

streets. We passed the GENIUS Act, a landmark bill to create the first U.S. Federal framework for stablecoins and ensure U.S. leadership in financial innovation. We passed the TAKE IT DOWN Act to combat nonconsensual explicit images being shared online. There is so much more that I could talk about.

We tried to do things that, ultimately, were blocked by Democrats, like legislation that would prevent biological males from hijacking opportunities for women and girls in sports.

I guess my point is that it has been a long and challenging year here in the U.S. Senate. I thank all of my colleagues, both Republican and Democrat, and all the staffs, including folks here on the floor, who put in long days and long hours in this last year. I think, as I said, there is a lot to show for it.

If I put up this last chart, you will have a hard time—nobody will be able to read this, for sure. I do this simply to illustrate. This is the list of things that we have accomplished in this last year. It runs the gamut of all the things—some of which I just mentioned and a lot I didn't mention—that were included in the working families tax cuts, the One Big Beautiful Bill that passed last summer. But then there are so many other things on this list that were accomplished as a result of the good work we have done on behalf of the American people here last year.

It is an example of what we all came here to do. Thanks to our work this year, Americans are going to be looking at, one, safer streets; two, more money in their pockets; and, three, new opportunities to get ahead and new opportunities on the way for American people and American families.

Mr. President, we are going to keep advancing those priorities here in the U.S. Senate, in 2026, and build on the record accomplishments and successes that we have had here in 2025.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive 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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, last night, Donald Trump gave a speech about how supposedly great his first year has been. So, of course, his speech was short because there is really not much to say about how great Trump has been.

For 18 minutes, the President, last night, tried to convince Americans the sky is green and that trees can walk. He yelled at the camera and said that things are somehow going great even

though costs are up. He said he is doing a great job in office—all of which is, obviously, false. And the American people didn't buy it.

It was clear, in watching the speech, that the President didn't want to be there. The only thing Americans saw last night was a very rich President trapped in a bubble, forced by his advisers to give a speech he didn't want to give. It is like your cousin who can't sit still for a Christmas photo, only this is the President of the United States.

Our country is in a lot of trouble right now, but instead of giving Americans a plan on how we will lower their costs, Donald Trump played the blame game. That is so typical of him. Instead of solving a problem, which is what a good President is supposed to do, he just points fingers at other people, and that doesn't do a bit of good to get the American people back on the right track. It is never a good sign when the President begins a speech by saying, "I inherited a mess," because that is just another way of telling people: I don't want to be responsible for any of this.

Again, President Trump's speech showed he lives in a bubble—a billionaire bubble—completely disconnected from the reality that everyday Americans are seeing and feeling. People are feeling squeezed harder and harder every day, and Donald Trump, last night, took a victory lap.

Now let's talk about one of the most important issues for Americans when it comes to costs: healthcare.

Last night, Donald Trump offered exactly zero solutions for how we are going to lower Americans' healthcare premiums. He kept blaming Democrats. He kept saying the healthcare crisis is not his fault.

But here are the facts—the immutable facts—Donald Trump: No amount of finger-pointing, lying, hyping it up, or patting yourself on the back is going to undo the fact that the American people are going to pay a lot more for healthcare come January 1.

On January 1, the ACA enhanced premium tax credits are going to expire because Donald Trump chose to let them die.

Even our Republican colleagues have told us time and time again that if Trump would do something here and support an extension of the tax credits, as we Democrats are fighting for, then maybe they would be able to do something. But he doesn't.

Now tens of millions are going to see their insurance premiums double on average. Four million people will lose insurance because Donald Trump let it happen, and he is there, sitting in front of the TV camera, patting himself on the back—unbelievable. Millions more with private insurance will see their premiums go up because Donald Trump let it happen. Our emergency rooms are going to be even more overrun. People are going to be kicked out of nursing homes. Rural hospitals will close. And

there is Donald Trump congratulating himself on how great he is.

Look, because of Republicans' total inaction on healthcare, huge damage has already been done, and nothing we do after January 1 can undo so much of that damage. As I have said before, the toothpaste is out of the tube.

However you want to say it, the point is this: Because of Republicans, it is now impossible, sadly, to prevent people from having to pay hundreds, if not thousands, more on their premiums next year. It is going to start January 1.

Even if we can figure out a way to stop the bleeding next year—that is a very big "if"—Republicans are still in shambles and have no plan themselves. For too many people, it is going to be too late because Republicans chose to let these ACA tax credits expire. They had an easy opportunity to join us in our 3-year, clean extension of the ACA credits, and they refused.

Well, Americans heard none of what they wanted to hear last night during Trump's speech—nothing about how he will lower premiums, nothing about how he will lower their cost of living, nothing about how Republicans could have fixed this crisis but didn't. Donald Trump kept playing the blame game. Many a President has tried to do that—all with disastrous results. People want solutions; Donald Trump gave them none.

Democrats, meanwhile, are not going to stop fighting to lower people's premiums, and we are not going to stop fighting to lower costs across the board and help Americans pay for the things they need and avoid those moments on Friday night when families sit around the kitchen table and say: How the hell am I going to pay this bill? I don't have the money for it. I need what the bill has asked me to pay for.

Look, we Democrats will not stop fighting to lower costs and help Americans pay for the things they need. These will be our watchwords in 2026: lower costs and lower healthcare costs in particular.

That issue ain't going away, Republicans. We are going to keep on it and on it and on it until maybe you join us to really solve the problem.

Republicans, healthcare is not going away. People need help to afford premiums, and Democrats are going to keep fighting and pushing this issue for all of 2026 and beyond.

APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. President, on the CR, Democrats want to get our work done to finish the bipartisan appropriations process. Our goal is a bipartisan bill that funds the government through fiscal year 2026.

Republicans worked for over a month and just yesterday gave Democrats a list of their cleared amendments, one of which has no text.

While I don't expect we will need quite as long as Republicans took, it will still take some time for us to work through our amendments so that we can finish the minibus in January.

Democrats are working in good faith to finish the process. As we have said, our goal is a bipartisan bill that funds the government through 2026, and we are working in good faith to finish this process. It is not easy. Obstacles always remain. No side is going to get everything they want. But a bipartisan agreement is the preferred outcome for the vast majority of Senators, Democrat and Republican.

#### SENATE COMMERCE COMMITTEE HEARING

Mr. President, now on the Senate Commerce Committee yesterday and what TED CRUZ had to say. Yesterday, the Senate Commerce Committee heard testimony from FCC Chair Brendan Carr—the first time he has appeared publicly before the Senate after trying to bully ABC and Disney into pulling Jimmy Kimmel off the air. Remember back then that Carr said in a podcast, “We could do this the easy way or the hard way.” He threatened ABC and Disney with investigations. What thuggery. He threatened to pull broadcaster licenses.

These are naked attempts at censorship in violation of the First Amendment’s protection to free speech. The threatening and bullying of the media into simply being a mouthpiece for Donald Trump is one of the greatest threats our democracy faces, and Mr. Carr has been a willing and eager henchman to achieve that very dangerous goal.

It was disturbing to hear Mr. Carr double down yesterday on his attempt to take Kimmel off the air, and it was troubling that too few Republicans were willing to stand up to him. But at least one Republican—the chair of the committee, the junior Senator from Texas, Senator CRUZ—spoke out against Mr. Carr’s bully tactics.

I don’t agree very much with Senator CRUZ on most everything he says, and I didn’t agree with many of the things he said yesterday at the committee, but CRUZ is absolutely correct that Mr. Carr’s conduct is dangerous. On the issue of Mr. Carr and the censoring of the news media, Senator CRUZ is right on the money. He is right when he said Mr. Carr’s behavior is the kind of stuff you see in “Goodfellas.”

No government, no matter who is in charge, has the right to silence, intimidate, or censor protected free speech no matter where it comes from.

There are lots of dangers to our democracy under this Trump regime—it is becoming more and more like a regime—but one of the top is the intimidating of media, is the consolidation of media to only have a voice that protects Donald Trump and defends Donald Trump. That is what dictators do. That is what Orban has done in Hungary and Erdogan in Türkiye. Dictators throughout history try to censor the media, consolidate the media so they are all under the thumb of the leader, of the dictator.

This is a dramatic danger, a huge danger, one of the greatest dangers to our democracy, and TED CRUZ talked

about that yesterday. Frankly, if CRUZ can speak out against the FCC’s obvious bullying tactics, so can other Republicans. Other Republicans should join him. Everyone should join him. What Mr. Carr is doing is a huge danger, and both Democrats and Republicans should unite to call this dangerous conduct out. CRUZ’s comments yesterday were the first step, and more on his side of the aisle in particular should join him.

Now, there is also the issue of affordability, which Mr. Carr did not address. Yesterday in committee, Republicans did not speak out on the issue that is in the very front of every American’s mind. While the Republicans rubberstamped Carr’s destruction of free speech—too many of them did that—they didn’t bother to question Carr about how families have to choose between internet and cell service for their kids and putting food on the table. The costs are going through the roof, led by the big media carriers like AT&T and Verizon.

Senator CANTWELL spoke out strongly on this issue. It is a cost issue. It is a cost-of-living issue. People hate paying a lot of bills that they don’t have the money for, and one of them is their bill for social media, for the internet.

Democrats have a very simple message for Carr and the Trump administration: We need high-quality and low-cost wireless service, not the other way around.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). The majority whip.

#### TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor today having just heard the minority leader talk about the President’s address to the Nation last night. I listened carefully to what the President had to say, and I thought he did an outstanding job explaining what a difference a year makes, because what the President inherited and Republicans inherited when we took over after Joe Biden and the Democrats had been in charge—our country was weaker, our country was poorer, and our country was less safe.

What we have seen is a complete reversal over the last year, with a focus on significant changes at the border, where we now have a secure border—the most secure it has been in years and years and even decades.

There is a huge difference on energy. We are right now going into the Christmas season, and gasoline prices are at the lowest they have been in 5 years.

There is a complete change in taxes, where the Democrats wanted to raise taxes on American families by \$5 trillion. Instead, this year and as we go into next year, people are going to see a dramatic difference in lower taxes, impacting how much money they have in their pockets.

There has been a dramatic change in national security. We now have peace through strength, and we didn’t have that over the last administration.

Then, on top of all these things, President Trump announced something called a warrior dividend. That is going to give \$1,776 to each and every one of our brave men and women in uniform, and there are over 1 million of them right now. What a gift and what bonus to thank them for their service.

Oh yes, we are dramatically changing the direction of this country. We are getting America back on track.

Just this morning, we got additional good news. It is the latest inflation report. The inflation has slowed in November to 2.7 percent, and that is lower than anything anyone expected. That is a reflection of the work we are doing. Core inflation was the lowest since March of 2021. That is when Joe Biden and the Democrats came into office, and we faced 40-year high inflation. That is what the American people suffered through under 4 years of Biden and the Democrats.

This is good news for consumers, it is good news for Main Street, and it is good news for the country.

The evidence is undeniable: Republicans are getting America back on track.

This Christmas, families are really feeling the relief that comes from returning to commonsense energy policies. You unleash American energy, as we have done—taken the leash off that the Democrats had applied to American energy production—you get more energy production, and prices go down.

I remember when consumers were paying \$5 a gallon for gasoline and even higher for diesel. Now, in Wyoming, it is less than \$2.50 a gallon. I hear that in Oklahoma—from Senator LANKFORD—it is \$1.99 a gallon.

I will never forget the day that Joe Biden told his Environmental Protection Agency—he said: Prioritize climate over energy that is affordable, available, and reliable.

That era is over. By unleashing American energy that is now affordable, available, and reliable, Republicans are making America safer and more prosperous.

Now, a vital piece of all of this energy dominance is America’s clean coal. A few months ago, President Trump declared that American clean coal is essential for our Nation’s safety and prosperity, and he is right.

As part of the Working Families Tax Cut bill, Republicans in Congress lowered the royalty rate for coal production on Federal lands. The old, higher tax rates risked keeping coal in the ground. Lower rates mean higher production and lower energy costs. It is good, certainly, for my home State of Wyoming, and it is good for America.

Wyoming is America’s energy breadbasket. Our Powder River Basin coal produces nearly half of all the coal in America, and it is the cleanest burning coal in the world. More production means more affordable energy. More production means revenue for Wyoming schools as the taxes come in. More production means more certainty