

Times, The Washington Post. The list goes on.

What are Democrats saying on television?

Well, on “Meet the Press” this Sunday, Senator ANDY KIM of New Jersey, said that Democrats in Congress would shut down the government, he says, “if we have to” in order to obstruct President Trump—not to help the country, not to provide services for the men and women in uniform, not to provide needs around the country. No—because they want to obstruct President Trump. That is why CHUCK SCHUMER and the Democrats are calling for a government shutdown.

It didn't end there.

CORY BOOKER of New Jersey—a member of the leadership of the Democratic Party—was on CNN this weekend. What did he say? “Democrats will use every tool possible” to stop President Trump.

The Democrats want to stop the President, who was elected with 312 electoral votes and won every one of the battleground States. The Democrats just want to stop him, and the American people want the kind of action and the urgency that we are seeing right now out of President Trump.

JEFF MERKLEY, a Senator from Oregon, is open to shutting down the government. He said: “There's no [more] business as usual.” Shut it down.

President Trump is doing exactly what America voted for, but here are the headlines, and there are the pictures, and those are the Democrats in the U.S. Senate, saying: We don't care what the American people say. We are going to shut down the government.

President Trump is shrinking the size of government. We know the government is too big. We know it spends too much. President Trump is accounting for every single penny, and we are not going to make pennies anymore as a result of the fact that it costs 3 cents to make a penny. That is why Democrats want to shut down the government. They don't like the success that America is having today. They don't like the optimism that is pervasive throughout our country.

So, once again, if there is going to be a shutdown, we are talking about a “Schumer shutdown” of our country because they lost the election.

#### NOMINATION OF TULSI GABBARD

Additionally, Mr. President, here we are on the floor of the Senate, and the Senate will vote soon on the nomination of Tulsi Gabbard to be the Director of National Intelligence. She has the right background, she has the right experience, and she has the right perspective to keep our Nation safe and to keep it secure.

Congresswoman Gabbard has served in uniform for more than 20 years. She deployed to the Middle East several times. She serves in the military today and was recently promoted to lieutenant colonel. As a Member of Congress for 8 years, she served on the Armed Services and Foreign Affairs Committees.

Her experience handling highly classified information is extensive. As Director of National Intelligence, she will handle classified information properly and lawfully. Congresswoman Gabbard is more than qualified to serve as the Director of National Intelligence.

Now, we have heard a lot of debate about her, but not one Senator has disputed the simple fact that she took a hard line on Russia and on Iran. In 2013, Congresswoman Gabbard cosponsored the Nuclear Iran Prevention Act. She wanted severe sanctions on Iran. Well, why would the Democrats not like that? Oh, because they were part of the group, with President Obama, who wanted to appease Iran. No wonder they oppose her now. She opposed the Iran deal. She viewed it as a threat to both America and to Israel. And she was right. In 2014, Russia annexed Crimea. President Obama rejected sending tank-busting missiles to Ukraine. Remember what he sent? He sent blankets. Blankets.

The sanctions that President Obama imposed against Russia were terribly weak. Congresswoman Gabbard argued for U.S. military assistance to Ukraine back then, and she called for painful sanctions against Russia, things that the Democrats and their President—Obama—at the time were unwilling to do.

Tulsi Gabbard never sought war with Russia, yet she never kidded herself, never would look back about the aggressive nature of Russia's ambitions. She worked to stop wars even though she served and was ready to fight in them. She knows what it means when we talk about peace through strength.

Democrats attacked her patriotism. They attacked her loyalty. It is disturbing. There is no evidence to support that. The attacks on her are another case of Democrats equating political disagreement with disloyalty.

If Washington wants to trust our intelligence Agencies again, we need to take an ax to the weaponization of these very Agencies. Congresswoman Gabbard will keep politics out of intelligence gathering. She wants to return ODNI to its original size, its scope, and its mission. She wrote in Newsweek:

I promise to provide unbiased, timely, and accurate intelligence for those making decisions to protect the people of our country.

That is exactly what we need.

Tulsi Gabbard is the right choice to be the Director of National Intelligence, and I look forward to voting to confirm her later today.

#### GRIZZLY BEARS

Now, Mr. President, on a different matter, one critically important to my home State of Wyoming, under the Constitution, most decisions affecting our lives are meant to be made at the local or the State level. But for decades, unelected, unaccountable, heavy-handed Federal bureaucrats have taken away decisions from the States. They have centralized power and ignored the local experts. We need to put the power back into the hands of the people and

the States. That is where it belongs. That is what our Founding Fathers envisioned.

A perfect example of this is the status of grizzly bears in Yellowstone National Park. The Yellowstone population of grizzly bears has been fully recovered—it was put on the endangered species list years and years ago, but it has been fully recovered for more than 20 years.

In Wyoming, we have invested more than \$50 million in this effort to make sure that the grizzly bears did fully and safely recover. Both Democrat administrations and Republican administrations have moved—have taken action to take the grizzly bear off of the endangered species list.

Wyoming has a strong, proven track record of science-based management of the bears. Today, grizzly bears in Yellowstone are thriving. They are thriving so much that they are now doing great damage to our livestock and to our wildlife.

In 2022, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said that there was “substantial scientific or commercial information” to warrant local control—not the heavy hand of Washington but local control. Yet the grizzly bear remains under Washington's control, and that is despite the best data and our State's success.

This issue isn't science; it is politics. There are partisan, liberal judges who refuse to listen to scientific evidence. The evidence shows that the grizzlies are fully recovered. The previous administration didn't want to give up control. That is kind of how the Biden administration did it. So on its way out the door, in the final weeks, it threw sand in the gears of change. The Biden administration rejected, at the midnight hour, Wyoming's good-faith efforts and management plans. They did it just before leaving office. The decision was wrong. It was wrong for the grizzly bear population, and it was wrong for the people of Wyoming.

It is time for Wyoming—not Washington—to be in charge of managing the grizzly bears. In Congress, Senator CYNTHIA LUMMIS and Congresswoman HARRIET HAGEMAN and I introduced legislation to delist the grizzly bears. Our legislation would restore State management. It would put power back into the hands of the people who understand the situation the best.

We are also working with the Trump administration to take immediate action. Interior Secretary Doug Burgum is a supporter of delisting the grizzly bears. He agrees that local communities and States should be in control of these decisions. He said in his confirmation hearing:

There's a belief that when they come off of federal protection that they're unprotected. No, they're managed as all the other species in the state by the locals who've got the closest data.

Secretary Burgum is right, and I am glad that we finally have an administration that is ready to work with the people of Wyoming.

So I am going to continue to work closely with the Secretary of the Interior on a path forward that allows the people of Wyoming to make decisions for Wyoming.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

#### GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I listened to my colleague and friend from Wyoming, and I am struggling to understand his point of view. He announced at one point that the Republicans were in the majority in the House and Senate. Well, that is a fact. I know it. The Presiding Officer does as well. So to say that you are in the majority suggests that you are in charge, and it also suggests that if there is going to be a budget for the U.S. Government, which we need next month, the majority party in both the House and the Senate has that responsibility to come forward with a budget. That is a simple fact of life. It is a fact of political life.

To blame the minority for no budget is to ignore the obvious: The majority of votes in the House and the Senate belong to the Republican Party. If there is going to be a budget, it is fair to assume that they would have to lead in that effort. I look forward to seeing that leadership. We have seen precious little of it so far.

#### JANUARY 6 PARDONS

Mr. President, on a completely separate note, I realize that the President made these statements during the course of his campaign, but it still came as something of a shock when, on the first day of his Presidency, Donald Trump decided to issue a blanket pardon for those who had been convicted of the January 6 riot that took place in this building.

For those of us who were physically present, it is a moment we will never forget. The Vice President of the United States was sitting in the Presiding Officer's chair, presiding over the U.S. Senate as we addressed the constitutional responsibility of counting the electoral votes.

It was roughly 10 minutes after 2 in the afternoon when someone came along in a suit, walked up to the Vice President of the United States, grabbed him by the arm, and pulled him off of the chair. Those of us who were here wondered what was going on. While we could hear the demonstrators outside, we didn't understand why the Vice President was being removed from this Chamber.

A member of the Capitol Police then walked up to where the Presiding Officer is sitting and announced that this was going to be a safe room; yes, there were demonstrators outside, even some in the building, but stay here; the Senate Chamber will be a safe room; and be prepared for others to come into this safe room to avoid any conflict with the demonstrators.

That instruction lasted for about 10 minutes, and then the same officer

came up and stood before us and said: Change of plans. Everybody evacuate this room as quickly as possible.

We all headed out that door, going to another building on Capitol Hill that we thought might be safer, away from the demonstrators.

Think about that—the Capitol of the United States of America, taken over by demonstrators; the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives stopped in the progress of doing their constitutional responsibility of counting the electoral votes.

We have seen the videotapes—oh, there are plenty of them—that show these mob demonstrators breaking the windows to get into the Capitol Building, knocking down the doors, and then beating up on the police officers.

When the Presiding Officer and I came to work this morning, there were men and women—some in uniform, others in plainclothes—standing in the corridors of this building. Their responsibility is to keep us safe and to keep those who visit this Capitol safe. They are prepared—many of them have to be prepared—to risk their lives to do it.

To think what they went through on January 6 is outrageous. They were beaten up by these mobsters, these thugs, these demonstrators, who were egged on by the President of the United States to come up and go wild in the U.S. Capitol. Oh, they went wild, spraying bear spray into the faces of individual policemen, beating up on them with poles and pieces of furniture.

Yes, it was a pretty wild occasion, and it was a criminal occasion. It led to the most extensive criminal prosecution in the history of our country. Some 1,600 people were prosecuted for their conduct on January 6. And I will tell you, as someone who witnessed that and went through that experience, they deserved it. It just strikes me as outrageous.

If you heard on the news this afternoon that the Houses of Parliament in London had been invaded by a mob that had beaten down the doors of the House of Commons and took control of it, you would have said: That is impossible. That doesn't happen in a civilized country like England.

Well, it certainly shouldn't happen in the United States, and it did. I witnessed it.

Then came the President of the United States on his first day in office, and what did he do? He decided that every single person arrested for a crime related to January 6 should be released with a full and unconditional pardon. And that is what he did.

I asked my staff: Let's keep track of these people, see what happened to them. In the 3 weeks that have passed since the President made that decision, there are some interesting stories, sad stories.

Emily Hernandez pleaded guilty to entering and remaining in a restricted building or grounds in relation to her actions in the Capitol on January 6.

Ms. Hernandez was seen holding a stolen, broken nameplate of House Speaker NANCY PELOSI. She served 30 days in Federal prison and was released. Days after being pardoned by President Trump—days after being pardoned by President Trump—she was sentenced to 10 years in prison for a 2022 deadly drunk-driving crash in Missouri during which she collided with a couple—Victoria and Ryan Wilson—who had just left dinner, celebrating their 15th wedding anniversary. Victoria died in the crash, and Ryan sustained serious injuries.

Then there is Daniel Ball. Daniel Ball was arrested for throwing "an explosive device" that detonated on at least 25 officers and forcefully shoving police at the Capitol on January 6. Daniel Ball was in possession of a gun and ammunition as he came into the Capitol, which was illegal considering his criminal background. The Department of Justice dismissed Ball's charges following President Trump's pardon.

I have a long list here, and I am not going to read them all, but there is one in particular, released with a full pardon by President Trump for the January 6 crimes he committed. Guy Reffitt, the first defendant to stand trial on charges related to the January 6 Capitol insurrection, was sentenced to 87 months in prison for bringing a firearm into the Capitol on January 6, 2021.

Reffitt's 19-year-old son Jackson turned him into law enforcement after the attack. Jackson also indicated that Reffitt had threatened to shoot him and his sister Peyton if they reported him to authorities.

After receiving a pardon from President Trump, Guy Reffitt attended Kash Patel's Senate Judiciary Committee nomination hearing. Kash Patel is President Trump's nominee to be the Director and head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Reffitt attended that committee nomination, and here is what he posted on social media afterward.

Remember: a man who is released after he was granted a full pardon, after he was convicted of bringing a firearm into the Capitol on January 6, 2021—certainly not a casual tourist by any means.

Here is what he said on social media:

Present and in support of Kash Patel as the leftist commies continue to spew lies, misinformation, and disinformation. My man, clean house Kash.

So it certainly seems like he learned his lesson, right? He served time in jail and was released with pardon by the President. He is at it again, defying the authorities, defying anyone who disagrees with him politically—full, unconditional pardon from Donald Trump.

The reason I wanted to make a note of Mr. Reffitt's history is that it is apropos of what I want to speak to this morning.