

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 593, Jared Isaacman, of Pennsylvania, to be Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

John Thune, John R. Curtis, Tim Sheehy, Roger F. Wicker, Joni Ernst, Markwayne Mullin, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Pete Ricketts, John Boozman, Lindsey Graham, John Barrasso, Dan Sullivan, Steve Daines, Tom Cotton, Ted Cruz, John Kennedy, Deb Fischer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Jared Isaacman, of Pennsylvania, to be Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Iowa (Mr. ERNST) and the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) is necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 67, nays 30, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 649 Leg.]

YEAS—67

Baldwin	Graham	Moreno
Banks	Hagerty	Mullin
Barrasso	Hassan	Murkowski
Blackburn	Hawley	Paul
Boozman	Heinrich	Ricketts
Britt	Hoeven	Risch
Budd	Husted	Rounds
Cantwell	Hyde-Smith	Schiff
Capito	Johnson	Schmitt
Cassidy	Justice	Scott (FL)
Collins	Kaine	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Kelly	Shaheen
Cotton	Kennedy	Sheehy
Cramer	Kim	Slotkin
Crapo	King	Sullivan
Cruz	Lankford	Thune
Curtis	Lee	Tillis
Daines	Lummis	Tuberville
Durbin	Marshall	Warner
Fetterman	McConnell	Wicker
Fischer	McCormick	Young
Gallego	Moody	
Gillibrand	Moran	

NAYS—30

Alsobrooks	Lujan	Sanders
Bennet	Markey	Schatz
Blumenthal	Merkley	Schumer
Blunt Rochester	Murphy	Smith
Booker	Murray	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Ossoff	Warnock
Duckworth	Padilla	Warren
Hickenlooper	Peters	Welch
Hirono	Reed	Whitehouse
Klobuchar	Rosen	Wyden

NOT VOTING—3

Coons	Ernst	Grassley
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(Mr. RICKETTS assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). On this vote, the yeas are 67, the nays are 30.

The motion is agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Jared Isaacman, of Pennsylvania, to be Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUESTS—THE CALENDAR

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, the American people understand to varying degrees but have a general understanding of the fact that the work we do here in the Senate is a combination of things.

Some of the things that we address are controversial. Some of them make the daily or evening news or the cover of the newspaper the next day. Those tend to be the things that are more controversial, things on which there might be sharp disagreements, sometimes sharply divided down partisan lines, reflected based on where one's desk sits in relation to the center aisle of this Chamber.

Other times, there might be controversy, but the controversy doesn't cut cleanly across party lines. We might have some Republicans and some Democrats on one side or the other.

In many instances—maybe not enough but, mercifully, there are many instances—there is not only not much controversy but no controversy at all.

There is a significant amount of legislation that passes through this Chamber every single year unanimously, without a single "no" vote. Some of this, to be sure, might recognize the naming of a post office or it might recognize—I don't know—"National Sofa Care Month," if there is such a thing. Others deal with discrete, local issues—issues that, while important to a select few people who live around, for example, a particular piece of land owned by the Federal Government and might be affected by the land management policy associated with that parcel, are very important to that local population but might be completely unknown not only to people on the other side of the country but even to people in other parts of that same State.

There is a fair amount of legislation that moves through the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources—a committee that I currently chair—that fits into each of these categories: controversial bills where there is a sharp Republican-Democratic divide; bills that have some controversy that cut across party lines; and, yes, mercifully, this other category of noncontroversial votes without a single substantive objection.

The American people understand that there will be opposition to a lot of pieces of legislation, but they also, justifiably, expect us to consider and pass bills on their merits. As to this category of bills that are important to some, unknown to most, and controversial to no one, well, they expect us to get those passed in a timely fashion.

I am trying to do this quickly, expeditiously, and to do it in the right way.

Now, I tried doing it the right way—the same way I am going to try today—back in May, on the 22nd of May. I tried to do it the right way again on July 29. I tried doing it the right way again, 2 weeks ago. This will be my fourth attempt to try to pass a small handful of extremely noncontroversial bills that already passed this Chamber unanimously, without a single "no" vote in the last Congress, at the end of last year, and that have moved forward from the Energy and Natural Resources Committee—again, without opposition from either side of the aisle, from any Senator—earlier this year.

Each of these times, I have received an objection from the Democratic side of the aisle. At no point have I heard a single substantive objection to any of these bills in this category that I have tried to pass through this procedure—a procedure which is well-worn and which exists for exactly this circumstance. You know, across multiple committees—certainly within the Energy and Natural Resources Committee—there is a lot of legislation that falls into that category.

We are told repeatedly that there are simply too many bills for the Senate to consider individually. This is often the case. And it is often the case, in particular, that for a bill that has no opposition, for a bill that is very important to a population of people within a particular State as to a discrete issue—it might be important or interesting to literally no one else in any other State or in other parts of the same State—we are told that these bloated bills that sometimes get combined, which are multiple pieces of legislation, sometimes amounting to thousands of pages at a time, can become a necessary evil to accommodate all of the small lands bills important to our States.

I am here to tell you that this is simply not the case. It certainly need not be the case here, and it isn't.

Now, had we moved these bills each time I have been on the floor this year, we certainly would have already been able to make significant progress in clearing the backlog, so that we could deal with this problem that many people cite as a reason we would need a massive, all-or-nothing, bloated, sewn-together lands package—take it or leave it, all or nothing.

If we really need the bills passed, why can't we start, at least, with the low-hanging fruit?

I have no delusions that this makes everything easy. It certainly doesn't, as there is a lot of this process that can be difficult. But we ought to start with the bills that are noncontroversial,

that have yet to receive a single substantive objection on their merits, and that are things that we all agree on.

Why can't we move the bills that have already passed unanimously, that have already been vetted in committee this year and last year, and that passed on the Senate floor without a single "no" vote last year?

Why come down here and object, over and over again, to bills that are noncontroversial?

Well, sometimes this is the muscle memory that can start to evolve, that can start to take hold within this body. But it need not be this way; it ought not be this way, as it doesn't lead to good decisions. If this is how we treat the things that are noncontroversial, it is going to make the things where there is some debate, some opposition, some dissent more difficult and, as to the stuff that is sharply partisan, impossible.

If you have a bill that you know can't pass on its own, well then, what do you do?

Well, perhaps what you want to do is pair it with a bunch of other bills that are themselves noncontroversial, hoping that it won't get noticed or hoping that there will be enough other Senators who will say: I guess we have to take it or leave it; so let's let it all pass.

They might say: Are you really going to sink all of this important work just for one section of this much larger bill that you disagree with?

Well, look, taken to its logical conclusion and repeated, over and over again, and applied even to noncontroversial bills, this ends up being sort of extortive in its effect, and it doesn't produce a good outcome—not for people of either party, not for people of either legislative Chamber, and, certainly, not for the American people.

Just yesterday, we were able to do some things on the floor the right way. Senator SULLIVAN came to the floor and passed his bill to extend the deadline for Alaska Native Vietnam-era vets to claim the land allotments that they earned through their service. This was only after Democrats—including my friend and colleague the distinguished senior Senator from New Mexico, Senator HEINRICH—had objected to it twice. But his bill—Senator SULLIVAN's legislation that I just mentioned—is now headed to the President's desk to be signed into law. Now, there is no reason that that success that we tasted, just yesterday afternoon, can't continue here with similarly situated, similarly noncontroversial, unanimously passed bills.

So, again, I have got four bills that I will be asking unanimous consent to pass here today. They include S. 1084, which is the North Dakota Trust Lands Completion Act of 2025. This bill, sponsored by Senator HOEVEN, passed last year with unanimous support and would authorize equal value exchanges to enable the State of North Dakota to manage its own State lands.

S. 1142 is the Scarper Ridge Golden Gate National Recreation Area Boundary Adjustment Act. This bill, sponsored by Senator PADILLA, passed last year and would make a minor boundary adjustment to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. It is entirely noncontroversial.

S. 1016 is the Vicksburg National Military Park Boundary Modification Act. This bill, sponsored by Senator WICKER, is a minor but important boundary adjustment to the park, and it passed last year with unanimous support.

S. 603, sponsored by Senator KAINE, designates the George C. Marshall House in Virginia as an affiliated area within the National Park System. It is simply allowing them to be affiliated with the National Park Service. This bill also passed with unanimous support.

What do these bills have in common? Well, they are bipartisan. They all passed the body unanimously, without a single "no" vote in the last Congress. I have heard zero substantive objections on the merits to any single one of these bills.

I stand ready to work with any Member—Republican or Democrat—to move their bills off the floor, especially with regard to these noncontroversial bills.

We can get this done. We can work through this broken process. It need not be broken, especially as to this category of bills. This is the easy stuff. Let's not make the easy stuff hard, lest we incur the risk of making the harder stuff impossible.

So to that end, Mr. President, as if in legislative session and notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be discharged and that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of the following bills en bloc; further, that the bills, as amended, if amended, where applicable, be considered read a third time and passed en bloc and that motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, all en bloc: S. 1084, North Dakota Trust Lands Completion Act of 2025 from Senator HOEVEN; S. 1142, the Scarper Ridge Golden Gate National Recreation Area Boundary Adjustment Act from Senator PADILLA; S. 1016, the Vicksburg National Military Park Boundary Modification Act with a substitute amendment from Senator WICKER; and S. 603, to designate the General George C. Marshall House in the Commonwealth of Virginia from Senator KING.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, as I have said a number of times now, I am not willing to send Democratic bills to the House without an agreement to get them through the House and to the President's desk.

Just last week, we saw the House pass a Senate Republican bill without

the Senate Democratic bill that it had been paired with. Both bills are bipartisan; both even have a budget score, and yet the Democratic bill sits with no plan to get it signed into law.

We need to pass bills over here in a way that ensures that both Republican and Democratic priorities and bills become law.

In addition, I do have substantive concerns with S. 1084. I was not the ranking member of the previous Congress, but it would give away public land without an equal value exchange or payment for conservation of other public land.

The public is simply left out of the equation. That is not something I can support, and I am certainly willing to work with the bill's sponsor on finding a path forward. But in its current form, I must object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I appreciate my friend and colleague, the distinguished Senator from New Mexico, who has a genuine concern. It is a worthy concern, and it is a concern that I share in the sense that I want to make sure that both Democrats and Republicans serving in this body on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, when they submit these bills—particularly bills in this category that I described that have passed unanimously in this body—be given ample opportunity for consideration and passage over in the House of Representatives.

He is understandably concerned about the possibility of Republican and Democratic bills being sent over together, only to discover after the fact, that the Democratic bills would languish. I understand that concern. I am deeply sympathetic to it.

And it is because I share that concern—and not in spite of it—that I believe this is the way we ought to do things. This is the way we do things elsewhere in the Senate where we have got noncontroversial legislation. Let's move them forward. Now, we have moved them forward. You have seen pairings here; Democratic bills brought to the floor, not stitched together surgically in one legislative package but paper-clipped together in one stack so that we are presenting them for unanimous consent passage at the same time but not as part of the same legislation.

Why do we do this rather than the other way?

Understanding the legitimacy of his concerns, we want to make sure that bills in this category, in particular, receive fair consideration regardless of whether there is a Democrat or Republican sponsor of the bill.

No. 1, our House counterpart committee and others within the House of Representatives have told us that not only is this their preference—that they would rather have them paper-clipped and not stitched together as one bill but sent over as separate bills—they

said this will actually expedite, facilitate their ability to get them passed, whether they are introduced by Republicans or Democrats in the House or in the Senate.

Not always, by the way, is a Democrat bill here a Democrat bill on the other side of the Capitol. Sometimes it switches. But regardless, even for the bills that are introduced by a Democrat here and a Democrat there, these bills are considered—and we have been told over and over again by those with responsibility over this, they have got a better chance of passing separately than they would if we start stitching them together.

In their view, as they have told me repeatedly, it will hinder—not expedite or facilitate—their chances of being passed if we surgically stitch them together in one bill.

There are a number of reasons for this, including the fact that the laws of gravity don't always operate the same way here as they do on the other side of the Capitol. Sometimes a bill that can move through over here without a single objection might draw some opposition on the other side of the Capitol for reasons that can be difficult to predict.

In any event, there is a great safeguard in all of this in the way the House of Representatives passes this—and I think this is inherent in why it is that they want them as separate bills that can be paper-clipped together for purposes of getting it passed by unanimous consent over here—over there.

When they do it over there, they use a procedure in the House known as suspension of the rules. Under suspension of the rules, you have got to have 290 votes to pass it rather than a simple majority of 218 votes. That feature ends up replicating, to a significant degree, the effect of the cloture standard over here such that it has got to be bipartisan. So they can't afford to—and therefore don't on bills like this—favor Republican bills over Democrat bills.

Now, my friend and colleague the distinguished Senator from New Mexico noted a moment ago that his concerns are already materializing and that they are neglecting Democrat bills in the House while preferencing Republican bills.

I don't see this. In fact, to the contrary. Within the last week, the House of Representatives has passed multiple bills—I believe it was three or four bills—introduced by Democrats; Democrat bills run through the suspension of the rules calendar passed this week.

They are not depreferencing them. And from what I have heard from multiple credible sources on the other side of the Capitol, this is because of the way the suspension of the rules practice works over there. They don't, in part, because they can't get these passed if they preference Republican bills and depreference Democrat bills in this respect.

Look, at the end of the day, we have to remember that a lot of what this

Chamber does operates by means of unanimous consent, certainly in scheduling votes, scheduling just about anything. Heck, scheduling what time we are going to go to lunch or adjourn for the evening until the next day requires unanimous consent.

But a lot of legislation we pass gets done that way, too, and thank Heaven above that it can. If we can't do the easy stuff this way, the harder stuff becomes much more difficult. And the really tough stuff, the stuff that still needs to get done—things like permitting reform, for example, where on both sides of the aisle you have strong opinions, you have a strong desire overall to see that permitting reform gets accomplished, you have somewhat differing ideas on what must be in there and what must not be included—things like that that are very important to the public but that are by no means noncontroversial become far more difficult to impossible.

Let's get the easy stuff done. We did it yesterday afternoon. We can do it again. I will be back as I am determined to push these bills forward, Republican and Democrat. And if we tie them together surgically in one bill, it will impair their passage, Republican and Democratic alike. We don't need to do that here. We ought not. This is unfortunate, but I will be back soon.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

REMEMBERING NORMAN PODHORETZ

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I am sad to share that Norman Podhoretz, a towering figure of American letters and politics, passed away last night.

Not many men change the course of history. Those who do usually do it through their actions, like GEN Ulysses Grant's brilliant military campaigns in the Civil War. Fewer still do it with a combination of words and actions like Abraham Lincoln.

Perhaps rarest of all are men like Norman Podhoretz, who changed history with mere words—and what words they were. Norman was not only the longtime legendary editor and soul of *Commentary* Magazine but also a prolific author of a dozen books, hundreds of essays, articles and columns and no telling how many speeches.

He could turn out 10,000 words of elegant, sparkling, cogent prose, seemingly, at a moment's notice while identifying for his readers the deeper meaning of the day's news. Norman was an original neoconservative and proud to be so.

These days, some historically illiterate podcasters and so-called influencers use the term “neocon” as an all-purpose slur for anything they don't like. But the neocons were just that, new conservatives, a collection of anticommunist liberals between World War II and the Vietnam war who were, as the saying goes, mugged by reality—in this case, the reality of the New Left's turn against America.

Norman followed this path and blazed it for others. Born in 1930 to working-

class Jewish immigrants in Brooklyn, Norman later said the first Republican he met was in high school. Blessed with natural abilities and good teachers, Norman earned a scholarship to Columbia, while at his father's insistence, he also studied concurrently at the Jewish Theological Seminary and earned a degree in Hebrew literature.

After more studies at Cambridge and 2 years in the Army, he returned to New York and wrote for magazines such as *The New Yorker* and *Partisan Review* and ran in the liberal intellectual social circles of the times with the likes of Norman Mailer and Allen Ginsberg.

He also wrote for and worked at *Commentary*, a journal of Jewish thought which, at the time, fit well into those circles. He became editor-in-chief in 1960, on the eve of the disorder, chaos, and anti-Americanism that would be unleashed by the New Left that decade.

They considered this country to be evil—

Norman said of the New Left in 1995.

We neoconservatives were not only outraged by this attitude and thought it intellectually wrong in almost every detail, but also thought it was morally outrageous, contemptible, and dangerous.

Soon enough, Norman and *Commentary* defined this neoconservative movement, especially on foreign policy. They published famous path-setting essays, such as Jeane Kirkpatrick's “Dictatorships and Double Standards” and “The United States in Opposition” by Pat Moynihan.

No less a titan than Ronald Reagan called Norman a “must-read” for conservatives of all stripes.

Norman, Kirkpatrick, and other neocons both followed and led Reagan into the Presidency, helping to shape a strong and confident foreign policy of defending American interests and free peoples against the menace of Soviet Russia and anti-American insurgencies around the world.

Norman maintained a friendly dialogue with Reagan over the years and received a richly deserved Presidential Medal of Freedom from President George W. Bush.

Norman turned over the reins of *Commentary* in 1995, but he never put down the pen. I am thankful he didn't because that was also the year I discovered the magazine and became a 30-year subscriber.

Norman and *Commentary* were there to chronicle the threat from militant Islam, communist China, and growing anti-Semitism and radicalism at home.

Thanks to great thinkers like Norman, I cannot claim to be a neoconservative. I was, if I could borrow the phrase, “right from the beginning.” Generations of young readers learned the easy way from Norman what he had learned the hard way, never flirting with liberalism in our youth.

As, in his own words, “a filthy little slum child” of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, Norman was eternally grateful to America for welcoming his

family and providing him with unlimited opportunity. Norman said that he had “a love affair with America.”

A love affair with America—I think that is a very apt way to put it, something we should all try to emulate and instill in our kids and grandkids.

Norman’s love affair with America, I suspect, was behind his dogged support for Donald Trump when so many of his old friends abandoned our party in 2016. But Norman saw President Trump’s election as “a kind of miracle.” He believed that President Trump could, in his words, “save us from the evil on the Left.”

Despite all their differences, with their shared love of America, their hatred of communism, their shared New York roots—indeed their shared Brooklyn-to-Manhattan journey—Norman and the President may not be quite the strange bedfellows they first appeared to be.

I am confident that Norman was pleased with the President’s muscular defense of the American way of life upon his return to office and especially pleased that Norman lived to watch America join with Israel to devastate Iran’s nuclear program on President Trump’s watch.

One of the great benefits of my work as a Senator is the opportunity to cross paths with great men like Norman Podhoretz. After learning from his writing for so many years, I have had the occasion to meet him and share a modest correspondence. I can share that Norman may have receded from public writing in recent years, but he remained as witty, brilliant, and courageous as ever in his private correspondence.

Yet, as we all sometimes do when we reflect on our lives, Norman too acknowledged that he at times wondered “what it all amounted to” and sometimes feared the answer was “not much.” But nothing could be further from the truth, I assured him. For nearly 70 years, Norman informed, educated, persuaded, and succeeded with his words. He taught multiple generations not just to love our country but also why we should love it and how to defend it. His words reached to the U.S. Congress, the Oval Office, and into the councils of nations.

Without Norman and the little magazine he led, the course of history—the Reagan revolution and the Cold War in particular—might indeed have been very different.

I, therefore, join Norman’s family not only in mourning the loss of this great man but also in celebrating the highly consequential life of a true American patriot.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

REMEMBERING ELLA COOK

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to honor the life of Ella Cook, one of the victims in last weekend’s horrific attack that killed two and left more wounded at Brown University.

Ella was a 19-year-old female and a sophomore at Brown. Her life was taken far too soon in a disgusting act of violence that leaves all of us searching for answers.

You know, moments like this remind all of us how short life really is and how important it is to take advantage of every moment. Ella certainly took advantage of every moment she had with us here on Earth.

She grew up in Mountain Brook, AL—a suburb of Birmingham—with two loving parents, Anna and Richard, and two siblings, Hooker and Mary Hamner.

Ella loved to play piano, dance, and travel. She was studying French at Brown University. She also loved kids and spent much of her time babysitting and serving in Sunday school. She believed her highest calling was to be a mom one day.

But the most important thing to know about Ella is that she was a devout Christian. She was very involved in her church, the Cathedral Church of the Advent in Birmingham, and was loved by everyone there.

In her obituary, it says:

Not only did her personal faith shine out like a bright Christmas star, but she loved others as real people, not as objects. Ella loved God with her whole heart and she loved people—with her whole heart!

The reverend of Ella’s church described her as “an incredible, grounded, faithful, bright light” who “lifted up those around her.” I can’t think of a better legacy to leave behind than that.

She went off to college at Brown, where she was studying French, mathematics, economics, and was obviously very, very smart. She also was a patriot who loved this country, and she served as vice president of the College Republicans at Brown University. She was clearly a very courageous young lady, and I can’t imagine that was an easy job on such a liberal campus as Brown. But Ella was resolute in her mission to speak the truth and to fight every day for Christian values that have made this country great.

The president of the College Republicans of America described Ella as being “known for her bold, brave, and kind heart as she served her chapter and her fellow classmates.”

You know, the true measure of a life is not found in its length but its impact. And in the stories shared and the grief that is being expressed, it is clear that Ella left a lasting imprint on the people she touched. Alabama misses Ella, and we join her family and friends in grieving her loss.

You know, it certainly seems like this might have been a targeted attack. We will not rest until the deranged psychopath who did this is brought to justice. But that being said, may God bless the Cook family and give them peace and comfort in the midst of unspeakable tragedy. And may we honor Ella by carrying forward the values she lived by. Though her life

was taken far too soon, we know she is in Heaven now, and we will make sure that Ella’s legacy of patriotism and faith lives on here on Earth.

May God bless the Cook family, and may God bless Ella Cook.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

NATIONAL DEBT

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, we are quickly approaching the end of 2025, and this past year, particularly here in Congress, we have been met with a lot of challenges, chaos, as well as change. But there is one issue that unfortunately has not changed, and that is our ballooning national debt.

Throughout the year, I have repeatedly come to the Senate floor to pound the drum on this very serious issue. I have outlined the history of how we got to this point, and I have urged all of my colleagues, both Democrats and Republicans, to join me in taking action to address our runaway debt before it is too late.

So as we end the year, I am back on the floor today to remind my colleagues of the dire financial situation we currently face and to focus specifically on the harmful consequences that it has on the everyday lives of hard-working Americans.

Let’s first take a quick bird’s eye view of the situation. At the start of 2025, our national debt sat at a staggering \$36.2 trillion. Today, thanks in part to the irresponsible “Big Ugly Bill” that Republicans and President Trump passed this summer, that number has now ballooned by \$2 trillion. Just 1 year later, our debt now sits at \$38.4 trillion.

To put that number into perspective, when I was sworn into Congress back in January of 2009, the national debt stood at \$10.6 trillion, so that means that in 16 years, our national debt has nearly quadrupled. Unfortunately, it is only getting worse.

I think I speak for most Americans when I say it is hard to even fathom that amount of money. And Americans might wonder what our debt actually means for them and for their personal finances. Well, the reality is that it isn’t some abstract, made-up number; the national debt is a real-life burden that our country has to contend with. Ultimately, the brunt of that burden falls hardest on the people who are just fighting to make ends meet in this increasingly unaffordable economy.

So let’s break it down. On one front, it is simply an issue of having fewer resources available to invest in American families. Because our debt has gotten so out of control, each year, Congress is having to use more and more of everyday tax dollars to pay down just the interest on that debt. We are not even paying off the debt itself; we are just paying down the interest. In fact, the interest alone that we pay annually on our debt now exceeds the amount we spend on every single Federal program except Social Security.

That means fewer of your tax dollars are being sent back to your community to invest in stronger roads, safer neighborhoods, and better schools. It means that less resources are available for programs that help Americans put food on the table, afford childcare, or gain new skills through workforce training initiatives.

Particularly as American families continue to face an affordability crisis—the prices just keep going up—this support is needed now more than ever. Failing to invest in those who need it most because our debt is bogging us down will only add fuel to that fire.

On another front, Americans have continued to experience high inflation this year that can be tied to this growing national debt. When inflation goes up, the Federal Reserve has to raise interest rates to combat those higher prices. As interest rates rise, so do Americans' largest expenses, from their car payments, to their home mortgage, to their student loans.

Essentially, the longer we go without addressing this national debt, the purchasing power of Americans' hard-earned money will shrink each and every day, and families will continue struggling to afford the cost of everyday life because, unlike the Federal Government, Americans actually have to live within their means and adhere to their household budget. But unfortunately, today, too many American households find themselves trapped in a cycle of debt and financial insecurity just to meet their bottom line. More and more we see this is the case, even when both parents are working and doing everything they can to give their children a better future.

This is an entirely different reality than what Donald Trump and his billionaire supporters live in. Instead of paying their fair share like most Americans, Republicans just wrote for President Trump and the richest Americans a more favorable Tax Code, making sure that they get to hold on to their wealth and watch it grow. And when the richest Americans still don't succeed, they are given the leeway to bail themselves out.

We don't have to look any further than our President, whose companies have filed for bankruptcy at least four times. Four times, filed for bankruptcy—the President of the United States. Yet he contributes less to servicing our national debt than teachers and firefighters and hard-working Americans who play by the rules each and every day. The average American isn't afforded that luxury.

As a result, our Federal deficit has grown, inflation remains high, and the American people are left with nothing but rising prices, stagnant wages, and bitter, bitter feelings about being left behind.

For too long, we have propped up the wealthy and forced middle-class Americans to pay the bill. It is unacceptable, and if we have any hope of getting our fiscal house in order, this needs to change.

Congress is about to wrap up for the year, but when we reconvene, our debt will still be there—the largest it has ever been. We just can't make this debt go away. Lawmakers are going to have to put policies and politics aside and come together to figure out a way to address this issue.

So, in 2026, I am going to keep sounding the alarm on our national debt, highlighting the everyday consequences, and delving into the ways in which we can finally take steps to put our country on more sound financial footing.

We all say that we care about addressing our growing debt—everybody here in this Chamber says it—but in 2026, let's actually put our money where our mouth is, and let's make it happen.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

MILITARY RECRUITMENT

Mr. BANKS. Mr. President, last week, I had the pleasure of attending the Reagan National Defense Forum at the Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, CA. I have been to the event a few times before. It is a beautiful setting. The library is such a great tribute to one of our greatest Presidents, Ronald Reagan, who is known for his efforts to rebuild the military through peace through strength in the Reagan years that we often think about and talk so much about today.

The forum has been around for 12 years. This was the 12th annual event, and I have been able to attend the incredible event a few times early on in my time in the House, serving in the House of Representatives. It has been a few years since I have been there.

The event is filled with some of our Nation's top military leaders, Cabinet officials, administration officials—much of the leadership of the Pentagon. It is also a bipartisan event with a congressional delegation from both sides of the aisle. It also includes leaders and innovators in our national defense industry who join the event every year as well.

At this past forum, I participated in a panel discussion about recruitment and retention in our military. I was actually joined by a former Democrat colleague of mine in the House, JIMMY PANETTA, a Democrat from California.

Coincidentally, his father, the former Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, was sitting in the audience to hear his son and myself and the other members of the panel talk about this important subject.

The panel got me thinking, though, as we close out 2025, about how far we have come in just 1 year on this subject—recruitment and retention in the military. As we close out 2025, I can think of many big wins that have come out of the Trump administration but none as significant as what President Trump and Secretary of War Hegseth have done to repair the recruitment

crisis that took place on Joe Biden's watch. This unbelievable accomplishment doesn't get as much attention as it deserves, and that is why I wanted to come down to the floor today and talk about that incredible success story and share with you some of what I talked about in that panel a little over a week ago.

When I served in the House of Representatives before I got to the Senate, I chaired the Military Personnel Subcommittee on the House Armed Services Committee, so I saw up close how bad things got under Joe Biden—especially at the Pentagon and in our military.

When Joe Biden was President, he presided over the worst recruitment crisis in the over 50 years of an All-Volunteer Force of our military. In 2022, the Army set a goal to recruit 60,000 new soldiers but only managed to recruit 45,000. That is 15,000 soldiers short. The same thing happened again the following year, in 2023, when the Army was again 15,000 soldiers short of its 65,000 soldier recruitment goal.

When you add up the recruitment losses under Joe Biden, between 2021 and 2025, the Army shrank by 40,000 soldiers due to a lack of new recruits—that is as much as 4 divisions of troops in the U.S. Army.

The same story, Mr. President, happened to the Navy, which I know is important to you, and it is important to me. In 2023, the Navy was 7,500 short of its goal to recruit 37,000 new sailors. In 2024, it was nearly 5,000 short of its goal to recruit over 40,000 new sailors. So between 2021 and 2025, the Navy shrank by 16,000 sailors, which is about 3 aircraft carriers' worth of U.S. sailors.

That is how bad the recruitment crisis got on Joe Biden's watch.

How did this happen? I think this is an important context in history when we evaluate where we are today. It is clear to everyone that the Biden administration treated the military as a political experiment. I don't think, Mr. President, we have seen the military politicized in a way that it was under the 4 years that Joe Biden was President ever before in American history.

The Biden Pentagon dropped physical fitness standards to promote equity and supported woke DEI initiatives throughout the armed services.

As a side note, by the way, the marines were the only good news on recruitment during those 4 years because the Marine Corps never dropped their standards.

You had former Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, who immediately, after Joe Biden was sworn into office, ordered a 60-day stand-down to "combat extremism" in the military. They spent nearly 6 million man-hours militarywide on that stand-down. Those are hours, Mr. President, that could have been spent on training our troops to combat our biggest enemy, our biggest threat—that being China—or, I would contend to you, those 6 million man-hours could have been spent

on preparing to evacuate and leave Afghanistan in a much more responsible way than what the military did. Instead, they focused it on politics at the beginning of the Biden administration.

Then you had Gen. CQ Brown, who at the time was the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, who issued racial quotas for the U.S. Air Force. You had Joe Biden's Secretary of the Army Christine Wormuth arguing that it was a bad thing that more than 80 percent of our recruits come from military families. Think about that for a minute. She said there was "a risk of developing a warrior caste" in America. When the Secretary of the Army should have been trying to boost recruitment, she insulted patriotic Americans who are inspired by their parents to serve and suggested that the Army didn't want them. It is no wonder that we had a recruitment crisis in the U.S. Army.

Mr. President, when you combine all of these factors, it is no wonder that the military under Joe Biden failed to meet its recruitment numbers.

Simply put, fewer young Americans wanted to serve because they stopped believing in the mission.

I often think back to an article from the Wall Street Journal that I read back in 2023. It had a poll that showed that patriotism among Americans, especially young Americans, had plummeted to historic lows.

Again, in 2023, Joe Biden is the President; the aftermath of what happened in Afghanistan; all of this other foolish experimentation; the politicization of our military.

According to that poll, only 38 percent of Americans in 2023 said that patriotism was very important to them. That is down from 70 percent in the 1990s.

To this day, this story astonishes me. I would love to see an update from the Wall Street Journal on that poll to show what those patriotism numbers look like today.

Mr. President, I know you know this: You can't build a military without patriots. You can't ask young men and women to put their lives on the line when the culture tells you that the country isn't worth fighting and dying for. You can't expect the next generation of Americans to raise their right hand—Mr. President, like you did, like I did, like so many of our colleagues did in the U.S. Senate—to protect this Nation when so few believe that America is the greatest country in the history of the world.

Something else that I think about is how the catastrophic withdrawal from Afghanistan played a huge part in the shortage in military recruitment under Joe Biden as well. Americans saw 13 brave servicemembers killed at Abbey Gate, including a Hoosier, and American guns and vehicles were abandoned to the Taliban on that embarrassing and disastrous and deadly day. It didn't exactly inspire people to serve. Young Americans asked themselves "Who

wants to be part of that type of military?" and they said "Not me."

Mr. President, the good news, though—and I want to get to the good news because this is really good news. The good news is that this has all been fixed in a really short period of time. President Trump changed everything. In fact, it changed immediately on election day just a little over a year ago. Military leaders testify to the fact that military recruitment increased dramatically the day that Donald Trump won the election. The Army met its 2025 recruitment numbers 4 months early. The Army reached its retention goals for the whole year in just 6 months. Navy recruitment hit a 20-year record.

How did all of this happen? President Trump and Secretary Hegseth inspired young people to serve again because President Trump and Secretary Hegseth are restoring our military's strength and greatness. They cut away the woke DEI initiatives throughout the Department of War and focused on what really matters to our military—patriotism, a sense of mission, and lethality.

Under Joe Biden, young Americans saw the botched withdrawal from Afghanistan. Today, they see a military that puts America first—taking out narcoterrorist drug boats before they can bring deadly drugs into our country.

Seventy-one percent of Americans say they support these strikes on these drug boats. When you ask young men and women if that is the type of military they want to be part of—one that is stopping drugs from flooding into America and killing our brothers, our sisters, our neighbors, our friends—you get an overwhelming yes.

When America is strong, when America is competent, when America wins, our young people want to be a part of that. They want to serve.

Patriotism isn't dead; it was just dormant during those 4 years, waiting for leadership that America can believe in, like what we have in the White House today in Donald Trump.

Secretary of War Hegseth is doing an extraordinary job. He is the exact leader at the Department that we need to restore the focus on lethality after 4 disastrous years under Joe Biden when the focus was on anything but that. He has brought back the warrior ethos to our military and has worked hard to ensure that America's military can meet tomorrow's challenges. Our enemies have been put on notice under Pete Hegseth's leadership at the Department of War.

Mr. President, the path forward is clear: We must continue supporting this administration's efforts to restore our military and make our military as great as it can be again.

Our All-Volunteer military depends on Americans who choose to serve, and Americans will choose to serve when they believe in the mission, trust their leaders, and take pride in this great

country. President Trump is giving them that, and America is stronger for it. That is some great news, Mr. President.

As we close out 2025, there are so many things to talk about, but this accomplishment in and of itself—what President Trump and Secretary Hegseth have done to restore recruitment, save our military—is really good news, and I wanted to come to the floor and talk about it as we close out this year, on the eve of going home for this Christmas break.

Mr. President, Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Happy New Year. I am looking forward to a lot more good news like this to come in 2026.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

SENATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, we heard so much over the weekend from Tennesseans who were reaching out, just so saddened by the series of truly devastating attacks we saw in Syria. Two of our National Guard members from Iowa lost their lives. Indeed, we know that right now, President Trump and Senators GRASSLEY and ERNST are out at Dover to meet with those families. These are two that were killed by an ISIS gunman.

At Brown University, a gunman shot and killed two students that were in a session as they prepared for exams right there on the college campus. One of those was a young woman from Alabama who was vice president of the college Republican Club; another was an aspiring neurosurgeon. These are two young people who had very bright and promising futures in front of them.

In Australia, two terrorists opened fire on a Hanukkah celebration. They murdered 15 people, including a 10-year old girl and a Holocaust survivor.

We know that anti-Semitism is a sickness. It is spreading across the globe, and world leaders must do more to protect their Jewish communities.

Our Nation's prayers remain with all of these victims and with their families and those that experience these tragedies.

We can all be grateful that, in Donald J. Trump, we have a President who is committed to serving that justice when it is needed. Terrorism will not have the last word.

And we have seen how the FBI has worked to thwart these plots that are taking place here in our country. They announced, on Monday, that agents had thwarted a New Year's Eve terror plot that was planned for Los Angeles by a pro-Palestine extremist group. The four suspects are now in Federal custody, and we know they will face the full force of the law.

God bless the men and women in Federal law enforcement and in our armed services who are really working around the clock to restore safety and security here in our country.

Under President Trump, we have seen that national security has become a

priority. In fact, when we look back over the last year, one theme sticks out about the administration's accomplishments is that President Trump is keeping his word. He is making America safer and stronger than ever before.

You can look at the southern border. In a matter of months, President Trump completely fixed the Biden border crisis. The President was right when he said we didn't need more laws. We just needed a new President, one who would enforce the laws.

In October, there were just over 11,000 apprehensions at the southern border. The same month last year, in 2024, there were over 100,000 encounters at the border, and that was under the Biden border policy. Now, even the year before that, there were 240,000 encounters. Think about that: from 240,000 down to 100,000, down to 11,000. And what changed was the fact that we had a President who was enforcing the law.

Now, also in my wonderful State of Tennessee, Memphis saw the highest crime rate per capita in 2024. But since September, the administration's Memphis Safe Task Force has made more than 4,200 arrests, including hundreds of warrant arrests for domestic violence, aggravated assault; and dozens more for narcotics, sexual assault, and homicide. They also have located more than 120 missing children and have recovered 970 illegal firearms and 560 stolen vehicles.

With President Trump and AG Bondi and Kash Patel, and the commitment that they have made to Memphis, this is what you are seeing. Criminals are being apprehended, and the citizens in Memphis feel safe to go out and about. The crime rate has been cut in half. President Trump is replicating the success we are seeing in Memphis. He is replicating this all across the country, whether it is here in Washington, DC, or in Oregon and in other areas.

And around the globe, President Trump has restored peace through strength, after years of weakness from the Biden administration. We have to note, when we talk about globally, what he has done—ending eight wars, making the world a safer place not only for Americans but for so many.

Across the government, President Trump has also rooted out woke programs that abused taxpayer dollars under the previous administration. And we saw a lot of corruption in our institutions. With these programs, the Biden administration pushed a radical anti-American agenda, and now, with the Trump administration, we are restoring common sense and putting the American citizens first.

On the economy, the President's pro-growth and pro-worker agenda is already delivering. Since its peak under Biden, inflation is down 67 percent. Of course, we all remember, under Biden, it was at a 40-year high. And now that has come down 67 percent, and it will continue to come down.

The trade deficit is shrinking. Our Nation is bringing in trillions of dol-

lars in new investments, and this is going to create new factories, jobs, and opportunities.

Mr. President, we are so pleased that some of those jobs are coming into Tennessee. Some of those investments are coming into our State.

And the President has focused on making American energy dominant once again. We were pleased to see that, in his first few days in office, he eliminated a lot of the Green New Deal. And because of that, the national average for a gallon of gas is at its lowest price since March of 2021.

He has also signed Executive orders to support nuclear energy, including speeding up approvals for new reactors and strengthening fuel supply chains. And more than any other State, Tennessee is best positioned to lead our Nation's nuclear renaissance, especially with the work that is being done at the Oak Ridge National Lab and at our universities. I will remind my colleagues that our nuclear energy industry had its birth at the Oak Ridge National Lab, in Tennessee.

We also have the Clinch River site, which should soon be home to the Nation's first small modular reactor. And taking advantage of this opportunity, the Tennessee Valley Authority has got to step up, and they have to lead the way.

This week, the Senate is set to confirm four of the President's nominees to serve on TVA's Board of Directors and ensure that Tennessee and our Nation do lead in nuclear energy.

Supporting all of these accomplishments is the One Big Beautiful Bill, or the working families tax cut bill. This is something that was signed into law on Independence Day. And in that legislation was the largest tax cut in history, of \$4 trillion, including no tax on tips and overtime and Social Security, a provision I have worked to achieve for years; historic funding to finish the border wall; \$50 billion to support rural health; permitting reforms to make it easier to build in America again; a generational investment in our military; and I could go on and on.

And in the last year, this administration, with President Trump and Republicans, has been hard at work to make certain that we address the cost of living, that we address safety in our Nation and around the globe, and to improve the quality of life in a stronger, freer, and safer country than ever before.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BANKS). The Senator from California.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. President, in a moment, I am going to ask this body to pass legislation requiring the Department of Defense to show Congress and the American people the September 2 video of strikes that killed two survivors on a shipwrecked vessel after the administration's first strike disabled the craft. The American people deserve to see this video and to witness what is being done in their name.

The administration has proudly published the footage of countless other strikes, including the first one from the very same day, believing it could do so without compromising any sources or methods used by our military or intelligence services. This followup footage should be no different.

Since the beginning of this campaign of unauthorized strikes against boats in the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific, there has been one key feature from this administration: an eagerness to push out the videos of these attacks.

We first learned about these strikes when video of an attack was published by the President of the United States, who posted the video of it on his social media. That was video of the first strike on September 2.

In the strikes since—strikes that have killed nearly 100 people in the last few months—the attacks have been announced to the world by the President and the Secretary of Defense, posting videos of them on their social media.

Last week, we saw the administration distribute lengthy footage of the seizure of an oil tanker off the coast of Venezuela.

So why not release the video of the second strike that the administration ordered on September 2? Why is the administration hiding it behind closed doors, sharing it with only a small handful of Members, and leaving the rest of Congress and the country in the dark? What is it about the killing of these two survivors that the administration is unwilling to let the people see?

The legality of the entire campaign of striking these boats and killing those onboard, rather than interdicting and arresting them, has been called into serious question. An attack on shipwrecked sailors is expressly prohibited by the laws of war.

The rationale for hiding this video seems far less about any nebulous claim of the need to protect sources or methods, and far more about protecting the administration from accountability and oversight that the American people demand.

This legislation is simple: Make this video available—first, in full, without edits, to all Members of Congress. Then, if there is any legitimate basis to be concerned with the revelation of some source, method, modus operandi, or technology that isn't already apparent with the eager release of all the other videos, make it public with proper redaction.

Surely, the same people who scrub and declassify every other video the Pentagon has publicly posted can be enlisted to do the same for this one.

Or is the so-called "most transparent administration in history" afraid of what this video would show? Would it show a clear violation of the laws of war, which use the killing of shipwrecked combatants as the textbook definition of an illegal use of force?

The truth on this is going to come out. We know that it will. Let it be

now. We already know from the reports of our colleagues who have seen the video what it shows—first, a strike on a boat; and then, a short while later, a second strike on the disabled wreckage of the boat and two survivors, killing them.

I should make clear: None of these strikes is lawful because these targets are not combatants. There is no imminent threat of invasion, and there is no legal authorization in the United States or international law for the use of military force for drug interdiction alone.

We have condemned campaigns of extrajudicial killings in other countries that have done so to allegedly combat the drug trade—like the Philippines under Duterte—and we must not engage in that conduct here.

But the second strike on September 2 compounds the illegality. It flies directly in the face of laws and values to underpin the U.S. military.

So I ask my colleagues to support this bill. Allow this legislation to pass and ensure that we are not hiding information from the American people. After all, the President of the United States said he was fine with releasing the footage. “Whatever they have,” he said, “we’d certainly release. No problem.”

It is time we hold the President to his promise to be transparent with the American people. Our servicemembers and their families deserve nothing less.

Right now, we have a massive military force in the region. We have killed almost 100 people. We are beginning a blockade of a country with which we are not at war and with which the American people do not want us to go to war—not over regime change, as despicable as the Maduro regime is. The American people do not want to go to war over regime change, which is apparently the real objective here.

We should pass a War Powers Resolution to make clear that Congress does not support a military campaign that may draw us into another endless war or destabilize the region. And we can start by releasing the video of one deadly strike already undertaken, but the evidence of which has been withheld from the American people.

I urge passage of this bill.

As if in legislative session and notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of the bill at the desk to require the release of video strikes conducted on September 2, 2025, against designated terrorist organizations in the area of responsibility of the U.S. Southern Command; that the bill be considered read three times and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. MULLIN. Mr. President, I reserve the right to object.

The junior Senator from California knows good and well what “classifica-

tions” mean because he had 15 years on the House Intelligence Committee until his clearance was pulled in 2023. He understands classifications. He understands when certain things can be exposed and certain things cannot because of the sensitivity of them.

He also understands that committees of jurisdiction are privileged with the correct clearance to be able to watch this video because the junior Senator from California stated that himself. It has been shown to not a partisan but a bipartisan group of individuals who do have the accurate oversight and clearances to watch it.

Now, what is this really about? Politics? Maybe.

During the junior Senator’s time on the House Intelligence Committee, then-President Obama had 500 strikes on terrorist organizations. Let’s keep in mind that we are striking terrorist organizations, and no one is denying that. There are 24 cartels that are being deemed terrorist organizations that are poisoning our streets, that are killing our families, that are killing our friends, that are affecting all of our homes and all of our streets in all of our States all across the country—in fact, to the tune that there have been more people killed in 2024 by drug overdoses—the sum of 10,000 more individuals—than we lost in U.S. personnel during the entire Vietnam war. If that is not an attack on us, I don’t know. If that is not a terrorist organization that is truly poisoning our streets, then I don’t know.

During the time that the junior Senator from California sat on Intel, not one time did he ever ask for the release of the same videos from the Obama administration that killed 3,700 individuals, including U.S. citizens.

Now, if you think there would be transparency, that would need to be released. We would want to see the videos at least on the U.S. citizens who were killed in this manner, not these narcoboats that are poisoning our streets. But that really isn’t what this is about, and the junior Senator from California knows that. This is all about politics. That is what this is about.

Why are we protecting the ones who are poisoning our streets? Shouldn’t we be trying to protect the ones who are on our streets?

I don’t think it is crazy to think that we would want to be proactive about going after narcoboats. I, for sure, want to. I have zero issue with this. I have been able to be briefed. I know the junior Senator was recently briefed; he is just upset that he may not have the clearances to watch the videos anymore.

But there is sensitive material, and it was clearly explained why it can’t be released.

Of all the people in this Chamber, the junior Senator from California knows that when it is in certain classifications, there is a reason for that.

With that, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from California.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. President, first, as my colleague served on the Intelligence Committee when I chaired the committee, he should well know that Members of Congress actually don’t hold clearances that can be revoked; we either serve on certain committees or we don’t.

But more to the point, in listening to my colleague address this motion to release the video to the American people, I have heard very little of the basis for an objection to releasing this video except some nebulous claim that somehow this footage must be classified.

I would pose this question to my colleagues: Do you recognize that this video has already been partly displayed to the American people? The administration was all too proud to show the first part of this same video, the first attack on this ship, to the American people. There was no objection, obviously, to classification or to source of method. They showed that to the whole world. They just didn’t show all of us the rest of that video; that is, they only showed the footage of the first strike. What they withheld was the footage of the killing of the survivors of the strike.

So, to make the claim here without basis that, well, somehow the continuation of that footage is confidential but that the beginning of that footage showing the first attack can be released without injury to sources or methods—it just doesn’t pass the smell test.

This is going to come out. It is just a question of how long we have to fight to make this available to the American people.

But if the administration is proud of this, if the administration is proud of what it is doing in the name of the American people, it should be proud to show this video to the American people. And we should hold the President, who said: Whatever they have, we would certainly release; no problem—we should hold the President to that commitment.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

ROTORCRAFT OPERATIONS TRANSPARENCY AND OVERSIGHT REFORM ACT

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, in January of this year, tragedy struck just a few miles from here when an Army Black Hawk helicopter collided with American Airlines Flight 5342 at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport. Sixty-seven souls were tragically lost in an instant.

After the crash, it quickly became evident that there were commonsense changes that would immediately enhance aviation safety.

The Army helicopter, flying along the Potomac River, had deliberately chosen not to broadcast its location to other aircraft or to air traffic control