life, as a young father with a little daughter who had a medical issue, I had no health insurance. I felt helpless. I don't want that feeling to be spread across America because of our lack of ability to reach a compromise. We can and we must. Rising premiums affect constituents in my State, and they affect those in Texas, South Dakota, Louisiana, Florida, Kansas, and Wyoming.

I believe the basic elements of an agreement are achievable. If Repub-

licans are serious about preventing catastrophic premium increases, let's get together and get it done as soon as we return from Thanksgiving. We don't need to hold healthcare hostage and add extreme issues on its conditions to passing. We shouldn't undermine a deal to meet political goals.

Let's do something right for the families of America. They will be just amazed that we did, as they should be.

Global issues, such as proposals by Senator SANDERS of Vermont—Medicare for All as an option to health insurance—are worth a debate. Proposals by Senator CASSIDY of Louisiana to privatize health insurance are worth a debate, there is no question about it. Let us make that the second item on the agenda after—after—we provide tax credits to help families pay for these health insurance premiums.

We can't upend the entire healthcare system in America by January 1 of next year. Let's get the highest priority done right away before Christmas. We have an opportunity. We have a responsibility to help Americans afford their healthcare, and that starts with a bipartisan vote in the Senate.

I hope my Republican colleagues will not waste this opportunity, nor should the Democrats waste it either. We need to make a real and positive difference for the people in this country who are counting on us.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Maryland.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 935

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, on October 23, a genocidal militia called the Rapid Support Forces, also known as the RSF, entered the city of El Fasher in the Darfur region of Sudan.

Countless reports describe how they murdered men and boys and raped women and girls. Credible reports indicated that RSF fighters entered a maternity hospital and slaughtered 460 people—doctors, nurses, patients, and their loved ones.

They turned the city into a killing field, going house to house, rounding up people to torture and murder because of their ethnicity. RSF forces entered a shelter for displaced people near El Fasher University and raped at least 25 women at gunpoint.

Over 100,000 survivors have fled the city, making it out, trying to take the roads. But the RSF has targeted those who try to escape.

The massacre has been so brutal and so bloody we can see it from space. The Yale Humanitarian Research Lab has flagged satellite photos that appear to show incidents of mass killings, with dozens of unarmed people lying dead and sand stained with blood.

In late October, the same Yale lab was told that more than 10,000 people were killed in 3 days.

Human rights groups also report that hundreds of unaccompanied children, some carrying babies, have fled El Fasher to other Sudanese towns, seeking to escape the violence.

Sadly, we have seen this story before because the RSF have a horrible history and lineage. They are part of what is known as the Janjaweed militias, who committed genocide in Darfur 20 years ago, and they want to continue the Janjaweed's genocidal mission of eliminating other ethnic groups.

I do want to salute the journalists and human rights analysts who are working to expose these terrible truths, but it is up to us as to what we do with that truth. And the truth is this could have been prevented. We had warning, and we could have done more to stop it. And we can still do more now to stop the ongoing genocide.

El Fasher was under siege for 18 months. The civil war in Sudan has been raging for more than 2½ years. More than 150,000 people have died, and approximately 14 million have been displaced in Sudan, marking the largest and fastest displacement crisis in the world.

Earlier this year, at the beginning of his administration, Donald Trump gutted USAID and suddenly cut off our humanitarian aid to Sudan. More than a thousand soup kitchens closed overnight. While others have stepped up, the vacuum left by AID's departure means that even more innocent people are dying.

And even as we cut humanitarian aid for the victims of genocide, we have not effectively used our leverage and influence to end the war, because throughout this conflict, we, the United States, have continued to send weapons to the United Arab Emirates, the UAE, whom we know are arming the murderous RSF.

Report after report from the United Nations, human rights organizations, and journalists have provided evidence that the UAE is doing this. In fact, in January of this year, the Biden administration confirmed to me directly that the UAE was providing material support to the RSF, even though the UAE had assured the United States that it wasn't and that it wouldn't.

So this is not a question for debate, and, in fact, if the UAE is not supplying the RSF with weapons, then they should have no concerns about this legislation.

And around the same time that I heard from the Biden administration about the UAE supplying the RSF, the U.S. Government concluded what is clear from plain sight, that the RSF and their allied militias are committing genocide in Darfur.

According to the State Department's assessment, "the RSF and allied militias have systematically murdered men and boys—even infants—on an ethnic basis, and deliberately targeted women

and girls from certain ethnic groups for rape and other forms of brutal sexual violence. Those same militias have targeted fleeing civilians, murdering innocent people escaping conflict, and prevented remaining civilians from accessing lifesaving supplies." End of quote from the State Department of the United States.

So we know this has been going on. We have known it for years. And the Trump administration has reiterated the finding by the Biden administration State Department that the RSF is engaged in genocide in Darfur.

We are not helpless. We are not innocent bystanders in the face of these unspeakable crimes. We have leverage. We just need the political will to use it.

And I should say, I recognize—we recognize—that the RSF is not the only party to this conflict in Sudan. The State Department has determined that the Sudanese Armed Forces, known as the SAF, have also committed atrocities throughout this war. And there are also other external actors fueling the war in Sudan, including countries like Turkey, Egypt, Iran, Russia, and others.

I commend the U.S. mediators who have been trying to bring peace to the region, both in the previous administration and now. But at the same time, we have got to recognize, after 2½ years and after all the bloodshed and the ongoing genocide, that talk is not enough; that we have to use at least the leverage we have and use our influence more effectively when it comes to the UAE and its army of the RSF.

I would gladly work with my colleagues across the aisle to say that the United States should not be supplying U.S. military assistance to any country that is fueling the ongoing war and genocide, but surely—surely—we can agree that we should begin by not providing weapons to a country that is, in turn, fueling a genocide—what we have determined is a genocide in Darfur.

And I should say that Secretary Rubio, during his confirmation hearing for Secretary of State, was asked about this very issue, and here is what he said: We need to "raise the fact that they"—referring to the UAE—"are openly supporting an entity that is carrying out a genocide." That was Secretary Rubio, nominee.

But I asked the Secretary and I asked the President and I asked my colleagues: If we agree that there is a genocide going on and we agree that it is being committed by the RSF, shouldn't we agree that we should at least pause the transfer of weapons to the UAE, which is fueling the genocide in Darfur? And why haven't we done that?

Well, Donald Trump visited the UAE over the summer. Instead of demanding accountability for their role in the genocide in Darfur, he gave away the crown jewels of American AI, and many of our most sophisticated chips were promised to the UAE. In return, a UAE-backed firm gave the Trump fam-

ily's newly launched stablecoin business a \$2 billion boost.

And it was just days before President Trump visited the UAE that the administration green-lit the sale of \$1.4 billion of arms to the UAE.

What about the genocide they were fueling in Darfur? Did he say anything about that? It doesn't seem that he raised those issues during his visit to the UAE. In fact, President Trump said just yesterday in a speech that Sudan was "not on my charts" until the Saudi Crown Prince brought it to his attention.

Really? Really, President Trump? This has been going on for 2½ years. You have been sending military assistance to the UAE that, in turn, is fueling the RSF's murderous rage in Darfur, and it just wasn't on the President's charts until yesterday. What was on his charts was all the corrupt deals that were going down in the UAE.

So here are the facts. The UAE is aiding and abetting a genocide in Darfur. Meanwhile, the Trump administration has been providing highly sophisticated U.S. technology to the UAE, removed many of the safeguards that have been in place to prevent that technology from falling into China's hands, and shipping them advanced technology and deadly weapons, while a UAE state-owned company invested \$2 billion in the Trump family's crypto scheme.

Now, earlier this year, in the summer, Senator MURPHY and I, along with colleagues, filed a joint resolution of disapproval to try to stop those weapon sales to the UAE, sending a message—or trying to send a message—that the U.S. foreign policy could not be manipulated by corrupt bargains. Unfortunately, that effort failed.

If we want to stop the ongoing horrors in Sudan, we need to begin by applying our leverage and stop the UAE from funneling weapons to the RSF. That is why I have been working for years during this conflict with Congresswoman SARA JACOBS. We introduced the bill. It is called the Stand Up for Sudan Act. It would prohibit the United States from selling weapons to the UAE until the President certifies that the UAE is not arming the RSF. So if the UAE is really not doing this, they shouldn't have to worry about it because President Trump won't make that certification.

And I acknowledge that the UAE is an important partner to the United States. But that doesn't mean that even with partners, we shouldn't use our leverage to stop them from fueling a genocide.

I remember many days when Senator Rubio took to the floor of this Senate, and he talked about having an American foreign policy based on values and principles, on human rights, on self-determination. That has all gone out the window in this administration. It seems like a quaint thing, but it doesn't have to be a quaint thing in this body, in this Senate, where Senators can stand up for our values and

can make sure we exercise our leverage to prevent the ongoing genocide in Darfur.

I am going to close with a story about an orphan boy in Sudan. He told the Norwegian Refugee Council and the New York Times that “his parents and siblings were killed . . . in a strike as they tried to flee El Fasher: On a broken foot, he wandered alone to the northern gates of the city until others who were fleeing put him on a truck”—a truck to another city.

Then he told reporters:

Now I'm here alone. At night I find places where people gather and sleep on the ground near them.

I hope someone helps me.

That boy needs our help. Thousands of innocent people need our help, and for goodness' sake, we could take one small step to exercise just some of our influence to end the ongoing genocide in Darfur, and that is by adopting a resolution that Congresswoman JACOBS and I have put forward.

So, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Committee on Foreign Relations be discharged from further consideration of S. 935 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; further, that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Iowa.

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

Mr. President, I object. The United Arab Emirates is a close partner with whom we have vital cooperation on regional security, counterterrorism, and Middle East stability.

Five thousand American warfighters serve at Al Dhafra Air Base, and UAE has one of the largest U.S. Navy ports in the Middle East.

The UAE has used American-supplied military equipment to protect U.S. personnel from Iran and its proxies. The world is seeing the damage Iran-backed chaos can have. And while this administration showed Iran what “peace through strength” truly means with Operation Midnight Hammer, we cannot forget that Iran's goal is still chaos. They still chant, “Death to America.” After all, it was not but 6 months ago that Iran launched hundreds of missiles and drones toward Israel and U.S. military personnel. And while their nuclear abilities have been cut off, Iran has again demonstrated reckless behavior to evade sanctions by illegally seizing a Marshall Islands-flagged oil tanker.

Applying a blanket ban on the export of U.S. defense articles to the UAE leaves our partners in the region unequipped to deter any act of aggression and sends a message of weakness to our adversaries, like Iran and its terrorist proxies. Meanwhile, it poses an unnecessary risk to U.S. personnel, our personnel in the Middle East.

Our allies in the region must have the weapons systems not only to de-

fend themselves and our warfighters in the area but also to deter Iran's reckless destabilization efforts.

My heart does break for what is going on in Sudan, and, thankfully, this is the era of the peace President. As the President said the other day, “We will work with Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Egypt, and other Middle Eastern partners to get these atrocities to end, while at the same time stabilizing Sudan.”

Working with our partners is key to a safer world, which is why my colleagues must reject this legislation and pursue a smarter, more strategic, and unified approach to ending the crisis in Sudan.

And for these reasons, I object to this legislation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I was listening carefully to my colleague and, of course, she raises the question: If the UAE is telling us the truth when they say that they are not sending any of their weapons to the RSF to help fuel the genocide in Sudan, why do my colleagues protest so loudly against this measure?

It must mean that they don't believe the UAE when it is doing it because the pausing in the transfer and sale of U.S. weapons to the UAE in this legislation is predicated on a finding from the President that the UAE is, in fact, arming the RSF. So if their denials are true, then my colleagues should have nothing to worry about in terms of the impact of this legislation.

And, in fact, if they are lying to the United States, that should cause concern.

Now, I agree that the UAE is an important partner, and they have been an important partner in a variety of interests in the Middle East region, including countering Iran's malign influence there. But, colleagues, does that really mean that we should look the other way while they are supplying an entity that our own government has concluded is committing a genocide in Darfur?

Surely, the UAE needs the United States for all sorts of things. They clearly want our AI technology, our semiconductor technology. In fact, as I described, they went to great lengths to essentially provide \$2 billion for the President's family crypto schemes in order to get that American technology.

So this is not a situation where its either-or. We can continue a partnership with the UAE, which, again, says that they are not supplying the murderous RSF with weapons or we can choose just to look the other way.

And I will just close again with this. I remember Secretary Rubio—and I hear so many of my colleagues take to the Senate floor—calling out human rights abuses around the world.

It is always convenient to call out human rights abuses by our adversaries. We all talk about the awful

things China does when it comes to the Uighurs. We talk about what Russia is doing in Ukraine and other places. But for some reason, we cannot find it in ourselves to say to a partner that we value our relationship with the UAE, but we are not going to stand by and supply you with weapons while you continue to provide weapons that are fueling a genocide in Darfur.

What happened to any semblance of a values-based American foreign policy? We can pursue our interests, and we can pursue our values. We don't always do it perfectly. But for goodness' sake, Senator Rubio talked about the importance of human rights; Secretary Rubio, apparently, has thrown that out the window along with the President of the United States.

I am very disappointed that our colleagues cannot join together in a bipartisan manner to just use a little American influence to try to stop a genocide in Darfur.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HAGERTY). The Democratic leader is recognized.

POLITICAL VIOLENCE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, earlier today, Donald Trump shared a post on Truth Social calling for Democratic Members of Congress to be hanged. He also posted a message that said:

SEDITIONOUS BEHAVIOR, punishable by DEATH!

Let's be crystal clear. The President of the United States is calling for the execution of elected officials. This is an outright threat, and it is deadly serious. We have already seen what happens when Donald Trump tells his followers that his political opponents are enemies of the state. Every time Donald Trump posts things like this, he makes political violence more likely.

None of us should tolerate this kind of behavior. We all remember what January 6 was like. We lived through January 6. We have lived through the assassinations and attempted assassinations this year. We have Members whose families had to flee their homes.

When Donald Trump uses the language of execution and treason, some of his supporters may very well listen. He is lighting a match in a country soaked with political gasoline.

Every Senator, every Representative, every American—regardless of party—should condemn this immediately and without qualification, because if we don't draw a line here, there is no line left to draw.

Who would have thought the President of the United States would be saying his opponents should be hanged? It is outrageous. No President has ever stooped as low as Donald Trump—none. He has made political violence a feature of his politics, and if we don't draw a line here, there is no line left to draw.

And, today, he crossed yet another line that no democracy can afford to

tolerate. He must be condemned forcibly, loudly, and without excuses before someone takes his words as permission to do the unthinkable. Anything less enables the flames of hatred to grow and spread.

AFFORDABILITY

Mr. President, on affordability, in less than a year, Donald Trump has gone from promising to bring costs down “on day one,” as he said, to claiming that the word “affordable” is some kind of “new word” and even a “con job.” That is right. Donald Trump doesn’t even want to see the word “affordable” on his teleprompter because it will send him into a tailspin.

Poor guy, he can’t reduce prices. He doesn’t care about prices, but he doesn’t want to see the word because it will send him into a tailspin. If there was ever ostrich-like behavior, that was it.

Here is what he said yesterday at the U.S.-Saudi Investment Forum:

That’s the new word they use, “affordability”. . . . We are bringing prices down, but they came up with a new word: “affordability.”

What the heck is Donald Trump talking about? Does he think “affordable” is some kind of new made-up fancy word? Doesn’t he realize that working and middle-class Americans talk about affordability all the time: I can’t afford this; I can’t afford that.

Is he trying to hide the problem by denying the word?

Does he think that rising grocery prices, rising rent, rising healthcare are all some kind of lie invented by Democrats?

Does he think, if the word is abolished, that people will then automatically, magically, be able to afford all the things that they can’t afford anymore?

When was the last time Donald Trump actually spoke to someone earning a middle-class income or someone who earned minimum wage?

If Donald Trump actually spent time talking to real people around the country, instead of bragging about ballrooms and jetting around the world in luxury, he would realize there is nothing made up about the affordability crisis.

These kinds of comments from Donald Trump give the game away. He has absolutely no conception of what everyday Americans are going through right now. He is on another planet.

It has gotten so bad that he doesn’t even want to listen to people talk about rising costs.

Here is what he said just a few days after the recent election:

I don’t want to hear about the affordability.

Well, he is going to hear about affordability from the American people, above all, because they can’t afford a whole lot of stuff.

And when Donald Trump wants to know why his popularity is sinking, it is because of things like this.

The No. 1 crisis that the average American feels when they sit down and

try to figure out how to pay bills is they can’t afford them, and Donald Trump says he doesn’t want to hear about affordability.

Do you hear that, America? Donald Trump doesn’t even want to hear your worries about your high rent or high grocery costs. Don’t even mention that they are “affordable” because that word sends him into a rage.

It is unbelievable. This President—unbelievable—he thinks that by saying you abolish a word, you abolish the problem.

And the magnitude of this problem is so large. Ask America, Trump: Is your healthcare too expensive?

They will say: Yes.

Are your groceries too expensive?

They will say: Yes.

Can you afford your healthcare?

They will say: No.

Can you afford your groceries? Can you afford the cost of electricity? Can you afford to buy a new car?

They will say: No.

And he doesn’t want to hear about it.

He says extending the ACA premium tax credits, which would save people thousands a month, is nothing but a waste of time. This President is so out of touch with Americans, and, every day, more and more Americans are realizing how out of touch he is when he says things like this.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. President, let me talk now about HSAs and the healthcare debate.

After Democrats pushed Republicans for months to fix ACA premiums, Americans are now about to fall off a healthcare cliff, and Donald Trump has no plans to fix it whatsoever.

Maybe he thinks healthcare is affordable for people. It isn’t for most.

If Donald Trump were smart, he would have worked with Democrats at the drop of a hat to extend the ACA tax credits for at least another year. We offered him that. But, instead, he is telling Republicans to push half-baked ideas like health savings accounts and direct checks.

Let me say this very plainly. Donald Trump’s Republican ideas about HSAs are nonstarters for Democrats because they are completely flawed and woefully insufficient for our Nation’s healthcare problems. If Republicans push this flawed policy, they will go nowhere in the Senate.

First, neither HSAs nor a lump-sum check will do anything to help people afford insurance. If your insurance plan goes from \$1,000 a month to \$4,000, a one-time check isn’t going to go very far. For cancer patients who pay thousands of dollars for lifesaving medications in one month, their HSAs will do nothing—nothing—to help them afford care.

Second, implementing changes this complex would be practically impossible before the end of the year. People are signing up for health insurance right now, and health savings accounts cannot be used to pay for premiums, period.

Third, Republicans talk about “waste, fraud, and abuse” and have railed on insurance companies. But the Republican policies will do nothing—absolutely nothing—about either problem. So either Republicans don’t understand how healthcare works or their complaints about fraud and abusive insurance companies are cynical and disingenuous.

That is why Democrats insist that one of the best things we can do right now is extend the ACA premium tax credits, because when people talk about costs, healthcare is near the top of the list of their worries, if not at the very top.

It is shameful that Donald Trump and Republicans have given up entirely on solving the healthcare premium crisis. When people’s monthly payments spike next year, they will know it was Republicans that made it happen. And more than that, they will know Democrats are the ones who are fighting on their behalf to lower costs and rebuild the sunny American optimism our country desperately needs.

ANTI-SEMITISM

Finally, on anti-Semitism, anti-Semitism in America has reached a dangerous tipping point. Jewish Americans are facing threats, harassment, and violence at levels we have not seen in generations.

As I have said many times in this Chamber, anti-Semitism is the canary in the coal mine. Where there is anti-Semitism, there lurks White supremacy and other pernicious forms of hate.

Three days ago, the President of the United States declined to condemn Nick Fuentes’ hateful views and defended Tucker Carlson’s decision to give Fuentes a platform. The President was asked about his thoughts on the interview. He declined to condemn Nick Fuentes.

That is disgusting. For Donald Trump to excuse and protect the spread of Nick Fuentes’ ideology confirms what many of us have long said: White supremacy and anti-Semitism are taking deep roots, unfortunately, within the Republican Party.

Just as we saw from the leaked texts of young Republicans, just as we saw from text messages of administration officials, the Nick Fuentes saga on the right reveals that anti-Semitism and White supremacy have been growing with disturbing currency within the rightwing and within the rightwing of the Republican Party.

But I know this is not true of everyone on the Republican side, especially not for many Republicans in this Chamber. Therefore, I will soon lead a resolution, here in the Senate, rejecting Nick Fuentes and his White supremacist views and condemning Carlson’s platform of hate and condemning White supremacy whenever and wherever it occurs.

In the coming days, I will work to grow support for my resolution so the Senate can take a clear stand against hatred and anti-Semitism. I hope my

Republican colleagues will join me in this effort and cosponsor this resolution.

Calling out anti-Semitism should not be a partisan issue. In fact, when we refuse to condemn anti-Semitism, when we stay silent and fail to reject anti-Semitic rhetoric, when we normalize hateful figures spewing disgusting anti-Semitism, that is when anti-Semitism spreads throughout society like a poisonous wildfire.

Americans don't want to see that happen. So my resolution will give every Senator—every single Senator—a chance to make an important stand against hatred. The country must see us unite and fight this awful form of bigotry.

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

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

INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, 2 months ago, I came to this floor to warn about the growing politicization of our intelligence community. I laid out in detail how this administration, led by Director of National Intelligence Gabbard, was dismantling the independence, integrity, and credibility of the very institutions we rely on to keep Americans safe.

I had hoped that by sounding that alarm early, the administration might reconsider its actions or at the very least slow its march toward turning our intelligence Agencies into instruments of political loyalty, but, instead, the situation has only grown more dangerous.

I want to say at the outset that this will not be the last time I come to the floor on this issue as we continue to see the unraveling of that independence. I intend to continue making these speeches for as long as it takes because the stakes for our national security are too high to let this pattern go unchallenged.

Since my remarks in September, we have seen not restraint but an escalation—an escalation—of political retaliation, of the hollowing out of expertise, and of the outright manipulation of intelligence. We are watching in real time an administration strip away the guardrails that have protected this country for generations.

I have had the distinct privilege of representing the people of Virginia in this body since 2009. In nearly 17 years, one of the most consequential responsibilities I have held has been that of serving on the Senate Intelligence Committee, first as a junior member and then, for the last 8 years, as chairman and vice chairman.

I always tell our new members that getting a seat on the committee is a

double-edged sword. On the one hand, you get access to things that no other Senators hear, and you see capabilities that would astonish even the most seasoned spy novel reader. But the other part of the edge is you get to see the full scope of threats facing the United States: daily reports about terrorist plots, cyber attacks, hostile foreign services targeting our citizens and institutions. Once you have seen that picture clearly, you don't sleep quite as soundly at night.

It is precisely because these threats are real, persistent, and in many cases growing that I am so deeply concerned about the Trump administration's reckless actions—actions that have left our country more vulnerable than at any point in recent memory.

Just last month, FBI Director Kash Patel testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee that the FBI has experienced a 300-percent increase in terrorist cases opened this year alone, on top of a 30-percent increase in foreign espionage cases.

At the Senate's Intelligence Committee's annual threat assessment hearing, Director Gabbard reiterated that foreign terrorists remain intent on striking the United States and our citizens, that a large number of cyber and intelligence actors continue to target our critical infrastructure, and that these adversaries possess weapons capable of hitting U.S. territory and disabling vital U.S. systems.

Indeed, in an interview earlier this month, Director Gabbard repeated:

Terrorism continues to pose the greatest both short- and long-term threat to the American people.

Whatever one thinks of the individuals delivering these messages, the assessments themselves leave no ambiguity of the dangers confronting the United States. Yet, in spite of these clear and present threats, the Trump administration has chosen a course of action that weakens our defenses and leaves Americans more vulnerable to the very risks its own officials have publicly described.

Since Inauguration Day, the President and his handpicked FBI Director—again, Kash Patel—have forced out thousands of experienced agents for reasons that appear more political than professional—for example, for refusing to acknowledge who actually won the 2020 election or FBI agents being thrown out for prosecuting the violent criminals who attacked the Capitol Police on January 6 or being pushed out for simply being friendly with someone critical of the President.

Alarming court filings suggest that even Director Patel has privately acknowledged that many of these actions may be illegal yet justified them by saying that his keeping his position depended on carrying them out.

The list of those purged reads like a who's who of the Bureau's most decorated public servants.

Those agents forced out include former Acting Director of the FBI

Brian Driscoll, who rose through the FBI's ranks in some of its most elite units, including the FBI's Hostage Rescue Team. In 2015, he supported U.S. Special Operations in rescuing an American humanitarian aid worker, Kayla Mueller, from ISIS. Special Agent Driscoll would later rise to the head of the FBI's Critical Incident Response Group—the FBI's elite team in charge of dealing with terrorists, child abductors, bomb threats, and hostage situations.

For his service, Agent Driscoll was awarded the FBI's Medal of Valor and Shield of Bravery, only to have Director Patel fire him because he would not purge agents whom the President deemed politically disloyal.

Other purged individuals include Bobby Wells, who joined the FBI shortly after 9/11 and spent decades in counterterrorism. He eventually became the head of the FBI's Counterterrorism Division, leading efforts against al-Qaida, ISIS, and other global networks. Notably, he helped bring to justice the mastermind of the Kabul International Airport bombing that killed 13 American servicemembers—an accomplishment publicly touted by the President. Yet the President fired him shortly thereafter.

This list includes Michael Nordwall, who was the head of the FBI's Criminal, Cyber, Response and Services Branch, who led efforts to combat ransomware attacks, online fraud, and sophisticated cyber intrusions targeting critical U.S. infrastructure.

Further, the list includes Ryan Young, who was the head of the FBI's Intelligence Division, overseeing the collection and analysis of all intelligence on domestic and foreign threats, trying to make sure that field offices had the situational awareness to prevent attacks.

Other senior agents were forced out from dozens of FBI field offices nationwide—from Washington to Miami, to New Orleans, to Las Vegas and Seattle. Among those heads of FBI field offices forced out was Special Agent Jacqueline Maguire, who was the lead investigator into the five hijackers of American Airlines Flight 77, whose expertise was critical to understanding 9/11 and preventing further attacks.

Most recently being pushed out includes Steven Palmer, a 27-year veteran of the FBI and the third head of the FBI's elite Critical Incident Response Group.

In just 3 months—3 months—three separate heads were fired.

As head of the Critical Incident Response Group, Mr. Palmer led teams tasked with responding to terrorist attacks, mass shootings, hostage crises, high-risk national security incidents—work that required split-second decision making under extraordinary pressure. He was fired not for failing his duties, not for misconduct, and not for political disagreements about law enforcement; he was fired because the American people learned that Director

Patel had been using the FBI's \$60 million jet at \$20,000 a flight to go on dates with his girlfriend.

To make matters worse, recent reporting indicates that Patel now has also pulled agents off of an FBI SWAT team to provide a security detail for that very same girlfriend—an unprecedented use of some of our Nation's most elite units, ordinarily assigned to deal with terrorism, hostage situations, or mass shootings; thousands of FBI agents all forced out not because they failed to do their job but because they refused to bend the knee to partisan politics.

As if these individuals were not enough, the truth is, the FBI, in recent months, has reassigned between 25 and 45 percent of its agents who handle counterterrorism, cyber, espionage, child sexual abuse, and other critical missions. What have they been reassigned to? Well, they have been reassigned to immigration, while our office hears regularly that they want to get back to the cases that they had been working on and instead are stuck on a detail where they do nothing.

As a matter of fact, data reveals a 33-percent decrease in hours spent on child exploitation cases this year compared to previous years.

Firing agents who investigate terrorists, foreign spies, cyber hackers, and child predators doesn't make America safer, especially when the President's own intelligence officials warn publicly and repeatedly of the many threats facing our Nation.

Just this summer, the ODNI issued a bulletin warning of al-Qaida and ISIS plots targeting the homeland. And just last month, the FBI disrupted ISIS terrorist plots in Michigan and New Jersey that might have been aimed at Halloween. I shudder to think what would have happened if the FBI had missed those plots, if the terrorists had semi-automatic rifles that suddenly let loose on kids trick-or-treating.

The FBI Agents Association, which represents over 90 percent of all active FBI agents, issued a sobering warning earlier this month that Director Patel "disregarded the law and launched a campaign of erratic and arbitrary retribution" and that his actions "make the American public less safe."

This is the FBI Agents Association. They don't make these kinds of comments. How far do you have to be pushed to basically say the current Director of the FBI is making America less safe?

But this political purge is not simply limited to the FBI. Since April, the National Security Agency—the Agency in charge of spying on communications of our adversaries—has been without a permanent Director or Deputy Director after President Trump fired Gen. Tim Haugh and his Deputy, Wendy Noble, at the behest of conspiracy theorist Laura Loomer; the same for the Defense Intelligence Agency, whose Director, Gen. Jeff Kruse, was fired after the DIA provided a fact-based assessment that

contradicted the President's false televised claims that the United States had "obliterated"—President Trump's words "obliterated"—Iran's nuclear program.

The pattern of reckless firings has extended to nearly every corner of our national security enterprise: Hundreds of workers who were responsible for maintaining our country's nuclear weapons, fired; staff managing foreign assistance programs ranging from detention of ISIS terrorists in Syria to air defenses in Ukraine, fired; hundreds of analysts monitoring China and Russia, fired, including a 29-year veteran of the CIA who supported President Trump's Alaska summit with President Putin whose undercover identity was publicly and incompetently disclosed by DNI Tulsi Gabbard; more than one-third of CISA—the Agency established for the absolutely explicit purpose of protecting our critical infrastructure, water, power, and our elections to prevent those entities from being attacked by cyber tools—a third of that Agency, fired, even as major cyber attacks hit State and local governments in at least 44 States, including a massive ransomware attack on Nevada's online government systems in August, a ransomware attack in July on local government networks in St. Paul, MN, and a cyber attack on city systems in Mission, TX, in February—folks are slow to respond—a third of CISA, it is a relatively new Agency but has been making progress, all fired.

The irony is stark: Despite persistent efforts by China, Russia, Iran, and other adversaries, the 2020 Presidential election was one of the most secure in history, thanks in large part due to steps taken during the Trump administration's first term to safeguard our critical infrastructure. Yet now, much of that hard-won protection has been dismantled, leaving Americans more vulnerable than ever.

Cyber Command—which under GEN Paul Nakasone disrupted the Russian troll farms in 2017—lacks a permanent Commander. The Foreign Influence Task Force, stood up by President Trump in his first term to share information with State and local partners about foreign interference in our elections, that task force has been completely disbanded. All the while, the administration's own intelligence reporting warns—and, again, I am going to go back to a quote:

Beijing will continue to expand its coercive and subversive malign influence activities to weaken the United States . . . is likely to feel emboldened to use malign influence more regularly in the coming years, particularly as it fields AI to improve its capabilities.

That is what China is saying.

Russia:

Moscow's malign influence activities will continue for the foreseeable future and will almost certainly increase in sophistication and volume.

Iran's growing expertise and willingness to conduct aggressive cyber operations make it a major threat to the security of U.S. networks and data.

The administration's own comments say these are threats we can't avoid. Yet you dismantle the foreign malign influence center, you fire a third of the people who are supposed to be responding to cyber attacks, you take FBI agents who were working on cyber and stick them on the immigration detail. This does not make America safer.

The truth is, the pattern is unmistakable: Political loyalty is now valued over competence, and the very institutions created to protect Americans are being dismantled right before our eyes.

We can no longer pretend that politics and national security are separate. Every day that we allow this purge to continue is a day we leave Americans more exposed in their homes, on the streets, and online.

The next attack will not wait for Congress to act. The next threat will not ask permission. And when it comes, the consequences will not be measured in polling numbers or election results; they will be measured in lives lost, infrastructure damaged, and national security compromised.

This is the moment to stand up to defend our intelligence Agencies; to protect those agents; to allow the intelligence community to speak truth to power, even when the power doesn't want to hear it; and, frankly, at the end of the day, to safeguard the American people. If we fail that and don't stand up for these men and women who have put their lives on the line, if we don't stand up for keeping classified information classified, if we don't stand up and say to those who undermine our infrastructure by cyber attacks, if we don't stand up for those terrorists planning, we will bear the cost later—a cost that could be catastrophic.

I think we are a better country than this. These men and women deserve our support, and, unfortunately so far, they have not gotten that support. We can and must do better.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. HUSTED. Mr. President, as I said on this floor many times, the government shutdown had many victims: air traffic controllers, TSA agents, and many other public servants, and, of course, the American people themselves who were the most affected by this. Thankfully, the bill passed in this Chamber last week put that chaos behind us.

But that wasn't all that it did. In some small way, the difficult time proved that we can work together to do tangible things to reduce healthcare costs in this country. As a matter of fact, I worked on a bipartisan basis to introduce the SMART OTC Act, which became law as part of the government reopening. It was a good part of that reopening.

The bill aims to make lowering the cost of over-the-counter drugs more accessible to patients by eliminating the

redtape at the FDA. We know that when you can take a prescription drug and make it an over-the-counter drug, prices go down. In fact, on average, in cases where we have been able to do this, it reduces prices from 30 to 95 percent. It was an important part of that provision and an example of a way, on a bipartisan basis, we can get some of these kinds of things done. It is an example of how we can attack affordability with commonsense reforms without adding the debt burden to future generations. I am proud to have worked on that bill to make things better for Ohioans and the entire country.

But the shutdown is finally over. I want to thank my Republican colleagues and the Democrats who joined us to help end it. Unfortunately, 40 others chose a different path, and we wasted 43 days from focusing on issues like growing the economy and making things more affordable.

I have been in the Senate less than a year. I wasn't here when Congress passed ObamaCare or the Biden COVID subsidies that have been used to prop up the ACA exchanges. But I want to be part of the solution. I didn't create the problem, but I am here to be part of the solution. We owe it to the American people to honestly assess the problem before we cast a vote on it.

Healthcare costs are rising. The ACA exchange system is too expensive and too complicated, and it has failed to reduce the underlying cost of healthcare. It has failed. The truth is, healthcare inflation is the No. 1 driver of inflation in the 21st century.

Just look at this chart. It shows at the beginning of the century, all inflation and healthcare inflation were about the same. But if you look here around the time that ObamaCare was enacted and went into law, you see the disparity growing. Medical care, medical costs, healthcare costs began to spike and rise.

It was not a solution for healthcare costs and making healthcare more affordable. As a matter of fact, the ACA made care less affordable. And this problem will not be solved by pouring more taxpayer dollars into the coffers of big insurance companies, which has been the path of how ObamaCare has been operated since its enactment.

Former Education Secretary Bill Bennett once said of higher education financing:

Higher education is not underfunded. It is under-accountable and under-productive.

That is the same that we can now say of the "Unaffordable Care Act."

But I believe there is a way forward on the issue that can protect families from punishing premium costs and cut costs driving inflation, and we can do so without putting another \$350 billion on the national credit card for a program we know is dysfunctional.

If we want to lower the cost of care, we must deliver reforms that put patients in charge, and I believe we can earn bipartisan support with a straightforward and responsible frame-

work focused on what I call the "fraud, freeze, and fix" approach—the "fraud, freeze, and fix" approach.

You do this paired with a short extension of the premium subsidies, and we can address the shortcomings of the ACA, lower healthcare costs, and provide the American people with something we can actually implement.

Now, I want to explain what I mean by fraud, freeze, and fix.

First of all, let's deal with fraud. The COVID-era zero-premium subsidies that were created created a cottage industry for abuse. Much of the explosion of fraudulent enrollees is attributable to zero-dollar premiums, which were created in 2021. These plans are fully subsidized by the taxpayers and have created incentives to enroll individuals without their knowledge.

This is how it works. Brokers are enrolling people who never asked for the coverage, one. Two, insurance companies get paid. Three, brokers get a commission. And, four, taxpayers get the bill.

There have been criminal convictions in many States across this country where this fraud is actually being perpetrated, and it needs to be fixed. Hard-working taxpayers have footed the bill for almost \$35 billion to insurers who enrolled people who did not use the plan a single time. And we know why—because not all, but some of those people, were enrolled fraudulently.

Requiring everyone receiving a premium tax credit to pay a small amount—at least a small amount—toward their health insurance will help realign the incentives and reduce fraud. It won't be allowable if we construct the program like that. It will make certain that Americans cannot be enrolled in plans without their knowledge or consent. It is an important step if we want to move forward in helping to advance a solution.

The second part is the freeze part. We need to limit the subsidies to where they are right now so it doesn't become a growing burden for the American taxpayer.

The ACA required insurers to lower deductibles, copays, and out-of-pocket costs for enrollees making between 100 percent and 250 percent of the poverty line. However, in 2017, a Federal court ruled that the cost-sharing reduction payments violated the appropriations clause. But insurers are still required to lower the costs, but this results in artificially high premiums. Additionally, because the premium tax credits are calculated against the second lowest cost silver plan, silver loading also supercharged the Federal subsidy spending of this.

It created a system that got gamed, but we can fix it. If we appropriate the cost-sharing reductions, we can lower premiums by 10 to 20 percent, while also delivering savings to the taxpayer.

Freeze it and fix it. That is the freeze part, one of the ways that we cannot put America in a bigger burden and bury the cost to the taxpayers, and we

can also lower premiums by saving money.

And then, finally, is the fix portion. This is the most important part because subsidies do not lower costs. They transfer the burden. The fix involves how we actually do reforms that lower the costs. There are several bipartisan healthcare initiatives that address lowering the price of healthcare for our constituents.

Many—"many" may be an overstatement, but there are several bills right now that I know have bipartisan support that will lower costs that we can accomplish.

For example, price transparency is one of the most bipartisan ideas in this Chamber. It gives patients, employers, and small businesses the power to see what the prices are and then compare them and decide whether or not they can find a better deal for what they are paying. Transparency exposes inflated costs, sparks competition, and makes the other reforms that we are talking about actually work because we can price shop and we can find out whether or not we are being ripped off by what we are paying.

Another example that I know there is bipartisan support for is PBM reform. There has been a bipartisan appetite to lower the cost of prescription drugs by addressing the role that the middlemen play in increasing these costs: bipartisan PBM reform, something we know can reduce costs.

And 340B reform, where both Republicans and Democrats have raised concerns about the 340B program, which is no longer efficient or serving its intended goal of supporting patients and healthcare providers who serve vulnerable populations, like our rural communities.

These are just some of the reforms that have bipartisan support. The list goes on. You can easily find them. We need to do them. It will help drive down the actual costs of healthcare in this country.

Transparency, where I started with this, is a necessary step in the idea of an HSA expansion that President Trump has proposed, where we send money to consumers rather than to the insurance companies. You have to have transparency if you expect people to shop. This will achieve the intended goal of creating consumer choice, and it would protect families from premium shock, and it would protect the Federal budget.

There are two things we need to do: protect families from the inflationary costs that the ACA has created, but also protect the taxpayer.

We didn't get into this mess overnight, and we won't get out of it simply by writing bigger checks. If this debate ends with one side saying extend everything and the other side saying we oppose everything, nothing will get done, and we will have failed the American people.

But we have a chance. What I outlined right there, I know there is bipartisan support for. And there is more,

but that is a start: fraud, freeze, and fix.

We have a chance right now to do better, help families afford coverage, pass bipartisan reforms to cut costs, and refuse to add another \$350 billion to the national debt.

I am the newest Member of the U.S. Senate. I wasn't here when Congress created this problem, but these ideas are part of the solution. If anyone in this Chamber is willing to work together, let's go. It is time to do it. The time is now. The American people deserve nothing less. Let's get ready to get the job done. Time was wasted during the government shutdown. There is an urgent need to address these issues. Let's go.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

TRIBUTE TO OFFICER ANDREW HINDS

Mrs. MOODY. Mr. President, I rise on the floor today to recognize one of the Sunshine State's best. On a Sunday morning in October, Officer Andrew Hinds was on regular patrol duty with the Riviera Police Department—Riviera Beach Police Department, they would correct me—when he spotted smoke coming from a neighborhood.

He didn't think twice. He immediately rushed toward the smoke, where he found a truck fully engulfed in flames, just feet from a family's house, threatening to spread and consume that house.

Neighbors flagged him down and told him that people were still inside, including small children. Officer Hinds didn't hesitate. With fire consuming the truck and while suspecting the vehicle could explode at any moment, he quickly called dispatch, banged on the door to wake up the family, and quickly moved everyone out of the home to get them out of harm's way.

The family of four inside was asleep and unaware of the fire, and it is no doubt that Officer Hinds' quick reaction and calm under pressure saved their lives and their home.

I am so proud to honor this heroic act today on the U.S. Senate floor as one of the Nation's newest U.S. Senators with our "Florida's Finest" award.

Ever since I was Florida's attorney general, and now as our State's newest U.S. Senator, it has been important to me to continue to honor the extraordinary work of our selfless law enforcement officers that protect Floridians every day.

Our "Florida's Finest" award honors those Floridians and law enforcement officers who demonstrate selfless courage and go above and beyond in service to their fellow man.

Because of this officer's quick response and his own willingness to put others' safety ahead of his own safety, a tragedy was averted.

I am so grateful for Officer Hinds and all of Florida's amazing law enforcement officers who, on a daily basis, put service above self. They are all making

our State—the great State of Florida—stronger and safer.

Thank you for allowing me this moment, Mr. President, to recognize this incredible law enforcement officer with our "Florida's Finest" award.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

RECOGNIZING THE 250TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE U.S. MARINE CORPS

Mr. YOUNG. Mr. President, on the campus of Indiana University, a tablet placed on the floor of the student union pays tribute to the men and women who served in the Civil War.

Over 80 years ago, in March 1942, three young Hoosiers stood over that marker. They raised their right hands, and they joined those ranks.

When the oath began, they were college students in the last days of childhood. When it was complete, they were U.S. marines, the first to fight for their country. They joined a long line of American heroes, dating all the way back to the Revolutionary War.

On November 10, 1775, when America contemplated a difficult amphibious assault on the British supply hub in Nova Scotia, the Continental Congress called for the raising of a regiment to execute this difficult expedition.

It required a special breed of warrior, capable of fighting on land and sea. Just the type of men "acquainted with maritime affairs," as the Continental Congress phrased it, were to be found at Tun Tavern, a brewhouse on Philadelphia's waterfront.

On the same day the colonial government passed its resolution, they commissioned Samuel Nicholas to raise this force. Not long after, he walked through the tavern's door and appointed its owner, Robert Mullan, chief recruiter. Together, with the lure of high adventure, mugs full of cold beer, and the call to defend their homes, they enlisted two battalions of men. These men were the first members of the U.S. Marine Corps.

So beginning on that day in Philadelphia, to countless days like the one on the campus of Indiana University, millions of men and women have answered their Nation's call. For 250 years, from the shores of Nassau to the walls of Abbey Gate, they have defended our flag, our way of life, and freedom's friends far from its shores. They have been asked and have often done the impossible.

Because of their daring, their relentlessness, and their ingenuity, the U.S. Marine Corps will always be synonymous with danger—danger to any foe that would threaten the American people. A history of vanquished foes can testify to this: Barbary pirates, whose strongholds Leathernecks marched across the African desert to conquer; British Redcoats mowed down during the Battle of New Orleans when marines formed the center of the city's defense under General Jackson; Mexican cadets, who watches as marines stormed the Halls of Montezuma and

raised the stars and stripes over Chapultepec Castle; German soldiers driven from Belleau Wood by the greatly outnumbered 4th Marine Brigade; Japanese troops who bombarded marines as they landed on the black sands of Iwo Jima and then listened from their bunkers as the Americans cheered while six members of the 5th Marine Division planted their flag at the summit of Mount Suribachi; the al-Qaida insurgents killed and captured in Fallujah when the marines fought from street to street, house to house. These and countless other battles were won at terrible cost—tens of thousands of marines killed or wounded in action, widows and widowers, sons and daughters left behind.

The history of the Marine Corps is one of incredible heroism and great sacrifice, but to reduce the Marine Corps to only those virtues is, I believe, to understate its importance in American history. Marines are not simply warriors but, as Ronald Reagan once said, the ideal of "soldierly virtue."

On the wall of my office hangs my Mameluke, the curved saber a marine carries at his side. Its history began on the shores of Tripoli when that band of marines took the Libyan port city of Derna. For this victory, they were awarded a Mameluke from an Ottoman prince. Two decades later, it officially became part of a marine officer's dress uniform. Today, its use is largely ceremonial, but if used wisely, it becomes a tool with multiple purposes, like the marine who carries it.

You see, marines are not just taught the virtues that make men and women soldiers—courage under fire, physical strength—but they are also taught the virtues that make them good citizens once their service has ended.

This photograph captures the moment in 1942 when those three young Indiana University students swore the oath—an oath to defend their country. The lives of the men in it, on the battlefield and off of it, demonstrated what it means to be a U.S. marine. They were honorable.

Three years after the picture was snapped, the man at its center wandered around Okinawa. He was searching for souvenirs to send home. He was there as part of the American assault on the island, which was a precursor to attacks on the Japanese mainland.

"The death and destruction leave bad taste in my mouth," he wrote, "and strike me deeply as the horrible part of the war." This from Lieutenant Colonel Maurice "Pat" David as he wrote his family in Nashville, IN. But his cause was just, he wrote. The bodies of old women and young girls murdered by the Imperial Japanese Army proved it.

He encouraged his parents not to worry about his safety, but months later, he was severely wounded, returned to the States, and later awarded a Purple Heart.

Through his service in the Corps, Lieutenant Colonel David attended law

school in Washington, DC. He then served as a legal officer before retiring from the Marine Corps after 22 years of service. He then returned home to Southern Indiana, settling in Columbus with his wife and daughters.

Lieutenant Colonel David served his country with honor during his time in the Marine Corps, and he did the same for his community after the war concluded. He was elected a superior court judge, practiced law for nearly 20 years, and after retiring, he served as a senior judge. As a lawyer, he was dedicated to his clients. As a judge, he treated the attorneys before him thoughtfully, reasoning they were his clients as well.

When he died in 2016, it was after living a life defined by what he learned in the U.S. Marine Corps: integrity, devotion to justice, service of a cause greater than oneself.

These men were courageous too. In fact, the man to Lieutenant Colonel David's right in the photo was Leonard Alford of Garrett, IN. A year after he stood at the memorial plaque in Bloomington, Alford sat in a tent staring at the Pacific Ocean.

"I know you have been worried because you have not heard from me," he wrote to his parents from an island he was not at liberty to name.

He had earned a Silver Star leading the men of the 4th Marine Raider Battalion in the Battle of New Georgia as his men fought across the Solomon Islands. Afterwards, they were redesignated the 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines, and Alford was made company captain. Members of the original 4th Marine Regiment were lost on Bataan and Corregidor.

"We hope to be able to keep their good name," he shared with his family. Because of Captain Alford's courage, they did.

Two years later, when Captain Alford was awarded a second Silver Star, which was turned to Gold, it was awarded posthumously.

In the closing weeks of the Okinawa campaign, he led a charge towards one of the island's remaining Japanese strongholds. Under heavy fire, ignoring his safety, he steadied the marines, ensured their advance, and he sacrificed his life for the success of the campaign and the freedom of his country.

Oh, they were committed too. In fact, the last man in the photo was Cpl John Irwin Murray of Hartford City, IN. In the years after the photo was taken, John Murray remained on campus, drilling with Pershing Rifles.

After graduation, he trained on Parais Island. Corporal Murray spent 16 months on Guadalcanal and Guam. He then deployed to China with the 6th Marine Division.

After the war, he settled in California, where he married and raised a family and worked as an accountant and a teacher.

Unlike the two other marines in this photo, there is very little public information about Corporal Murray's life—

occasional updates in the Indiana University alumni magazine on his time in the Marine Corps, his letters home from the Pacific lamenting how few other Hoosiers he met there. But you see, he lived a meaningful civilian life, without fanfare.

Commitment to duty doesn't demand glory or a long military career; it is about showing up when needed and then quietly contributing to society afterwards. Our service continues in the everyday work of building communities and supporting families.

Corporal Murray represents something essential about the Marine Corps. Most of us who serve will return to become good citizens, neighbors, and workers, carrying a sense of duty into ordinary life. That is not less important than the other two paths; it is an expression of the same commitment.

Whether on land, sea, or air, in war or peace, in service or after service, for 250 years, the U.S. Marine Corps has not just trained warriors but made citizens. There are no fiercer defenders of our freedom, no greater examples of the virtues that make our Republic function.

So as we celebrate this great anniversary throughout the month of November, we thank and salute the men in that photo and every member of the U.S. Marine Corps—always faithful—for their service and for their sacrifices. It is impossible to imagine America without the Marines.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I ask that we commence with the previously scheduled vote.

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

The joint resolution was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

VOTE ON H.J. RES. 130

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the joint resolution having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the joint resolution pass?

Mr. PAUL. 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 legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. MULLIN) and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr.

FETTERMAN), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 623 Leg.]

YEAS—51

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

NAYS—43

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

NOT VOTING—6

Fetterman	Klobuchar	Scott (SC)
Kelly	Mullin	Warren

The joint resolution (H.J. Res. 130) was passed.

(Mr. MORENO assumed the Chair.)

(Mr. CURTIS assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MORENO). The Senator from Kansas.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MARSHALL. 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.

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to use a prop during my remarks.

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

WHOLE MILK FOR HEALTHY KIDS ACT OF 2025

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. President, before I start talking today, I just want to pause for a moment to take a quick drink of the most nutritious, delicious drink known to humankind. So here is to healthy bones and here is to all the hard-working dairy farmers across Kansas and across America.

This summer, the Senate Agriculture Committee worked together to pass this legislation through the committee on a bipartisan basis. Special thanks to our chairman and to our ranking member for working on this with us.