

Amidst the current and rapidly evolving global landscape, we must ensure that the Foreign Service is mission-focused and equipped to meet the monumental task. If we expect our diplomats to effectively meet the challenges of a changing world, we have to give them the tools to do it.

Madam Speaker, I am proud of the work that was done over these past 6-plus months to put this bipartisan legislation together, and I thank colleagues across both sides of the aisle for working to modernize our Foreign Service.

Madam Speaker, I urge everyone to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER *pro tempore*. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAWLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 9086, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

QUESTION OF PERSONAL PRIVILEGE

Mr. MASSIE. Madam Speaker, I seek recognition for a question of personal privilege.

The SPEAKER *pro tempore*. The Chair has been made aware of a valid basis for the gentleman's point of personal privilege.

The gentleman from Kentucky is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. MASSIE. Madam Speaker, roughly 3 weeks ago, the Speaker of the House said: "Let me tell you how stupid THOMAS MASSIE's comment is." An article said that JOHNSON said that "Republicans are here to work" and will remain in Washington throughout September, according to the House calendar. He goes on to say: "That is a nonsensical statement by someone who is not participating as a full Member of the Congress, and it is really sad that he doesn't."

Well, I am here today to let you know that I am a full participating Member of the House of Representatives. In fact, when other people want to go home, I am here to work.

I am here to get justice for the Epstein victims, the survivors. I am here to get the price of food and fuel down for our constituents. We have solutions. We just refuse to pass them.

What happened a couple of weeks ago is that I introduced the Epstein Files Transparency Act II discharge petition. I predicted that the House would take days off the calendar in order to avoid a vote on this again.

□ 1330

If you remember a year ago, we had the Epstein recess, I call it. My colleague, RO KHANNA, and I had been very successful in collecting names. We

were just two signatures short of 218 on a discharge petition, and the leadership of this body recessed this body for weeks to avoid swearing in one Member who would have been the 218th vote. I was here. I was ready to work, to be a fully participating Member of Congress.

Well, the Speaker saw otherwise. The leadership here saw otherwise, and they kept Congress shut down for weeks.

We came back. I got that 218th signature, and the bill that RO KHANNA and I coauthored became law. Every Member, except for one Member of this House, voted for our legislation that they had criticized for months. If it was so bad, why did they all vote for it?

That bill went to the Senate. It passed by unanimous consent. If you ask the Senators, can you pass one of our House bills, what will they say? Well, we will see if we get it on the docket. That is going to take at least 3 days. We have got to get a 60-vote threshold to overcome the filibuster, and so it is going to be a while.

How long did it take them to pass the Epstein Files Transparency Act? They passed it before it got there. It left this House, and on the walk between the House and the Senate, they made a unanimous consent to pass that bill as soon as it got there. Nobody objected.

The President himself signed that bill. He had earlier said it would be a hostile act to even support that bill.

What came of it: 3 million files released.

Now, we have yet to see justice here in the United States, but we watched a British ambassador to the United States lose his job. He was sacked. We saw a prince of England lose his title. We saw the former Prime Minister of Norway arrested and convicted—maybe not convicted yet, but arrested. We saw the Minister of Culture in France receive the same fate.

CEOs and presidents of universities resigned—over a hoax? Somebody should have told them it was a hoax, because that is what we were told, that it was a hoax. Folks, it wasn't a hoax.

There are still 3 million of those files that are being withheld at the Department of Justice. The ones that have been released have been overly redacted, in contravention of that law.

What would a fully participating Member of Congress do if he got a law enacted against the will of the President, against the will of the Speaker, against all odds, and then the chief law enforcement officer of the country will not follow the law? What would a fully participating Member of Congress do?

Well, I think he would do what I did. I wrote, along with RO KHANNA and TERESA LEGER FERNANDEZ—by the way, when did it become a dirty word to work across the aisle? When did that become forbidden? I thought that was supposed to be a good thing, to form coalitions.

Oh, MASSIE, you know, he can't get anything done. He can't get people to

agree with him. Madam Speaker, 427-1 was the vote on the Epstein files. Come on. I think that is a pretty big coalition.

It was more than just getting the files released. My colleague, RO KHANNA, and I held the biggest press conference that has occurred in Washington, D.C., in at least a decade, for as long as I have been here. Is that something a not fully participating Member of Congress would do? I don't think so.

Why did we do it: to give a voice to the survivors. We gave them a venue to speak to you, the people in power—the people who were hiding the files at the DOJ, at the FBI, at the U.S. Attorney's Office. For the first time ever, we gave them a voice. We gave them a platform.

They were brave. They stepped up. They told their very tragic and sad stories. They compelled the rest of this body to do the right thing, after resisting for so long.

That gets us to where we are now on the Epstein files. RO KHANNA, TERESA LEGER FERNANDEZ, and I wrote another bill. What it does is simple. It says, Mr. Attorney General, if you refuse to prosecute the co-conspirators of Jeffrey Epstein, the rapists, the pedophiles, the ones who financed it, and the ones who covered it up—if you refuse to do it at Epstein island, in New York, Florida, or New Mexico, this bill is going to give the files to the State attorneys general in the various States so that they can prosecute these crimes.

I have talked to the attorney general of New Mexico. Guess what. There are crimes that occurred at Zorro Ranch for which there is no statute of limitations. We can still bring these pedophiles to justice. He is ready to do it, but the Attorney General of this country will not cooperate with the attorney general of that State.

So the Epstein Files Transparency Act II, would make that happen, would allow for that to happen.

It does something else that is important. The survivors need closure. This Attorney General will not share those files with the survivors, the files that were generated on their behalf.

We call them survivors because some are no longer alive. I am talking about the victims who are still alive, who survived the trauma and the shame, and were subjected to horrible things by these men. These brave women, we are giving them standing in court to get their own damn files, that they can't get now. For some of them, it was so traumatic they can't even remember what they told the FBI at the time. That is important.

We also give standing to Members of this body. Who would not want to make the legislative branch just a little more capable of getting its laws carried out in the way that they were meant to be carried out? It gives Members of Congress standing to go in front of a judge and test the executive branch's flawed legal reasoning for withholding 3 million files.

Why do we want to do that? Because their reasoning is such a joke, that in front of any judge for more than a minute, their arguments could not be sustained.

Let me give you an example. The Epstein Files Transparency Act, the first version that this fully participating Member of Congress ushered through this body and through the Senate and got the White House to sign against their will, the first bill says that the DOJ has to give us and the public, internal memos, documents, and emails concerning decisions of whether to prosecute or not prosecute and whether to investigate or not investigate.

That is at the heart of this issue. Why did our government fail us? Who was it at DOJ or FBI that decided to create two tiers of justice? We want to see those internal discussions.

What does the Attorney General argue now? Oh, I am sorry. We are going to exercise our deliberative process privilege. Well, here's the problem: that is a FOIA term of art, Freedom of Information Act term of art. It does not apply to a law that was passed by both Chambers and signed by the President. Even if it did, the law itself pierces through the previous law.

That is what any judge in this country, if they looked at it on the facts, would agree to. New laws override the old laws. I am not an attorney, but as a fully participating Member of Congress, I do serve on the Judiciary Committee. I know the simple concept that a new law overrides the old law. The judges know that, too. That is why this next bill is so important.

That gets me to why—we are going to take these—at first, it was: we are just going to cancel two weeks off the calendar. We know why that happened. We know why that happened. It is to keep the Epstein Files Transparency Act from getting the 218 votes on the discharge petition, ripening over 7 days, and passing before the election, thereby making the Senate be accountable in the weeks leading up to the election.

Oh, my gosh. We can't have that. We can't have Senators called to task while they are stumping and spreading their campaign promises. Oh, no, we can't put them on the spot like that and ask them if they are going to vote for transparency and justice for the survivors. That is why they cut two weeks off the calendar.

Isn't it ironic that I was called not a fully participating Member of Congress? I am the one who most wants to be here those two weeks.

□ 1340

They got canceled. I said they would probably cancel them. We were told, oh, nope. That is a ludicrous idea.

Let me tell you how stupid THOMAS MASSIE's comment is. Those were the words of the Speaker. Forty-eight hours later, what did he do? He did exactly what I predicted. He cut 2 weeks off of this calendar.

Why did he just cut another day off the calendar?

He had some more choice words for me because I predicted this, as well.

On Tuesday, as a fully participating Member of Congress, I introduced eight Articles of Impeachment against Peter Brian Hegseth.

Over there, they are leading a little fantasy. They call it the Department of War. You can't rename things without Congress. Hell, you can't even rename a post office without us. You think you can rename the Department of Defense to Department of War. Give me a break, but enjoy your little fantasy. It is the Department of Defense.

Let me tell you about the eight Articles of Impeachment.

By the way, Speaker JOHNSON says I am not a fully participating Member of Congress. Well, it took a long time to write eight Articles of Impeachment. It didn't take much time to conceive them.

If you are looking over at the executive branch and trying to give an award for the person who has racked up the most illegal and unconstitutional acts, there is one clear winner: It is Peter Brian Hegseth, Secretary of Defense, who has done that.

It was easy to conceive of these Articles of Impeachment, but it wasn't easy to write them. They are watertight. They are watertight.

In the 24 hours that has transpired since I was right here at this podium for an hour and 20 minutes reading the Articles of Impeachment, what has happened? Have they attacked the language of these articles? Have they said there is no legal basis for this? You can't possibly think these are valid Articles of Impeachment? No. Nobody has attacked the substance and nobody has come to the rescue of the Secretary of Defense.

I don't even see the online brigade of paid media grifters who typically rally for MAGA and the President while they are collecting their checks. I just don't see it happening, and that is interesting.

What is the form of a privilege when you introduce Articles of Impeachment as a privileged resolution? What happens? Well, the Speaker has 48 hours to schedule a vote. Forty-eight hours would be tomorrow would be that vote. What happened? We just found out not more than 1 hour ago that the leadership of this body, which is Republican—I am having a hard time figuring this out, too.

We are the majority. We may only be the majority for 6 more weeks. Why would we be canceling days when the country is burning? The inflation is rampant. There are things we could do here. Why would we cancel our own majority?

I can't figure that out, but I did figure out why we canceled tomorrow, and that is what I am explaining to you, as a fully participating Member of Congress.

Tomorrow would be the vote on impeaching Secretary of Defense Peter Brian Hegseth, and it looks like that

vote is not going to happen. It would be a real easy vote. It would probably be a vote to table to insulate the Members of this body from any accountability. That would avoid the Members from having to debate any of the eight Articles of Impeachment. It would let them go home to their townhalls and say, well, we didn't vote on the substance of the bill. I didn't really agree with MASSIE's thing or disagree with it. I just thought we should table it and it should go to a committee first. Maybe we will refer it to a committee or blue ribbon commission or a panel of experts because we are just mere Congressmen. We are not equipped to stand here on the floor and debate without reading our speeches that were written by our staff.

Would a not fully participating Member of Congress come down here and speak extemporaneously for 1 hour? I think if somebody does that it is an indicator that they are participating. Maybe when you hear their speeches, they are sincere.

I think it was against the rules at one time to read our speeches in this body. Why is that? Because it was considered insincere. If you didn't have the conviction of heart to come down here or the presence of mind—we have a few Senators who may not have the presence of mind, and we have some who don't have the conviction of heart. If you just always came down here and read your speeches—some of them are written by AI now. The staff better watch out. It was a good gig while they had it, writing the speech for their robot boss to come down here and—beep, beep, beep—here is my speech. Well, now, they have a robot to replace them to feed their robot a speech.

This is not a robot speech. I am not a robot Congressman. I never have been. I am, contrary to what the Speaker said, a fully participating Member of Congress. Let me talk about some of the things that I have done since I have been in Congress.

In 2014, working with Jared Polis—again, wait. That is a dirty word: across the aisle. You shouldn't be working across the aisle, Congressman MASSIE. Don't do that. We have to have a bunch of fake bills that go down party lines that we can use against the other party in this next election. We don't want anything—whatever you do, don't cosponsor some Democrat's bill. You are just giving credence to the other side, to the other viewpoint.

I ignored that, and I worked with Earl Blumenauer and Jared Polis, and we got the hemp bill in the farm bill. I am not afraid to tell you I did a little R&D to come up with that hemp bill. I ripped off and duplicated it. That is what R&D stands for.

I ripped off and duplicated that bill from Ron Paul. It became a law, and it created an entire industry with just a little thing in the farm bill, just a little pilot program that grew into an industry that helped my State, Kentucky, create an industry that is at least a billion dollars in Kentucky.

Now, they are trying to destroy it, but that is for another day.

What am I doing now right now? That was in 2014. Have you heard about this beef product, ground beef product that is going to come from a foreign country at 75 percent of market price? How do you get something at 75 percent of market price? Well, I can tell you what, it ain't grade A prime if it is 75 percent of market price. Somebody else didn't want to buy it, so they are talking about bringing 300,000 metric tons—they tell you in tons so you don't realize that that is 600 million pounds. That is 2 billion quarter pounders, Madam Speaker.

That is how much they are going to bring here to this country. Is that going to help farmers? No, it's not going to help farmers. It was never intended to help farmers. It is not even going to help consumers. Because what it is going to do is run more farmers out of business in this country, and when we run out of the 300,000 metric boatloads or whatever it is of ground beef product, we won't have our own farmers here. They won't survive through these manipulations of the market.

The solution has been here all along since 2015. As a fully participating Member of Congress, I introduced the PRIME Act. Back in 2015, what else happened? This body got rid of country of origin labeling for beef and pork. How did that help American farmers? You can't even go to the grocery store and know if it is American or where in the world it came from and where they have different laws that govern food safety. Oh, but it says USDA. That must be USA. No, that is not USA beef.

What was my solution? It is called the PRIME Act. I say it is my solution, but I have to give credit to CHELLIE PINGREE across the aisle. Oh, man. There is that dirty word again: across the aisle, working with Democrats, on a bill that could help farmers and consumers.

What does the PRIME Act do? It says if you are a small farmer and a small processor and you are not crossing State lines and you are raising your healthy beef right there in your own county and you want to sell it to a neighbor in your own county, your own State, you can use a local processor, and as long as the State or county health inspector is watching that process, you don't need the Federal Government there. You don't need a million dollars of regulation at a company that has 10 employees.

They cut up more meat at the steakhouse down the street in a day than most of these processors cut up in a week. They don't have a USDA inspector. They don't need a USDA inspector. They just need local inspection like for restaurants. So that is the bill that CHELLIE PINGREE and I came up with, as fully participating Members of Congress in 2015, in response to the repeal of the country of origin labeling, which I voted against the repeal.

By the way, your cell phone is labeled, your suit is labeled, your shoes are labeled, and your car is labeled. Everything is labeled with country of origin except for beef and pork. Why is that?

Because there is some greedy corporations that convinced the World Trade Organization and this body to get rid of those labels so they could sell you foreign food and make you think it was USDA because it has a USDA label on it.

Where is the PRIME Act right now? Well, Massie, that was a great idea, but you didn't do anything with it. Oh, no. You all voted for it. It is in the farm bill. It is in the House farm bill. I worked hard across the aisle and with the chairman of that committee. He did town halls across the country and found out that this is what people want. This would solve two problems.

□ 1350

It would lower the price of food in the supermarket. It would make our farmers more successful, and the quality of what you eat would go up.

That is what I have done as a fully participating Member of Congress.

You know what else I remember doing as a fully participating Member of Congress? I stood at this microphone on the night the big, budget-busting bill passed—some people called it beautiful—and I said: If it happens after midnight, it ain't beautiful.

I said from this podium: We are not rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic for this country. We are putting coal in the boiler and setting a course for the iceberg.

I said if you—look, I like to cut taxes. Two of my bills were in the big bill: no tax on tips and reducing tax for senior citizens on Social Security.

Why not? Massie, why would you not vote for that? Because I refused to lie to my constituents. I refused to lie to them. I am not going to tell them that you can cut taxes and increase spending and the debt will go down. That is a lie. No grade-schooler who has done the least bit of math would believe it, but some of my colleagues stood here and told that lie. I wasn't willing to tell it, and I wasn't willing to vote for it.

I said it would cause massive inflation. On that night over a year ago, when I gave my speech, I said: The bond market is also going to react poorly to this. Interest rates will go up because they see we are not serious about dealing with the debt. They see that one day we are going to default.

I called a spade a spade, and I voted against the big, beautiful bill. I am proud that I did because it is a terrible bill, and it is what has caused this inflation, part of what has caused this inflation.

Let me tell you something else I have done here over the years. I have worked with my colleague from California ZOE LOFGREN on privacy. Do you know you are being spied on by your

own country without a warrant in contravention of the U.S. Constitution? ZOE LOFGREN and I got an amendment passed many years ago into the appropriations bill to ban that. Well, the Senate threw it in the trash, but we can't control what the Senate does. That is one thing that I got done.

I have been here as a fully participating Member of Congress, the sole voice for inventors on the Judiciary Committee. I have introduced propatent legislation, pro-small business legislation.

There is this misunderstanding. People think, oh, Apple, Google, Microsoft, they just use those inventions to keep the little guys from getting into their markets. No. Apple, Google, Microsoft, they are slow-moving. They have got employees there—I mean, they have got some good ones, but a lot of them are just punching the clock. They have accumulated some weight.

The fast, nimble companies, the people in their garages, little girls at science fairs, invent things that even Google or Apple couldn't think of. Then when they patent them, Google and Apple do everything they can to steal the idea, to invalidate the patent. I have worked for the small inventors to make it a level playing field so that the little guys can compete, so that their patents won't get stolen by the big guys. I have been doing that for as long as I have been in Congress.

I got a bipartisan bill passed here recently, just this spring, to improve the reporting of the NICS database. This is the background check that they do on whether you could—before you can buy the gun or not.

Well, guess what. The error rate there is astounding. There are 100,000 false denials of the Second Amendment rights of people every year, the DOJ has admitted, and they only prosecute about 12 of them every year. Why is that? Because most of them are false denials.

But here is one thing I discovered. If your name is similar to somebody else's name, they are going to deny you, and then you have got to appeal. If you don't win that first appeal, you have got to go hire a lawyer. Justice, if it is delayed, it ain't justice.

So what I did, I dug deeper. My friend, John Lott, who is a researcher and an analyst, actually worked at the DOJ and got a look at this data. It turns out if you are a minority, if you are Black, you are three times as likely to share a name with somebody else who has the same name and who has been in prison for a year or more. Because we share names within our groups, within our ethnicities, if you are Hispanic, you are twice as likely to get falsely denied the purchase of a firearm because you share names with other people who are Hispanic who have been to jail.

I don't think—whether you are Hispanic, Black, White, or Asian—anybody should be falsely denied. Banks do background checks. We should let the

banks do these. If the banks had an error rate like this that was racially prejudiced, they would be sued out of existence; but the government gets away with it.

So I got a bill passed here unanimously to report by race and ethnicity. I don't want to collect more data on Americans, but that stuff is already collected. It is on the form. Just give us the data. I think what will happen is when we see what is really happening when the data becomes public, there will be an outcry to improve that database so that it is not racially biased and so that it doesn't deprive anybody of the right to carry a firearm or to keep a firearm.

One thing I have done here, as a fully participating Member of Congress, is draw attention to the foreign aid. Where is your money going? Before there was DOGE—all right. Let's talk about DOGE a little bit.

I sat here in this Chamber when we were addressed at the State of the Union about all of this waste, and everybody stood up and clapped—oh, the waste, the waste, let's get rid of the waste. These were the chairmen of the committees that created the waste. There was so much cognitive dissonance at the State of the Union. I said to myself, they are clapping because they have to clap, but there is no way they are going to cut that waste.

When candidates campaign against foreign aid because we want to put America first, I know they are not going to cut foreign aid up here. You have got foreign lobbyists up here, for heaven's sake. But I have drawn attention to that.

I have drawn attention to a war in the Middle East where 75,000 people have been killed—50,000 civilians, girls, and boys that just want to live their lives. I think it is a genocide. I call it a genocide, but I have also called attention to it.

I have worked across the aisle on War Powers Resolutions to stop these unconstitutional wars that have never been declared, never even been authorized. I have worked across the aisle with RO KHANNA on those bills, and we have got some of them passed, in fact.

I wish to spend a little bit more time on the thing that caused tomorrow to be canceled, which is the impeachment of Peter Brian Hegseth.

There are eight articles in there. Article I—by the way, the easiest way to understand this is the first three articles are impeaching Peter Hegseth for carrying out illegal orders. By the way, if you are in the military and you are given an illegal order, you do not have to carry it out. But Peter Hegseth carried out illegal orders and encouraged others, tried to get them to do the same thing, but all—the first three articles have to do with the War Powers Resolution of 1973.

The first one, they didn't even have the required predicates to act without authorization from Congress. There was no attack on Americans. In fact,

now, what they are using as a predicate is attacks on shipping vessels that aren't even ours. The War Powers Resolution doesn't allow you to start a war when somebody else's ship with a different flag gets attacked. But the White House is still sending us letters saying, oh, we are starting a new attack.

So Article I, Pete Hegseth is waging war in Iran without legal authorization because they didn't have a predicate to start it without the Congress.

Article II, we passed a concurrent resolution in this body. We passed one in the House, and we passed one in the Senate. The War Powers Resolution of 1973 says if you do that and send it to the White House, they have got to stop the war.

□ 1400

They didn't stop the war. They haven't even paused the war for that. They don't even acknowledge that. They say, oh, we don't believe in that law.

What have we gotten to? We don't believe in that law. We don't think that law is constitutional, so we don't have to follow it.

Well, then ask us to repeal it if you don't think it is constitutional, then override the veto, and blah, blah, blah. Go through the legislative process if you don't like that law. Quit—quit—just ignoring the law.

The next thing they did is—the War Powers Resolution of 1973 only allows Peter Brian Hegseth to do anything. If they had reached the legal threshold, the predicates required to act alone, they have 60 days to stop. Sixty days came, and they declared a cease-fire. Then, they started again and said: Oh, this is a new war. We are not still fighting the same war.

So, see, they can't even decide: Is it a war? Is it not a war? Is this a new war? Is it the same war?

They are continuing under this ridiculous legal authority, which doesn't exist. Those are the first three articles.

By the way, some people say article IV, as well as articles I through III, but article IV isn't carrying out an illegal order. Article IV is something that Peter Hegseth did himself.

He came to Congress and asked us to turn off—because it was turned on by law, he asked us to turn off the targeting minimization procedures that keep us from blowing up civilians, minimizing it. There will be some casualties.

Congress said, no, we like this law. We are not going to repeal it.

So, Hegseth just shut down the Department over there at the Department of Defense, and the outcome was predictable. They bombed schoolchildren on the first day of the war.

You would think, if the first day of the war—I could understand in the heat of war, in the fog of war. On the first day of a war that you have been planning for a year, you bomb a school? I am not saying they did it on

purpose. I am saying Peter Hegseth himself personally is culpable for that because he doesn't care about rules of engagement. He has deprecated the rules of engagement. He has degraded the ability to discriminate between civilian targets and valid military targets.

He needs to be impeached for that. He has committed extrajudicial killings. What do I mean by that? He has killed over 200 people in fishing boats. This is, they are saying, to interdict drugs. That is a law enforcement role. That is not a role for the military.

There is a reason we separate these two things, law enforcement and military. It is because you are presumed innocent until proven guilty, unless you are at war, and if you are holding a gun and you are shooting at me, you are guilty in war, okay? You are going to get shot back.

When you are in civilian mode and don't have a gun and don't have a drone and don't have a rocket, you are presumed to be innocent. You don't send in soldiers to assassinate people in boats. You certainly don't circle back and kill the people who are floating in the water because if it were a war, there are accepted norms of warfare from Geneva and elsewhere.

What Secretary Hegseth did by ignoring those rules of engagement that have been acceptable for a century—what did he do? He endangered our own soldiers because what if one of our own soldiers ends up shipwrecked, or sailors? What if one of our own soldiers ends up wounded or captured as a prisoner?

He has just encouraged every one of our adversaries to shoot our wounded, to shoot our captured, to shoot our shipwrecked, because that is what he is doing. That is why he needs to be impeached for that, for those extrajudicial killings.

Article VI should concern everybody in this body. He suppressed free speech. He tried to use the military to go after Senator MARK KELLY for saying something in his Senator capacity. You can't do that. There is the First Amendment right, and just because you served your country at one time and now do not serve, it doesn't mean you have diminished your own First Amendment rights in the process of saying I am willing to die for this country.

Now that you are done, you don't have the First Amendment anymore. That is what Peter Hegseth believes. He says we wouldn't even take this to court. We are going to deal with this in the military.

He doesn't just abrogate the powers of Congress. He abrogated the powers of the judicial branch by—and he brought every tool he had to bear. As the Secretary of Defense, he brought it against MARK KELLY to try to change the words that he said.

That should bother all of us.

Roughly 20 percent of Members of Congress have served in the military.

Do those 20 percent deserve less rights here at this microphone to say something than I do? I don't think so. We have several million veterans. Should they have diminished freedom of speech? No.

If we accept what Peter Hegseth did without challenging it, without impeaching him, then he has stolen unto himself aspects of our freedom of speech and put it under the military. Give me a break.

He kidnapped the leader of a sovereign country. Now, what was the predicate for this? This one is kind of ridiculous. He was just arresting a guy for some drug charges who happens to be the head of another country. Then what do we find out, based on quotes from the White House? Immediately after, as soon as this arrest—it was a kidnapping—was effectuated, our Commander in Chief stood up and said their oil is now ours, and our oil companies are going to come in here and make big money on it.

That is not right, but at least he is being honest. He is saying why we took out the leader of another country.

Again, that is an act of war if there ever was. They put boots on the ground. They brought in all the branches of the military. They did regime change. I mean, there are like four things that qualify as an act of war, and they did not have authorization from Congress to do that.

Finally, there was an unlawful and awful war in Yemen that was never authorized by this body, and it didn't meet the predicates of the 1973 War Powers Resolution, which is an attack on our soil or our soldiers or one of our bases overseas. That hadn't happened.

It didn't even reach the fairytale predicate. Some people say, well, if there is an imminent threat, if the President thinks that we are going to be immediately attacked, then he can attack before they attack.

That is not a valid operational war theory, but it is one that is sometimes employed, so they were using that threshold in a Signal chat that was leaked. Do you remember this? I am a little bit worried when the leaders of our country are on Signal and have added a reporter to it. I am glad they did add that reporter because here is what we learned from the leaked Signal chat: There was no imminent threat.

Let me tell you who the people on that Signal chat were who decided there was no imminent threat: The CIA Director, our former colleague here from Texas, said there was no imminent threat, that it could be done later, that they needed, really, more time to figure out what the best targets were.

Who else said there was no imminent threat? Joe Kent from national intelligence said there was no imminent threat.

The Vice President himself said there was no imminent threat.

What did Peter Hegseth say in this Signal chat among these folks? He said

we can pause it whenever we want. Let's go ahead and start, and we can pause whenever we want.

What does that tell you? He also knew there was no imminent threat.

Even this lower threshold doesn't meet the threshold of the War Powers Resolution of 1973—they didn't even meet the threshold they have created for themselves, which is imminent threat, and they acknowledged it unanimously in a Signal chat.

What did they do? The Secretary of Defense is in the Signal chat saying, well, it is going to look bad politically. We are going to look weak if we don't do this, so we have to do it now.

He was worried not about what was best for America but what would look bad in the news if it got out and they didn't attack. So that was my eighth Article of Impeachment as a fully participating Member of Congress.

I haven't heard anybody—I invite them to come down here and claim some time and rebut any of the eight articles. I haven't seen it. It is because they are legally correct, and we should be having this vote. We shouldn't be canceling Congress because of the optics.

I would implore my Republican colleagues, we are in the majority. Why are we whining about the SAVE Act? I voted for the SAVE Act two or three times, as many times as you want to put it on the floor. The Senate is not going to pass it, but we won the elections.

Why are we saying the elections were stolen if we won them all? We have a conservative majority in the Supreme Court. We have a Republican in the White House. We have a Republican majority here, a Republican majority in the Senate. We are complaining that the elections were stolen, and we are calling off Congress—calling off Congress—and we are in the majority?

I would implore my Republican colleagues to take that up with our leadership. I would implore all of us to take it up with the leadership. Why are we going to be denied a debate on whether this should be an impeachment or not?

□ 1410

Why are we going to be denied a debate on whether this should be an impeachment or not? There won't even be a debate. There should be a debate.

As a fully participating Member of Congress—and I have never said any of you weren't, even though the Speaker said that I wasn't. As fully participating Members of Congress, we should stay here for every day that is on the calendar, and we should debate until it takes—in the House, we are not like the Senate, we don't go on forever. It eventually ends, maybe a couple hours later.

A good, long debate would be about 4 hours here. That is the longest debate I have ever seen in the House. Let's debate it because the world is burning. This is a global issue. This isn't just about America. The price of fuel has gone up everywhere.

By the way, China is using their own oil reserves. Now, why would they do that? Why would they help us out? Why would they want to keep the price of oil lower than it otherwise would be if they didn't use their own oil reserves? It is because they want to buy our gold.

They are tired of buying our Treasury notes. They say: No, thank you. We will take no more of your paper. We want your gold. They are the payday lender in this war.

China says: I will tell you what we will do for you. We will keep the price of oil low, and we will buy some more gold while it is low and tracking the price of oil. That is what they are doing.

However, it is a global issue. The strait isn't just shut down for American farmers who are paying more for fertilizers, for American consumers who are paying \$7 a gallon for diesel. It is over \$6 now. I am afraid before the election it could hit \$8 a gallon.

Why would we recess when we can do something about that? What is the thing we should do? We should walk away from that mess. We should have never got in it.

Will the strait be shut down to us? Yeah, probably for a while. There are other people who didn't bomb Iran. They will let them through. They can bring our fertilizer over. Then our farmers can make the food, and it won't be so damn expensive in the grocery store. The truckers could carry the food to the supermarket, and it won't be so damn expensive in the supermarket. That is what we should do.

We should also, while we are at it, bring our troops home. Shut down those bases. Iran's missiles cannot hit the United States. They cannot reach here. What can they reach? At least a hundred of our bases or bases that we use from other countries. We have put targets for them right inside the radius of their missiles.

When people say: Congressman MASSIE, why did you have to do this this week? I know that some of you are checking your watches, and you did that when I read the Articles of Impeachment. Oh, my gosh, Congressman MASSIE wants an hour of time. I have a fundraiser to go to. I have to get back and campaign. I have things to do. I have a dinner to get to. Why are you doing this now, Congressman MASSIE?

It is because we have exhausted all other opportunities to try to stop this war, right? We have done the concurrent resolution. We have said that the clock ran out on the War Powers Resolution 1973. We have done what we can do, and we can't do any more except to take Peter Hegseth out of that job.

It is a very polite solution. I am not even suggesting to call him a name or do anything to him or put him in jail. I am saying let him go back into the private sector. Let him do what these Secretaries of Defense always do. Let him go make his millions of dollars at some military contractor coming here and lobbying us to send more money overseas to countries like Israel.

Let him go on to those greener pastures that Secretaries of Defense typically go to, and let's get somebody who is competent. Let's get somebody who can do the job. Let's get somebody who doesn't follow illegal orders. Let's get somebody who doesn't degrade our ability to discriminate between civilian and military targets. Let's get somebody who operates under the rules of engagement that everybody in the world operates under unless they are some terrorist organization.

Let's go back to being a country that when we end up with prisoners, we don't shoot them. Let's go back to being that country. Let's get somebody who will uphold the honor, that will do things that keep our soldiers safe, not things that gamble their lives so that we can steal some oil from Venezuela.

These are the reasons that I implore you to at least debate, at least debate this War Powers Resolution, right? Would it be so tough to have a debate? I don't think it would be.

Now, listen, there are some things I know I am not going to get a lot of agreement on across the aisle, but these are things I work on and I am passionate about, and that is the right to keep and bear arms.

I introduced a bill called the National Constitutional Carry Act. As a fully participating Member of Congress, as a member of the Judiciary Committee, which has jurisdiction over the Second Amendment and the other bills in the Bill of Rights, I introduced something called the National Constitutional Carry Act. Twenty-nine States already acknowledge that if you are legally allowed to have that gun in that State, then you should be allowed to carry it somewhere legally.

We have these plans, these bills, to do reciprocity. Well, how do you do reciprocity between a State that requires a permit and a State that doesn't require a permit? I say, just let every State recognize that you have a God-given right, not a congressional-given right, not a Bill of Rights-given right, not a Declaration of Independence-given right. It is a God-given right—whatever your God is—a God-given right. It is a natural right if you don't have a God. You have a right to defend yourself.

I have been passionately working on bills like this, so much so that there is a line to take over this bill when I leave.

By the way, these bills I have written—I will tell you about another one, a raw milk bill. This one I R&D'ed. I ripped it off and duplicated it from Ron Paul. I am passionate about this. Not everybody is. I get it. You want your milk cooked, I want it raw, just like a steak.

I introduced this raw milk bill in Congress, one of the first bills I introduced. The lobbyists up here are so strong, the milk lobby came at me. They said there would be kids dying in the streets from this raw milk and that there weren't enough emergency rooms

in the country if raw milk were legalized.

My late wife, Rhonda, saw all these Google alerts going off about how I was such a terrible guy for this raw milk bill. She texted me. She said: OMG, I didn't realize the lactose lobby was so intolerant.

All the lobbies are really intolerant if you threaten the existence of the fat cats who pay the lobbyists the money, who are making the money. I think Republicans and Democrats are to blame. We have got a uniparty here. As a fully participating Member of Congress—maybe that is what the Speaker meant, that I wasn't a fully participating member of the uniparty. Ah, it took me this long to figure it out when he insulted me in that way.

He is right. I have never participated in the uniparty up here, the uniparty that got rid of Country of Origin Labeling. That was a bipartisan bill. The uniparty that wants to take away your right to privacy, that is always a bipartisan vote. Unfortunately, there are more Democrats and Republicans against it than there are for it on most days.

I have never been a member of the uniparty. I have never been a fully participating member of the uniparty. This much is true. I have been a member of the American party.

We don't have an American party here, do we? I have one back home. My American party is the constituents that I have served for 14 years. What do they want? They want us to take care of our own veterans. Instead of sending money overseas to oligarchs in countries, rich dictators in other countries, they want to put America first.

□ 1420

They want us to do something about healthcare.

Whatever happened to that issue?

Mr. Speaker, 10 years ago, we used to fight about that all the time.

How are we going to get affordable healthcare?

I don't know. Let's nationalize it.

No. We need to know what the price of it is.

Mr. Speaker, when is the last time you heard one of those debates here?

Mr. Speaker, do you want to know why you don't hear that debate anymore?

It is because the uniparty doesn't want that debate. That is because both parties are taking money from the lobbyists that represent the insurance companies, and the insurance companies are the ones who made out the best on the Affordable Care Act.

However, I think the Americans, the American party, wants us to work on that. They want to know why it takes one-half week's pay to fill up their pickup truck. It shouldn't take that much. One-half of it is due to this stupid war that we shouldn't be involved in.

The reality is the price of fuel would still be high anyway because we are

not doing the things that are required to bring down the price of everything.

Mr. Speaker, what is the thing that is driving the price of everything?

It is inflation. This is the thing that I have fought the hardest when I have been here in Congress. I wear a debt badge. I invented a debt badge that shows the debt. They won't let me wear it here while I am giving a speech.

I guess it would be too embarrassing if America could see our debt racking up on a Congressman's lapel while he is giving a speech.

Mr. Speaker, why do I wear that debt badge? Why have I worn it ever since I invented it?

It is because I want my colleagues to look at what we are doing, what we are doing to this country. We can't lower taxes and raise spending and have it all turn out well.

What do you get, Mr. Speaker?

You get what we got. You get high prices for healthcare, high prices for college, high prices for cars, high prices for food, and high prices for housing. We get double high prices for housing because the price of housing goes up and the interest rate goes up. If you look at your mortgage payment, Mr. Speaker, if you are a young person deciding you want to start out in your own nest and buy a house, you get double whacked.

The prices of houses have gone up because the price of inflation has caused the price of two-by-fours, drywall, the nails, everything that goes into a house to go up, and the fuel to get it there. It has also gone up because if you look at your mortgage, Mr. Speaker, interest rates have gone up.

Who caused that?

I hear the President begging the Federal Reserve to lower the interest rates. They can't do it, even if they wanted to. They have pulled on that lever so much to try to give us artificially low interest rates that it doesn't work anymore. The lever is broken.

Speaking of broken levers, people feel like their levers are broken, their voting levers. We hear that the elections have been stolen. Elections aren't stolen. We are in a Republic. Mr. Speaker, I will tell you where your vote gets stolen. It gets stolen up here on the day we elect our leadership.

What am I talking about?

You work hard, Mr. Speaker, you campaign for a candidate, or maybe you are working hard at something else and you just go vote for him and your guy or your gal wins, and they promise you all these things and they fight hard. A lot of people do get up here and fight hard, but they get deceived. That is because they get here as fully participating Members of Congress. They are very enthusiastic to represent their constituents, and they find out the game is rigged.

They have a choice really early on, January 3, at noon, a lot of new people, dozens. I hear in these elections there is going to be a lot of change, so there are going to be a lot of people here on January 3 to cast their first vote.

Mr. Speaker, what is the first vote you cast for?

It is your leadership, Mr. Speaker.

I think that is kind of a misnomer, an oxymoron. Our leaders have not been doing a very good job if we are looking at the rate of inflation, the debt, and the price of fuel. We call them leadership up here, Mr. Speaker, and so you elect somebody in a secure election, and they get up here where you can't watch them, and they realize the game is rigged, and so what do they do?

They say: Well, the game is rigged. They have offered me some table scraps if I give my voting card to the Speaker or the minority leader.

Mr. Speaker, what should I do?

I think I will give my voting card to the minority leader or the Speaker. Oh, don't get me wrong. We get a few hall passes.

We have to make it look good: Oh, we will let you go on this bill. We understand you have a tough district, and that you made some promises. We have enough votes. The uniparty has enough votes on this bill. We will let you vote how you want on this bill because we want you to come back because you are a good soldier. You do what you are told. You are compliant, and we like that.

That is what a lot of people up here are faced with. However, the day I got here and realized that this game was rigged, I said: I am not playing this game. I am going to tell people what is going on up here. I am going to tell people how they sell committee seats. Yes. It is actually kind of a misnomer. I shouldn't tell you the committee seats are for sale, Mr. Speaker. They are for rent. If they were for sale, maybe I could collect enough equity and get on to Ways and Means, but I don't want to pay the rent.

Mr. Speaker, that is what they tell you when you get here: Don't get on this A committee.

Why is the Veterans' Affairs Committee a C committee?

I know why they call it a C committee up here. It is because the veterans don't have money falling out of their pockets up here in Washington, D.C., when they come to visit. They are asking for better healthcare. They are asking for the people who are in the military to be treated right. That is the way it is.

People get up here, and the game is rigged. I decided not to play the game, and for 14 years, as a fully participating Member of Congress, contrary to what the Speaker who just canceled 2½ weeks of session said—by the way, we will have been in Congress I think 8 full days since July, between July and the election.

Isn't that crazy?

Mr. Speaker, where else can you get a job that pays almost \$15,000 a month and benefits and some months you don't even have to come to work?

The months where you do come to work, Mr. Speaker, there are 3 weeks,

but we call a week 4 days, and 4 days, well, we wouldn't have to travel on our own time, so 4 days is actually 2 days because we needed a day to get here and a day to go home, and 3 weeks is a month if we feel like working that month.

This was supposed to be one of those 3-week months, but it just became a 1-week month. That is because as a fully participating Member of Congress, I am trying to get justice for the Epstein survivors. I am trying to stop a war, a hot war where we don't care so much anymore about which are civilians and which are military targets. It is a hot war that could go nuclear.

Yes, that is why I did it this week. That is why you had to cancel your TV appearance or your fundraiser. I don't know, maybe you had a codel you were going to go to, Mr. Speaker. Maybe there is a jet over there at the military airport, and you were going to go to Italy or South America this week, Mr. Speaker, and go on a codel because your election is all locked up. You took all the right votes that the uniparty wanted, all the right lobbyists gave you the money that you needed to get on that A committee so that you could go home and look good.

Mr. Speaker, you did all the right things, you are cruising into your reelection, and maybe you are going to go on a junket this week. I don't know.

I do know this: There are people going on trips, and it ain't to go work for their constituents.

There probably will be a few planes missed. Everybody got excited when the Speaker cut a day off of this week. I know how that works. They have all booked three plane tickets out of this hellhole, and they don't plan to work a lick until after the election, when you are going to get \$5,000.

Oh, I forgot to tell you this, Mr. Speaker. You are going to get \$5,000, and so as a fully participating Member of Congress, I don't hide in the tunnel and run back to my office and hope I never see a reporter. I will walk out there, and they come on you like piranhas. They want you to say something where you can screw up and they can use it to political advantage.

I don't worry about what I say because I believe what I say. Nobody wrote me a speech today. I believe what I say. So when I go out there and talk to reporters, they ask me questions that nobody else will answer.

Sir: Why don't you do the \$5,000 before the election?

By the way, Mr. Speaker, isn't that interesting?

The Republicans are running against socialism in November, and what are we proposing if we win?

It is socialism. Everybody is equal. We are going to take from the people who have more and give to the people who have less. Actually, we are going to give it to everybody.

I would say that I am a fully participating Member in spite of what the Speaker said. These are just a few of

the things that I have done since I have been in Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1430

BILLION DOLLAR BOONDOGGLE ACT OF 2025

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 766) to require an annual report of taxpayer-funded projects that are over budget and behind schedule.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 766

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Billion Dollar Boondoggle Act of 2025".

SEC. 2. ANNUAL REPORT.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

(1) the term "covered agency" means—

(A) an Executive agency, as defined in section 105 of title 5, United States Code; and

(B) an independent regulatory agency, as defined in section 3502 of title 44, United States Code;

(2) the term "covered project" means a project funded by a covered agency—

(A) that is more than 5 years behind schedule, as measured against the original expected date for completion; or

(B) for which the amount spent on the project is not less than \$1,000,000,000 more than the original cost estimate for the project;

(3) the term "Director" means the Director of the Office of Management and Budget; and

(4) the term "project" means a major acquisition, a major defense acquisition program (as defined in section 4201 of title 10, United States Code), a procurement, a construction project, a remediation or clean-up effort, or any other time-limited endeavor, that is not funded through direct spending (as defined in section 250(c) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 900(c))).

(b) REQUIREMENTS.—

(1) SUBMISSION.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director shall issue guidance requiring covered agencies to, on an annual basis, submit to the Director information relating to each covered project of the covered agency, which shall include—

(A) a brief description of the covered project, including—

(i) the purpose of the covered project;

(ii) each location in which the covered project is carried out;

(iii) the contract or award number of the covered project, where applicable;

(iv) the year in which the covered project was initiated;

(v) the Federal share of the total cost of the covered project; and

(vi) each primary contractor, subcontractor, grant recipient, and subgrantee recipient of the covered project;

(B) an explanation of any change to the original scope of the covered project, including by the addition or narrowing of the initial requirements of the covered project;

(C) the original expected date for completion of the covered project;

(D) the current expected date for completion of the covered project;

(E) the original cost estimate for the covered project, as adjusted to reflect increases