

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

for decades in the future in terms of our energy security. More production means good-paying jobs, and Joe Biden tried to cripple coal production in America.

His administration imposed a punishing Buffalo Resource Management Plan on Wyoming and on parts of Montana, a plan to stop mining of American coal. Republicans used the Congressional Review Act to restore sanity to energy production. Now, Wyoming coal producers in the Powder River Basin can provide the coal needed to continue powering our Nation.

As a result, miners see a bright future again. Coal production is now up 6 percent since last year. Another critical piece of American energy superiority is nuclear energy. Last year, the Senate passed my bill to ban the import of Russian uranium. President Trump is also supporting uranium production and nuclear energy as part of his all-of-the-above energy strategy.

Uranium production now in the United States is booming. My own State of Wyoming is the second largest producer of uranium in America. Our production has increased nearly 100 percent since last year.

Because of Republican policies, production facilities that were once dormant are now ramping up. That is because they have certainty in terms of business. Nuclear energy fuels 20 percent of American electricity. We need it. More power from all energy sources is going to bring affordable electricity prices in the future.

Remember, Republicans also ended this electric vehicle mandate that the Democrats were trying to foist upon the American people. We got rid of the \$7,500 government subsidies to buy electric vehicles. When California tried to control what cars we can drive, Republicans stepped in to stop them. Electric vehicles are vehicles Americans don't want, can't afford, aren't practical in my home State of Wyoming or the Presiding Officer's State of Montana. We are not going to allow California to force-feed us. They tried. Now Americans are back in the driver's seat.

Republicans also removed Green New Deal regulations. We did it throughout the entire government, and taxpayers saved billions. Additionally, Republicans repealed the Biden-era tax on natural gas. That saves Americans money when they heat their homes. Republicans rolled back Biden-era regulations on home appliances. Now Americans have the freedom to purchase what they want, the appliances that work best for them and their families and their budgets.

The contrast between Republicans and Democrats is dramatic, and we certainly heard it last night with the President's address. Senate Democrats have absolutely no plans or no desire to make energy more affordable. They don't. They want it more expensive so we use less, and that helps their green climate initiatives.

Democrats may talk about affordability. Yet energy costs are the highest in their own home States. Think about it. Senator SCHUMER, he was just on the floor of the Senate, his home State of New York, and he was addressing affordability. He wasn't talking about putting more money in people's pockets. Nope, his home State electricity prices are up 34 percent over the last 6 years. New York's energy prices are 44 percent higher than the national average.

In California, electricity prices are up 58 percent in 5 years. Democrats ought to take responsibility for the higher prices because it is their policies that caused them.

Affordable, reliable American energy is a necessity. It is not a luxury. It is good for our workers; it is good for our economy; and it is good for our safety and our national security.

America is an energy superpower. Under Republicans, we are finally beginning to act like it again.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority whip.

IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, earlier this year, the Trump administration began a calculated show of political theater in force designed to spread fear and terror in Chicago and surrounding Illinois communities.

Masked Federal agents pepper-sprayed, punched, body slammed, and even shot individuals, including U.S. citizens, during violent immigration enforcement actions. Virtually all of what I just said was captured on video. They deployed tear gas canisters against clergy, broke into apartments, zip-tied children.

When they were required by the Federal courts to disclose how many people had been detained recently, they came up with 614 names; 16 of the 600 had any criminal record that presented a threat to public safety whatsoever—16 out of 614.

President Trump has not gone after the worst of the worst as he promised. Instead, he has brought some of the worst, most unprofessional, and most poorly trained Federal law enforcement officers and agents into our city.

Because of his so-called Operation Midway Blitz, children are afraid to go to schools, businesses are closing, and families are being torn apart. Yet the Trump administration shows no regret. They are reveling in the fear and chaos they are creating.

Look at the Border Patrol official Gregory Bovino. On Tuesday, he returned to Chicago after leaving last month and bringing his campaign of fear to North Carolina and New Orleans. As soon as he arrived back in Chicago, Mr. Bovino went to the picket line of Local 705 of the Teamsters at Mauser Packaging Solutions.

These workers are on strike for better benefits, safer working conditions, and measures to prevent ICE from entering their workplace without a Federal judicial warrant.

Bovino brought Federal agents to this picket line to intimidate and interrogate these workers. He laughed in their faces as they demanded better working conditions. In court testimony, Mr. Bovino has praised Federal agents' use of excessive force as "exemplary," even after multiple U.S. citizens were hospitalized following their encounters with his Federal agents.

When addressing Federal agents prior to a confrontation with peaceful protesters, Mr. Bovino stated that "if someone strays into a pepper ball, then that's on them."

Bovino has tear-gassed peaceful crowds, encouraged his agents to fire pepper balls at protesters, and threatened to go "even harder on the streets," when Federal judges dare to order him to follow the law. But Mr. Bovino is not alone in his cruelty. Many Trump officials have been posting and gloating about their clear violations of constitutional rights.

While President Trump has given them carte blanche to violate the law, there is a reality ahead. One day President Trump will not be in the White House. When he goes, those who ordered these unlawful activities finally may be held accountable and prosecuted. Section 242 of title 18 of the United States Code makes it a crime for a Federal law enforcement official acting under color of law to violate the constitutional rights of any person.

I have no expectation that President Trump's Justice Department will investigate these violations currently taking place in Chicago. But the statute of limitations from these provisions is 5 years. The next administration will be well within its rights to hold accountable anyone who violated an individual's constitutional rights or directed others to do so during this Trump administration.

While the Supreme Court's outrageous decision in *Trump v. The United States* may have personally immunized President Trump from prosecution, it provided no such protection for these agents.

The Trump administration officials responsible for the use of excessive force or unlawful detention may face criminal consequences for their role in the Midway Blitz. That is why, today, my colleague Senator DUCKWORTH and I have submitted a criminal referral to the Justice Department regarding the unlawful actions of senior Trump administration officials and Federal immigration agents in Operation Midway Blitz.

To take one example, a Border Patrol agent shot a Chicago woman multiple times. Body camera video reportedly shows the agent threatening the woman, saying "Do something," and then I will delete the next term he used, prior to shooting her.

Afterward, the agent bragged in text messages to other agents about shooting the woman, writing "5 shots, 7 holes." As ranking member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, I have directed my staff to continue gathering