

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER
The majority leader is recognized.

ONE BIG BEAUTIFUL BILL

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, we are 4 weeks away from the new year and from the date that the 2017 tax relief for Americans was set to expire. Back in 2017, of course, Republicans passed a huge tax-relief package. We lowered tax rates for every income group, we doubled the child tax credit, and we nearly doubled the standard deduction.

But all of that was scheduled to expire at the end of this year. Without action, Americans would have seen their tax rates increase and the child tax credit shrink by 50 percent. A typical family would have seen their taxes go up by about \$1,700 a year. In my State of South Dakota, a typical family would have seen a \$2,500 tax increase.

Republicans were determined not to let that happen, so a priority for 2025 became extending the 2017 tax relief—but not just extending it, making it permanent. We didn't want hard-working Americans to have to worry every few years that their tax bills were suddenly going to soar. So in July, we passed the Working Families Tax Cut to make permanent the 2017 tax relief. We made those lower tax rates permanent, we made the increased standard deduction permanent, and we made the increased child tax credit permanent. But we didn't stop there. We expanded the child tax credit even further and indexed it to inflation so that its value will never go down.

We also further increased the standard deduction, exempting additional money from Americans' taxable income, and we added a new \$6,000 bonus deduction for seniors, allowing Americans on Social Security to keep more of their money.

That is still not all. We eliminated taxes on tips for millions of tip workers: Uber and Lyft drivers, hair stylists, delivery drivers, servers at restaurants. We also eliminated taxes on overtime pay for millions of hourly workers. Thanks to this provision, everyone from nurses and police officers to firefighters and paramedics will be able to keep more of their hard-earned money.

We did still more because one aspect of prosperity is being able to keep more of what you earn. Another aspect is being able to earn more, so in addition to the individual tax relief, we also made permanent some of the 2017 tax law's business tax relief to help businesses grow and create new jobs and opportunities for workers. That included the lower tax rates for small and medium-sized businesses, the job-creating 199A small business deduction, and full expensing for new equipment and for domestic research and development.

Again, we went beyond the 2017 tax relief and added full expensing for new factories and factory improvements, so we can expect to see more goods made in America and, again, more jobs and opportunities for American workers.

We also acted to protect countless family farms, ranches, and small businesses from the punitive death tax and all of the headaches and expense that come with planning for it.

I am incredibly proud of what we were able to accomplish for hard-working Americans. We not only averted a massive tax hike on American families but were able to further lessen Americans' tax burden. Hard-working Americans can be assured the Republicans will continue to work to enhance affordability, expand opportunity, and increase prosperity.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

AFFORDABILITY

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, last night, Americans once again went to the polls in an election where affordability—how much people have to pay for the things they really need—was the driving issue. A deep-red Tennessee district that Trump won by 22 points swung by double digits in Democrats' direction.

Last night was the latest flashing red light indicating Americans are fed up with Republican policies—particularly how much they have to pay for the things they really need.

Donald Trump doesn't get it. At yesterday's Cabinet meeting, Donald Trump once again doubled down on the bizarre claim that the affordability issue is somehow a hoax. Yeah, maybe it is a hoax for a billionaire like him and all of his cronies, who never have to worry about how much they have to pay for the things they need, but American people have to worry and worry about it every week when the bills come in, and they say: My income isn't equal to what I need to buy.

The costs are going up and up and up, in large part—in good part—because of Donald Trump and his administration's policies.

So when Donald Trump says that affordability is somehow a hoax, he is on a different planet than the average American. At his Cabinet meeting, he called affordability “a fake narrative” and “a con job.” He said affordability “doesn't mean anything to anybody.” What a bubble he is in. He doesn't understand how the average person struggles each week, each month, to pay the bills.

Of all the ways Donald Trump could respond to people's worry about the high cost of living, he has chosen the worst strategy. He is telling Americans they are imagining things. Donald Trump—a man who has lived his entire life in the kind of luxury most people

could never wrap their heads around—is pretending that high costs somehow don't exist. The man is a multibillionaire. The President of the United States, who is supposed to know what is on people's minds, is telling people that high costs that they pay each week don't exist. Well, their pocketbooks feel it. Their wallets feel it. Their bank accounts feel it.

Maybe things are going great if you are rich like Donald Trump, but for everyone else, things are getting worse, not better, when it comes to paying for stuff.

In a recent Axios-CBS poll, half of Americans said that food is harder to purchase this year than it was a year ago. That doesn't sound like a hoax—not to people who go to the supermarket every week and have trouble and look at those bills and say: How the hell did they get so high? It sounds, rather, not like a hoax, which Donald Trump seems to think it is, but a big problem every week for American families—the high cost of groceries and what they buy at the supermarket.

Seventy-four percent of Americans now say that the economy is either poor or just fair. Consumer confidence—one of the watch words of how good our economy is going to do in the future—is sinking.

This holiday season, the price of an 8-pound, bone-in spiral ham is up nearly 50 percent compared to last year—50 percent for a traditional Christmas dish. Beef prices are up 15 percent compared to last year. Canned vegetables are more expensive because tariffs made the packaging more costly even when those vegetables are grown here. Even something as simple as aluminum foil is up 40 percent compared to last year.

So, Donald Trump, hear the American people: Affordability—the high cost of paying for things—is not a hoax. People are struggling to pay for the things they need.

It is because of Donald Trump and his disastrous policies. His tariffs have effectively taxed each household around \$2,000 a year. Tariffs sent retail coffee prices up 40 percent in September alone. And those tariffs were placed on places like Brazil. We don't grow coffee here in America, so what the hell is there a tariff doing there? Except it is a tax. That is the way Trump taxes people.

Tariffs have poisoned American manufacturing. This week, the Wall Street Journal reported that manufacturing has contracted for 9 months in a row. Manufacturing, one of the lifebloods of America, has been declining every month for the last 9 months. And what is the reason? Ask manufacturers. Tariffs are the No. 1 cost. Producers say it is getting more expensive to source the material they need to make their products. It is very simple.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. President, when it comes to paying for things that Americans need, healthcare is way at the top of the list.

Every American knows they want to have healthcare. God forbid they, their spouse, their loved one, their kids, their parents become ill or sick. They want to know there is some kind of safety net there for them. But Trump and the Republicans don't seem to realize that.

In just 28 days, the ACA tax credits are set to expire. Next year, tens of millions of Americans will see their healthcare premiums skyrocket—20 million by an average of 114 percent, those on ACA that need those credits. Millions more—even on private insurance—are going to pay a whole lot more too.

I just had a friend I know who works for a big company—the company told him “You are going to have to pay \$450 more a month for your health insurance” because the insurers are charging the health company more—all because of the expiration of the ACA credit.

This is not theoretical. Higher premiums mean real pain, real suffering for real people—most of them, in fact, in red States.

Yesterday, the American Cancer Society found that virtually every single cancer patient who relies on ACA tax credits—96 percent—96 percent said they will struggle to get the care they need if the credits expire.

Republicans are literally telling cancer patients “You are on your own.” Telling someone with cancer “You are on your own because I want to give tax breaks to billionaires”—how un-American is that? How against what Americans need, want, desire is that?

Republicans have clearly sent America barreling towards a healthcare cliff.

The Republicans are divided. Democrats—we are united on healthcare. One House Republican, though, said that the Republicans are “nowhere on healthcare.” That is right. On healthcare, Republicans are divided; Democrats are united. And the divisions on the Republican side are severe. One day, the White House says they will release some grand plan to address the problem. The next day, congressional Republicans say “hell no” and shoot the White House plans down, and Trump backs off. Republicans can't agree on whether to dismantle the ACA or privatize the whole system or just keep attacking women's health because it plays well with their hard-right, anti-choice base.

Forget not being on the same page on healthcare; Republicans aren't even reading from the same book. And while Republicans continue fighting with each other, the American people are left holding the bill.

So I have said many times before: When it comes to healthcare, Republicans are divided—divided among themselves and divided from what the American people overwhelmingly want. Fifty-five percent of Trump voters—Trump voters—want to restore the ACA credits.

Democrats are united on lowering premiums. We are united on lowering costs. We are united on helping Americans pay for the things they need. Republicans, meanwhile, are paralyzed—paralyzed by their divisions, paralyzed by their own extremism. And it will be Americans who will pay the price when premiums go up. And they know who is to blame. They know why.

SECRETARY HEGSETH

Mr. President, on Hegseth, it has been almost a week since a report came out saying Secretary Hegseth potentially ordered the indiscriminate killings of survivors clinging to a vessel in the Caribbean, and we still—still—do not know the truth because Pete Hegseth has not released the full tapes of the strike.

It is an incredibly serious matter. It is about the safety of our troops. This is an incident that could expose our members of the Armed Forces to legal consequences. Yet the American public and the Congress are still not hearing the basic facts.

So once again, Secretary Hegseth, you need to do the right thing. Tell the truth. Release the full, unedited tapes of the September 2 boat strike.

Only then will Americans know the truth because no one believes Hegseth. Until Secretary Hegseth releases the full tapes, the American people cannot trust what he says.

Secretary Hegseth's story, the White House's story, the Pentagon's story keeps changing every—every—day. How can you believe them when the story keeps changing?

The day after the boat strikes, Hegseth said on FOX News that he watched the operation live. He told us in person that he was in the room and that he was part of the operation. But then yesterday, he totally reversed himself and said he didn't see the second strike everybody is wondering about. He now says that he left in the middle of the operation, that a couple of hours passed before he was made aware that a second strike had even been necessary. He blamed “the fog of war.”

A couple of hours? What could have been possibly more important that Secretary Hegseth went missing for 2 hours during a military strike against alleged drug traffickers?

What is Secretary Hegseth hiding? The American people are asking, Congress is asking, Republican Senators and Congressmen are asking Secretary Hegseth: What are you hiding?

Why does his story keep changing? Why won't he release the tapes? The tapes will show the American people what really happened on September 2, and the American people and every person serving in our military deserve to hear the truth.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican whip.

HONORING SPECIALIST SARAH BECKSTROM

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, on Thanksgiving Day, 20-year-old Sarah

Beckstrom should have been at home celebrating the holiday with her family. Instead, she lost her life, murdered 1 day before Thanksgiving. Her killer is an Afghan national—someone Joe Biden flew into this country without proper vetting.

Sarah served in the West Virginia National Guard. She wore the uniform of the U.S. Army. She was murdered on American soil by someone who never should have been here.

This is the tragic cost of Joe Biden's open border policies. It is also a sign of national security weakness. For 4 years, Joe Biden and pro-crime Democrats turned our border into a New York City subway turnstile—no fare enforced; just hop right on in. It was routine for 10,000 illegal immigrants to flood across our Nation's southern border on a daily basis. Criminals, gang members, drug traffickers, terrorists—they all came in. For these failed policies, Americans have paid the price: Laken Riley in Georgia, Rachel Morin in Maryland, and many, many others.

Today, President Trump and Republicans are ending the chaos, securing the border in record time, and getting America back on track. We acted fast. We started here in the Senate with the Laken Riley Act. It was the first piece of legislation President Trump signed into law. It mandates that illegal immigrant criminals be detained and moved.

Republicans ended catch-and-release. We stopped the illegal invasion into our country. For the past 6 months, zero—zero—illegal immigrants have been released into our country. Under Joe Biden, it was often 10,000 a day.

For the first time in 17 years, the backlog of immigration cases is actually going down. Immigration judges can finally do their job. Open border, rubberstamping judges are gone. Interior enforcement is making our communities safer. Seventy percent of ICE arrests are illegal immigrant criminals. They are individuals charged with or convicted of crimes in the United States.

During the week of Thanksgiving, ICE worked overtime. They arrested a convicted murderer in California, a convicted rapist in Tennessee, and a convicted drug trafficker in Delaware. Every one of these arrests makes our country safer. These criminals and many more are off our streets because Republicans have acted.

We didn't just secure the border for today, we secured it into the future because, in July, Republicans passed and President Trump signed into law the largest border security investment in American history, \$170 billion. The law finishes the wall, it provides \$75 billion for ICE, and gives our agents the resources they need to continue to deport illegal immigrant criminals. Our law helps train, hire, and retain Border Patrol agents. It even gives them a bonus.

Republicans have made a generational investment in American border security. Every Democrat in the Senate voted against it. Republicans voted