

Why? Here is the quote.

There is a perception that forcefully tackling this issue might cause political backlash among the Somali community, which is a core voting bloc [for Democrats].

And he is among the few among many prominent figures in the Somali community who is speaking out against the fraud.

In fact, at one point, a bunch of State employees—I don't remember how many, but they posted a letter publicly on social media saying: Governor Walz and the attorney general knew about this all the time, and we told them. We warned them early on.

And you know what they did? They just stood there sucking on their teeth. They did nothing.

So you know what the State employees did? They went to the U.S. attorney. They went to the U.S. attorney, and the U.S. attorney jumped all over this and said: This is obvious fraud. And that is how all this got started.

Now, what do we do about it? Well, first, I don't think that the only place this is happening is Minnesota, and, certainly, there are people involved in welfare fraud besides the few Somali Americans in Minnesota. And I mentioned the Somali Americans because it is just a fact. I mean, it is a fact in the trial of these disputes, the politics of it and everything else, in the litigation. I think it is happening in various degrees all over America.

Let me say it again. We are spending a trillion dollars a year of American taxpayer money to help poor people, provide welfare, and the GAO estimates that at least \$250 billion is being stolen every year.

We took some baby steps in the One Big Beautiful Bill, as the Presiding Officer knows. We tightened up eligibility requirements. We are requiring States to check twice a year to make sure people don't lie when they sign up for Medicaid or for food stamps or for housing assistance. We have implemented a work requirement.

But we need to do more. We need to do more. And that is why we need to do another reconciliation bill.

Now, I hope I am wrong when I say this. I hope I am wrong. I invite my Democratic colleagues in the Senate—I love them all—to come forward and help us. But I just know politics, and the Presiding Officer does too. A lot of them are going to be reluctant.

But we don't need their assistance. We can pass a welfare security bill with all Republican votes. If I could do it on my own, I would introduce the bill tomorrow. I would go and look at every single State and every single country and look for the best practices on presenting welfare fraud. I would cross-access a list of people who sign up for welfare to their tax records, if they have any. Sometimes, people lie. In Louisiana, we have caught people making a quarter of a million dollars a year getting Medicaid. But you have to check. Apparently, nobody was checking in Minnesota, and I don't think they are alone.

If it were up to me, I am drafting that bill now. I will look at every State, every country, and adopt the best practices. And my bill can be ready in 2 weeks, but I can't do a thing about getting it passed because I don't have the authority to bring it to the floor of the Senate. I don't. Only the majority leader can agree to bring a bill to be considered by the Senate. Those are the rules. If I were King for a day, I would change it in a nanosecond. I think every Senator ought to be able to bring his bills to the floor. And that is not a criticism of my good friend JOHN THUNE or my good friend MITCH MCCONNELL or my friend CHUCK SCHUMER. They are just following the rules. I would change them.

But we need to do another reconciliation bill to fix the welfare system and stop the stealing—stop the stealing. And we can do it with all Republican votes.

So, please, Senator THUNE—pretty please, as I have said before. I am saying this. I will beg. I will get down on my knees. JOHN, please bring another reconciliation bill. We can do so much, but we can start with fixing welfare fraud. Please, JOHN. Please let us do the bill.

I don't want to end on a negative note. I might have hurt my back going down. I don't want to end on a negative note. I love this country. I just think America is the greatest country in all of human history; I do.

And the whole world knows it. Everybody wants to come here. When is the last time you heard of somebody trying to sneak into China? No, they want to come to America. And I believe, as much as I am standing here, that the future of this country can be better than the present or our past. It can be. I have always believed that we are only as good as our dreams; we are only as valuable as our children.

But I am not going to bubble-wrap it. We have \$30-plus trillion worth of debt, and we have people stealing from poor people and laughing about it—and politicians participating in it. And Washington has to do its part to fix this. But the water is not going to clear up for America—the water is not going to clear up for America until we get the pigs out of the creek. Let's go get the pigs out of the creek.

Please, Senator THUNE, please, let us do another reconciliation bill. Please, lead with welfare reform. We can do it. You can do it. I know you can.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

SENATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, Republicans ran this past election year to make America safer and more pros-

perous. Now, we are a year into this, and people are seeing that the comprehensive economic plan that the Republicans have put into place is working for them.

This year, going forward, Americans are going to see even more money in their pockets, and that is thanks to the Working Families Tax Cut law. The average American taxpayer will see a significant cut this year in their taxes, which is a direct effect of the law. Families in every single State in the Nation are feeling relief.

Now, key parts of this tax law went into effect just on January 1, and they are going to make life much more affordable for American families. Republicans increased the child tax credit to \$2,200 per child, and they made it permanent. And it is per child every year. That means for a couple in Cody, WY, with two children: \$4,400 a year. That is money to help buy groceries, to help with education, and it helps with that child's activities.

Republicans also raised the limit in the dependent care flexible spending accounts. We raised it to \$7,500 from \$5,000. So a working mother in Casper, WY, can now set aside \$7,500, pretax, for childcare. Senator KATIE BRITT of Alabama championed that, really pushed it through, and worked very hard.

Additionally, Republicans are doing things Congress has never done before. We have now created a guaranteed savings account for every American child. Every child born between 2025 and 2028 will receive a \$1,000 investment account. So a child born in Sheridan, WY, will now start life with \$1,000 already invested in their future. Senator TED CRUZ had this innovative idea.

Additionally, the Working Families Tax Cut law protects family farms, ranchers, and small business owners. This is vital to my home State of Wyoming and for other rural States. For years, farmers and ranchers told me the same thing: The death tax makes it nearly impossible to pass their family operations on to the next generation. Republicans delivered permanent death tax relief for family farmers, for ranchers, and for small business owners. Now, ranchers in Wheatland, WY, or Worland or Torrington or Gillette can now pass their land on—and their livelihood—to that next generation and avoid these crushing death taxes from Washington, DC.

Every Democrat in the Senate voted against the bill—every single one of them. They want the government to come in and confiscate small businesses and farms and ranches. That is not what Republicans stand for, and that is not what we did. If Democrats had their way, taxes would be going up this year by \$4 trillion. Democrats supported and probably continue to support the largest tax increase in American history because that is the way they voted.

When Republicans proposed legislation to crack down on waste, fraud,

abuse, and corruption in Medicaid and food stamps and government social programs, every Democrat in the Senate voted no. They must love the corruption—which brings us to Minnesota.

Yesterday, Congress exposed worrying new information about the vast extent of the massive fraud and corruption in the State of Minnesota. Minnesota Governor Tim Walz, who was the Democrat Vice Presidential nominee in 2024, and his attorney general, Keith Ellison, who was the deputy chair of the Democratic National Committee, are presiding over one of the most outrageous fraud scandals in recent memory. Manipulative criminals have stolen billions of dollars from Federal programs—billions meant to help vulnerable Americans.

Republicans voted to put more money in people's pockets. That is not what the Democrats wanted. No. They voted to raise taxes and voted to protect the kind of fraud being exposed in Minnesota today, the kind of fraud that Democrat-elected officials refuse to see and refuse to stop.

The working families tax cuts are part of the broader economic agenda that is already working, and the numbers prove it. Today, the world's most successful companies are investing in this country—\$10 trillion in America. Record investment is driving private sector job growth. It is driving innovation. It is driving opportunity.

The proof is that the economy grew 4.3 percent in the third quarter. That is the strongest economic growth in 2 years. Core inflation cooled in November to 2.6 percent. Gasoline is now less than \$3 per gallon in most of the country. In Casper, WY, it was \$1.91. Forecasters predict prices are going to continue to fall. Real wages are on track to grow over by \$1,000 this year.

All of these successes happened because Republicans are committed to American prosperity. We cut taxes. We eliminated wasteful Washington spending. We rolled back burdensome regulations. We unleashed American energy. This is a 180-degree turnaround from the past 4 years under Joe Biden and the Democrats. Under Joe Biden and the Democrats, prices rose by over 20 percent in 4 years. Democrats will now go down in history as the party of high prices, high taxes, and open borders.

As Americans celebrate the 250th anniversary of our Nation, we can be confident—confident—that our country is safer, is stronger, and more prosperous. And with the Working Families Tax Cuts, Republicans are making sure that that prosperity continues into the future.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 3229

Ms. ROSEN. Mr. President, here is a fact that Donald Trump seems to not understand or care about: families in Nevada and all across this country being squeezed—being squeezed—by high costs. Nevadans are struggling to

afford even the most basic things from groceries to rent to healthcare.

This isn't just in Nevada. All across the country, housing costs are up; healthcare costs are up. Even the most basic, unavoidable expenses like electricity have even gotten more expensive. But if you ask Donald Trump, he says affordability—and I am going to quote here—is a “hoax.” It is a “con job by the Democrats.” He even said—and I am going to quote again—“prices are coming down tremendously . . . inflation is stopped.”

I am going to ask everybody here at home today: Do you think affordability is a hoax? Do you feel like prices are going down? Don't listen to Trump. Just take one look at your grocery bill this week. It is clear he isn't paying attention to hard-working people because the price of your groceries has done nothing but skyrocket.

Donald Trump, he ran for President on lowering prices. Since he got into office nearly a year ago, Americans have spent on average well over \$1,000 more because of Trump's cost-raising tariffs. He was supposed to lower prices on day one. Well, we are a lot further than day one.

I want to be clear about what these tariffs really are. They are an additional tax on hard-working families, and they increase prices across the board. Just look at housing. Due to Trump's tariff taxes, the price of construction materials, appliances, and furniture have skyrocketed, gone through the roof. When you raise the cost of lumber, steel, and other materials builders rely on to build new homes, you slow down construction. And when supply can't keep up with demand, prices go up. That is not just ideology; that is simple economics.

Similarly, Trump's self-imposed taxes have increased your costs at the grocery store. You are paying more for the essentials you rely on most: coffee, produce, meat, so much more. Trump and his billionaire buddies, who probably haven't gone grocery shopping for themselves in years, don't care about the price of groceries. Well, they might not care about paying more, but seniors on fixed incomes do; parents trying to feed their kids do; workers whose paychecks aren't keeping up do. They are the ones being hurt by these reckless tariffs. So Donald Trump may not care, but everyone else I know cares—and it matters.

That is why I introduced my No Tariffs on Groceries Act. This bill, it is simple—simple. It would exempt your groceries from Trump's tariffs, meaning the costs won't be raised because of the tariffs. So it is time that Congress reasserts its authority over trade and pushes back against Trump's cost-raising tariffs.

I know a few things: Groceries are not a luxury; food should never be a bargaining chip; and working families should not be collateral damage in Trump's reckless trade wars. This hits everyone at the kitchen table. Every

person needs to eat. You shouldn't be collateral damage in Trump's reckless trade wars. Let's prove this Chamber can still act on the issues that are most important to American families at their kitchen table. If they care about that and they want to lower costs for everybody, let's pass my bill right now.

Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be discharged from further consideration of S. 3229 and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; that the Rosen substitute amendment, which is at the desk, be considered and agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered read and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I rise in opposition to S. 3229, the No Tariffs on Groceries Act of 2025.

The reason groceries are so expensive is because during the last administration, inflation got totally out of control. We all know the grocery prices went up then. That is when the inflation rates were in double digits. I think at one point, they got over 20 percent.

Where is the inflation rate today? My colleagues on the other side would like to try to duck the fact that the reason grocery prices are so high is because of the inflation that was caused under President Biden's administration when we blew the top off of growth and the prices. Today, the inflation rate is at 2.7 percent, close to the Federal Reserve's target for our economy. That is just a fact that we have to recognize and deal with.

Now, this bill seeks to exempt articles of food from the President's IEEPA tariffs. I agree with my colleagues that tariffs generally should be targeted as much as possible to avoid harm to Americans. We also should consider more exemptions to harms arising from potential unintended consequences, including exemptions for unavailable natural resources.

The administration agrees. In November, the administration excluded a number of food items from the reciprocal, India, and Brazil IEEPA tariffs. By all accounts, the administration is working to identify similar exemptions in other active trade negotiations. I strongly encourage the President to pursue productive courses of engagement with U.S. stakeholders in doing so, but voting for one-off exemptions on the Senate floor in isolation of a larger negotiating strategy and broader stakeholder concerns like this bill S. 3229 asks us to do now, does not facilitate a predictable process for our negotiators or for any broader segment of stakeholder engagement.

Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.