

over Iraq and today serves with me as my colleague in the Senate. She speaks for all of the members of the National Guard when she says they are dedicated to our Nation and our States.

There must be a full investigation into the attack on Sarah Beckstrom and SSgt Andrew Wolfe. I implore the President to lower the temperature on political rhetoric and try not to exploit this to demonize immigrants, including many who make the ultimate sacrifice for our country. Instead, the President should work with Congress on commonsense and evidence-proven strategies to reduce crime and reform our broken immigration system.

My wife and I send our deepest condolences to the Beckstrom family, and we pray that Staff Sergeant Wolfe makes a full, speedy recovery.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, on an unrelated issue, last week, families gathered around the table to give thanks and enjoy a plate or two of turkey, mashed potatoes, casserole, cranberry sauce, and more. Except, this year, the Thanksgiving feast cost more than last year—because of what? President Trump's economic policies are driving up the prices of groceries. The President claims the opposite, but that is not a fact.

In a social media quote, President Trump said, "Prices for a Thanksgiving Dinner is now down 25% . . . since 2024." "AFFORDABILITY," he said, "is a Republican Stronghold."

Does the President of the United States actually have any conversations with families who are shopping for groceries?

Here is the truth: Costs are going through the roof because of President Trump and his MAGA policies. The American people know this. Recent polling from none other than FOX News shows that nearly two-thirds of Americans blame President Trump for higher prices—FOX News.

Listen to my constituent Tria, who wrote to me from Chicago. After experiencing the sticker shock at a South Loop grocery store, she said:

No matter if it's organic or not . . . it's still going to be an arm and a leg for it. It's like you're spending your soul on groceries.

Another constituent Esther said:

A loaf of bread costs us \$4, and it looks like it's getting smaller.

I know what she means. Tria and Esther are not alone in their shared frustration. Working families across the country are feeling the squeeze at the checkout counter and are having to cut back on spending for the holidays.

This struggle has been exacerbated for several reasons, one of them being the President's massive cuts to the SNAP program—used to be known as food stamps—in his Big Beautiful Bill—not so beautiful—that will reduce or eliminate food assistance for more than 22 million families. This is Amer-

ica. This President gives 20 million bucks to Argentina, but he can't find the money for American citizens.

Another is the administration's attacks on immigrant workers, which is fueling a labor shortage, thereby hurting farmers in Illinois and across the Nation, who are already struggling, and driving up prices on the products they grow. Even President Trump's own Labor Department agrees, saying that his war on immigrant workers is "threatening the stability of domestic food production and prices."

Now let's get to the bottom line here and be honest about it. The farmers in my State are great men and women, and I thank them for what they do. When it comes to the political scene, after a lifetime of dealing with them, I know that they are very courteous and kind, come to see me with regularity, give me a lot of things to seriously consider, and usually vote for the other party. I get it. They are more conservative, and they just don't see things politically the way I see them. But when you close the door and there is no press around and you ask them what is going on, they are scared to death.

They see China stopping purchases of soybeans. Why is that important? Illinois is the No. 1 soybean-producing State in the United States, and it is a major cash crop for farmers all across the country. So when China stops buying, what do we do? Unfortunately, our buyers, like China, turn to other countries, and they use those countries as sources when they used to rely on us. That worries these farmers behind closed doors, but they don't say much publicly.

They don't like tariffs. They tell me that behind closed doors too. They don't want to be open in public about their criticism of President Trump, but the tariffs are taxes that they know are going to make it difficult for them and their exporters and importers of important goods.

In addition to all of that, they need workers on the farm. It is a fact. Whether it is an orchard or a dairy farm or any other farm operation, many of them need workers on the farm, and there aren't a lot of local people volunteering for that job. The President's policies against immigrants are not only denying them the source of these workers, but they are also creating an attitude in other adjoining countries that have served us in the past that it is too dangerous to try to come and work in the United States. That is the reality.

Nationwide, for example, the costs of a lot of basics just keep going up. Orange juice is up 29 percent compared to last year. Ground beef is up 14 percent. Coffee is 26 percent more. None of these developments have occurred in a vacuum. They are a direct response to the President's chaotic tariff policies. He changes his mind every 15 minutes. Is it 10 percent? Is it 15 percent? Is it 100 percent? Wait a minute. The Premier of Ontario just ran an ad during a base-

ball game. Let's raise tariffs on products from Canada by 50 percent. Is that any way to run a country? Already, families in Illinois have paid more than \$700 just this year, on average, because of these policies.

In a Supreme Court hearing last month on the legality of these tariffs, Justice Sotomayor said to the lawyers defending the President:

You say tariffs are not taxes, but that's exactly what they are.

Justice Sotomayor is absolutely right.

We are paying for Donald Trump's failed economic agenda—an agenda which runs back and forth, helter-skelter, day by day. The President recognizes it too, really. That is why a few weeks ago he watered down his own economic proposal when he suspended certain tariffs on bananas, coffee, beef, and clothing. You just can't keep up with him. Why backtrack? Because he knows that the voters and consumers in America are fed up with rising costs and place it by a factor of 2 to 1 at his feet. My source again? FOX News. The President sees the writing on the wall, and he is scrambling to undo the damage he has caused, but it is too little, too late, unless he moves quickly and changes dramatically.

The damage goes beyond food prices. Thanks to this President, Americans are now confronting higher utility bills. Just ask them. On the campaign trail, the President promised to slash electricity prices in half. "Drill, baby, drill" will take care of everything. It ain't working. On average, Illinois households are paying more than \$1,500 annually for lights and heat in their homes—up more than 15 percent from last year. Cause and effect.

Under President Biden, with the support of a Democratic Congress, we signed into law the Inflation Reduction Act. This historic law provided tax credits to help households and businesses install energy-efficient windows, insulation, HVAC, and solar panels to lower their bills. I know because I put solar panels on my home in Springfield. Our monthly electric bill was cut dramatically because of that policy decision from the Biden administration.

Earlier this year, President Trump and congressional Republicans scrapped these credits for solar energy with their so-called Big Beautiful Bill. So while utility bills go up, people who want to go to cheaper forms of sustainable energy, such as solar, are told the tax incentives are no longer there, which is just the opposite of what we should be doing. Then they went further, eliminating incentives for wind and solar projects, meaning fewer jobs and less power to the grid. It is supply and demand. Less power equals higher prices. And the consequences of these policies are already taking effect.

According to the Century Foundation, past-due utility balances have jumped 10 percent this year. They are 10 percent more than they were the year before. People can't afford to pay these utility bills.

Just like SNAP cuts, Trump's energy policies harm those who are already struggling the most. One example is his budget proposal that calls to eliminate LIHEAP—a program that helps millions of low-income Americans pay their energy bills on time.

Between the sky-high cost of rent, groceries, and utilities, Americans are being hit from all sides.

The President has recently floated \$2,000 tariff rebate checks as an idea. Not only are these checks unlikely to see the light of day, but the hole he has put American families in is far greater than 2,000 bucks. The American people see right through the dumb scheme, and they know that the sole reason they are facing higher prices is because of his policies.

While Republicans ignore higher costs at their own peril, Democrats are still going to keep fighting to lower costs for the American people. We know that there is an opportunity that is going to come before the Senate in just a few days to do something about the high cost of health insurance premiums. I am hearing it back home. People understand what is happening. They are getting notices about what these premiums are going to be as of the first of the year. Some 24 million Americans are affected by the "Big Beautiful Budget Bill" of Donald Trump and the elimination of these tax credits.

It is time for us to do something for American families that makes a difference. Help them pay their health insurance. For goodness' sake, that should be a high priority not only for the Senate but because it is a high priority for every family.

I hope we can work on a bipartisan basis to extend these tax credits and to make sure the American people understand that both Democrats and Republicans can work together to solve this problem. I think some want to on the other side of the aisle. We should do that in the spirit of bipartisanship.

The last point I want to make is almost impossible to understand or explain. Can you imagine that the former President of Honduras—his name is Juan Orlando Hernández—was prosecuted by the Federal Government of the United States for his involvement in the trade of narcotics? He was found guilty of having been involved and was sentenced to some 45 years in prison as a result. He once boasted as President that he would "stuff the drugs up the gringos' noses." He accepted a \$1 million bribe from El Chapo—one of the leaders of narcotics international—to allow cocaine shipments to pass through Honduras that were destined for the United States. This former President Hernández had a man killed in prison to protect him.

Honduras has become a bastion of the global drug trade. This former President Hernández orchestrated a vast trafficking conspiracy that prosecutors said raked in millions of dollars for cartels while making Honduras one of

Central America's poorest, most violent, and most corrupt countries.

So they prosecuted him and found him guilty of being involved in selling narcotics through these cartels in the United States. Can you think of anyone more reprehensible than that—selling drugs to this country—and finding more victims by the day, many of them children, who become addicted to cocaine? Well, of course, it is terrible. It is so terrible that he was found guilty and sentenced to 45 years in prison.

Then what happened? Well, you won't believe it. Donald Trump pulls out his pardon pen.

[O]n Saturday, Mr. Trump said in a statement to the New York Times that "many friends" had asked him to pardon Mr. Hernández. "They gave him 45 years because he was the President of the Country."

Then Donald Trump said:

"[Y]ou could do this to any President."

I won't go into President Trump's own criminal convictions, but I will tell you this: When this man who was President of Honduras was facilitating the sale of narcotics in America, we thought so much of the effort to prosecute him that we assigned an assistant U.S. attorney by the name of Emil Bove. Ring a bell? Emil Bove was chosen by President Trump to serve on the circuit court of the United States. He was approved by this Chamber. I was at the hearing where he was considered, and I will tell you this: He was proud of the fact that he was tough on crime—so tough that he helped prosecute Hernández and ended up seeing him sent to jail for so many years.

Then along comes President Trump with his pardon pen, and he releases Hernández from jail. He releases him after years and years of prosecution, evidence, and hard work in stopping this man who was facilitating the sale of narcotics in the United States.

Once he started serving the prison sentence, President Trump said that "many friends" had asked him to pardon Mr. Hernández. "They gave him 45 years," President Trump said, "because he was the President of the Country—you could do this to any President." And he then pardoned him.

Hard to imagine, isn't it? But it isn't hard to imagine if you were here on January 6 and saw the insurrectionists come roaring through this Capitol, storm this Chamber, and drive the Senate into recess as we went to an adjoining building so that law enforcement could take over the situation. There were 149 law enforcement officers who were seriously injured, and several died as a result of that experience. It was a terrible day in the history of the United States and a terrible day in the history of this magnificent building I am honored to serve in.

What did Donald Trump do as soon as he was reelected President? He issued a full and unconditional pardon to all of the people who stormed the Capitol.

So it comes as no surprise when it comes to drug kingpins like former Honduran President Hernández. He got

his pardon pen, and he decided—because he had heard from so many friends, the President said, he decided to pardon Mr. Hernández and release him.

This is not an action by a President who is trying to keep America safe from narcotics. It is a strange understanding of his power that he would use this and not end up penalizing those who are responsible for the narcotics coming into the United States.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. BRITT). The Senator from West Virginia.

HONORING SPECIALIST SARAH BECKSTROM AND STAFF SERGEANT ANDREW WOLFE

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam President, I rise today with a very heavy heart, one shared by all West Virginians and by so many across our country, including the Presiding Officer. This past Wednesday, two members of the West Virginia National Guard were targeted and shot in the line of duty right here in Washington, DC.

In the days since this horrific attack, our entire State has been praying, grieving, and rallying around these heroes, their loved ones, and their families.

Today, I want to speak about these two brave, fine guardsmen: U.S. Army SPC Sarah Beckstrom, who passed away on Thanksgiving day, and U.S. Air Force SSgt Andrew Wolfe, who remains in critical condition, still fighting for his life.

This was a deliberate and senseless act of violence—an attack not only on two individuals but on the very values and the country that they took an oath to protect. These young soldiers put on the uniform to protect all of us, and on Wednesday, they were ambushed and attacked because they were U.S. servicemembers, because of that sense of duty that led them to serve their country.

SPC Sarah Beckstrom was just 20 years old. So think about it. I am looking at the young people here. Just think about that—20 years old. She had her whole life ahead of her.

We are so proud to claim her as one of our own. Sarah was a West Virginia girl. She served with honor, distinction, and a deep sense of responsibility—qualities that her family, her fellow soldiers, and her community have all recognized.

Those who served alongside of her talk about her leadership and her very bright spirit, and you can see that in her smile from her photographs.

They talk about somebody who showed up every single day. They describe her as a peacemaker, and that is what she was doing on the streets of DC. She was being a peacemaker; and that is exactly what she was. Her loss is immeasurable.

On a holiday that means to bring many families together and create joyous moments, her loved ones instead