

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard. So the item will be placed on the calendar under rule XIV.

HOUSING FOR THE 21ST CENTURY ACT

SAVE AMERICA ACT

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, later today, we will finish up the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act, the latest piece of legislation in Republican's affordability agenda. And next week, I will be bringing the SAVE America Act to the floor, and we will be having a full and robust debate.

So what is the SAVE America Act? It is a package of commonsense policies—the kind of commonsense policies that should get an automatic “yes” vote from literally every Member of this body.

At the core of the SAVE America Act is the requirement that individuals provide proof of citizenship to register to vote and then show an ID when they go to the polls. In other words, it would require Americans to demonstrate that they are eligible to vote and that they are who they say they are when they go to do so.

Not to keep using the word “commonsense,” but it is pretty commonsense, right? We require a photo ID for a whole lot of things in this country, for obvious reasons.

Getting on a plane? Show your official government-issued photo ID.

Go to the doctor? The same thing, provide your government-issued photo ID plus your insurance card.

Get hired for a new job? Provide your government-issued photo ID when you start.

Public libraries ask for a photo ID. In New York City you have to provide some type of photo ID to get a library card. In Baltimore, MD, it is the same thing; in Washington, DC, again, photo ID.

I will stop with the list of libraries, but I think we can all agree that if you have to show photo ID and prove where you live to get a library card, it is not too much to ask voters to show ID to vote in Federal elections. It takes about 10 seconds and protects the security of our elections.

Americans overwhelmingly agree that voters should have to show ID at the polls. Eighty-three percent of Americans—83 percent—in an August 2025 poll supported requiring photo ID at the polls for all voters. That includes 71 percent of Democrats, 76 percent of Black Americans, 77 percent of Asian Americans, and 82 percent of Hispanic Americans.

It kind of feels like the only Americans not to support voter ID requirements are Democrats here in Congress. That is right. We are expecting continued, full-throated opposition to voter ID and the SAVE America Act from Senate Democrats, as well as more of the unforgivable rhetoric that Democrats have already been engaging in.

The Democrat leader has been calling this bill “Jim Crow 2.0,” a phrase that

is not only deeply irresponsible and insulting for those who actually lived through that dark chapter in our history but also insults the overwhelming majority of Americans, including minorities, who look at voter ID and see nothing more than commonsense.

In fact, I can really see only two reasons for Democrats opposing this legislation: Either Democrats are just reflexively opposing this proposal because it originated from Republicans, or Democrats believe that there are, in fact, people out there voting illegally; and that it is benefiting Democrats, and they want to keep it going.

I honestly cannot think of another reason to oppose something so eminently reasonable as requiring people to demonstrate that they are eligible to vote and that they are who they say they are when they go to the polls.

Now, I will have a lot more to say about the SAVE America Act next week, including about two other commonsense measures in the bill that would prevent biological males from competing in women's sports and protect minors from gender transition procedures—two other things, I should note, that are supported by the American people.

I can't guarantee an outcome on this legislation, but I can guarantee that we are going to put Democrats on the record and that they will be forced to defend their outrageous positions on these issues and explain to the American people why common sense and the Democratic Party have parted ways.

Republicans are looking forward to this debate, and I look forward to saying much more about the SAVE America Act in the very near future.

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.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, yesterday, for the second time in less than a week, Republicans were given the opportunity to fund TSA and to also fund FEMA, to stand up for our Coast Guard, and to make sure core DHS operations are funded while negotiations on ICE and Border Patrol continue. And for the second time in less than a week, Republicans said no. Well, we are giving them another opportunity later this morning—another opportunity to end their blockade of TSA. We are giving Republicans the opportunity to end their blockade of FEMA. We are giving Republicans the opportunity to end their blockade at CISA and to end their blockade at Coast Guard and much else.

The bottom line is very simple. It is easy. You don't have to follow politics

very closely to see it. Democrats are ready to fund TSA; Republicans are blocking it. Democrats are ready to fund CISA; Republicans are blocking it. Democrats are ready to fund FEMA and Coast Guard and most of DHS operations. We will give Republicans a chance—a chance—to say yes.

We all know that we do not have agreement on how to deal with ICE. We know, very simply, that Democrats just want ICE to behave like any police department in America and use warrants and not wear masks, but we don't have to tie that disagreement up and use people at the airports and American citizens as hostages and say: We are not going to fund FEMA; we are not going to fund TSA unless you give in to our unreasonable and unpopular demands on reforming ICE. So we are going to offer these bills one at a time and see where our Republican colleagues go.

We know the American people are on our side. We know that the only thing Republicans need to do is stay out of the way and these programs will be funded today and problems at the airports will go away.

Mr. THUNE. Would the Democrat leader yield?

Mr. SCHUMER. I will.

Mr. THUNE. So I assume the Democrat leader is aware of the fact that we have tried repeatedly to fund everything temporarily to allow the negotiations over the ICE budget to continue.

Mr. SCHUMER. I am well aware, but that hasn't worked. What can work—

Mr. THUNE. And the reason that hasn't—

Mr. SCHUMER. No, no. I—

Mr. THUNE. The reason that hasn't worked—

Mr. SCHUMER.—am not yielding back.

Mr. THUNE.—is because the Democrats are blocking it.

Mr. SCHUMER. The bottom line is, Democrats are ready today. America, watch. We will have Members on the floor saying “Let's fund TSA” with no other preconditions. What will Republicans do? They are going to see Republicans get up and block it. It is that simple.

Now, my friend—sometimes—much of the time.

My friend, the Republican leader, says: Well, we will only do it if you go along with what we want on ICE and what we want on Border Patrol—highly unpopular and wrong. So who is standing in the way, America? Look at it. We are not putting any preconditions on funding TSA. The Republicans are. And why?

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, will the Democrat leader—

Mr. SCHUMER. I will not yield.

Mr. THUNE.—yield for a question?

Mr. SCHUMER. No. In a minute.

Why? Because Republicans are in obeisance to Donald Trump's insistence on having these marauding forces of ICE go through our cities. We saw what they did in Minneapolis. We saw what

they did in Los Angeles. We saw what they did in other places. Americans don't like it. Trump's numbers have suffered.

And so it is simple: Don't attach preconditions, fund TSA, fund CISA. You will have that opportunity in a few hours. And if you get up and block it and say "We will only do it unless," Americans will know who is to blame. I yield.

Mr. THUNE. Well, I would say again to the Democrat leader that the Democrats have had multiple opportunities—and will have another one today—to provide funding for all of the Agencies that he just mentioned, under a continuing resolution, to allow us to consider how we are going to resolve the DHS issues that the Democrat leader has raised, which are being negotiated, I might add, at the moment between Democrats and Republicans and the White House. So there will be an attempt. The Democrats will have an opportunity to block—because they have now repeatedly—a continuing resolution that would fund all the Agencies to which you just alluded and allow us more time to negotiate.

So those Agencies will be funded—

Mr. SCHUMER. Would my colleague—

Mr. THUNE.—if the Democrats don't block it.

Mr. SCHUMER.—yield for a question?

Will he support, without any Republican blocking it, a straight motion to just deal with TSA and get it funded while we are trying to work out these negotiations? Will he support that? No ands, ifs, or buts; no preconditions, no keep negotiating on ICE but just get it done. Will he support that?

Mr. THUNE. I would support a resolution, which will be offered, to fund not just TSA but Coast Guard; Cybersecurity, CISA; FEMA; other Agencies and Departments of our government that are essential not only to national security and homeland security but to making sure that people can move through our airports in this country, that the FEMA—Federal Emergency Management Agency—has the ability to respond to disasters. Those are things, I would say to my friend the Democrat leader, that could all be funded today, and then we can continue this discussion that he wants to have, which, again, there have been offers made repeatedly, the most recent of which was about 13 days ago, I think, from the White House, and the Democrats have yet to respond.

Mr. SCHUMER. Reclaiming my time. I rest my case. What the leader is saying is he will only fund TSA if we will continue to fund—for a short time, for a long time—ICE and Border Patrol, which he knows is gridlocked, which he knows we don't agree with, and so it is clear. He has made it clear.

Just fund TSA. That is it. He has a lot of rigamarole attached to funding TSA: but do this, but do that, but do this.

You can't win the argument, Leader. It is simple. We are being clear. We are being concise.

So the question is very simple. I say to my Republican friends: Support the legislation that is coming on the floor today. And if you do, TSA is funded like that. Every Democrat is for it. My guess is, half to three quarters of the Republicans are wishing they would be for it, but their leadership is insisting on attaching preconditions on ICE negotiations and Border Patrol negotiations.

So all I say to my Republican colleagues: Stop the speeches that you care about TSA. Don't talk the talk. Walk the walk. Let the legislation that we are proposing go forward without blocking it, and TSA will be back to work; our lines at the airports will be gone; and then we will have legislation on CISA.

Don't talk to us about the need for safety and then block legislation that allows CISA to go through. That is hypocrisy. Just let it go through. And I know that our Republican leadership knows that we have the high ground here, knows that the people are on our side.

And why do Republicans do this? Why won't they budge to give an inch on ICE, which is highly unpopular, and even the President has said hasn't done things right? That is the mystery, but it is probably because some in the rightwing insist. And we know that the hard right runs this party, and that is why they are doing so poorly with the American people right now. That is why we Democrats are on the ascent—because we are with the American people and the American people say: Fund TSA now, and you can debate ICE.

There has been a debate on ICE. We believe we are right. We believe something as simple as warrants should be used by ICE when you bust into someone's house. We believe, simply, that ICE agents should not be masked when every police department and sheriff's department is identified, and the American people are with us.

But we don't even have to debate that today because what Republicans are doing is insisting that we don't change a thing about ICE before we move forward on TSA. That is wrong. That is using the American people as hostages. And we are not going to do it.

And I remind my Republican colleagues, we are going to be back here again and again, winning this debate and eventually winning the American people, which will say to you folks on the Republican side: You had better stop this blockade of TSA and CISA, of FEMA, and of the Coast Guard. You had better stop using them as hostages until you get your way on ICE and on CBP, where you are out of touch with the American people.

I yield the floor.

Oh, no, I don't yield the floor. I have a few other subjects I might like to touch on. There is so much to talk about. Donald Trump and the Repub-

licans are screwing up America in so many ways. So let's talk about Iran for a minute.

IRAN

Mr. President, as the war on Iran continues, Donald Trump does what he usually does: He lies. He is lying to the American people.

According to public reporting, preliminary intelligence reports suggest, tragically, that American operations may have been involved, unfortunately, in this horrible missile strike on the all-girls elementary school in Iran on the first day of the war. And when Donald Trump was asked about those reports, what did he say? He said: Well, I don't know about that.

That is ridiculous, and it is an obvious lie. Donald Trump is the Commander in Chief, and he expects us to believe that he has no clue about intelligence regarding a horrific attack on a school several days after it occurred.

The vast majority of Americans, obviously, won't believe Donald Trump. They know he is an inveterate liar. He lies daily. They will know when he says he didn't know about this report—of course he did. But there might be a handful of Americans who still might believe the guy, who still don't understand that he is an inveterate liar.

And so think about that. He is saying he has zero clue about a basic intelligence report regarding this strike. If he didn't know about it 2 or 3 days later, when all of America did, and he is not lying, which I believe he is, then what chaos—what is going on in this administration? The Commander in Chief, on something that affects policy while we are at war, says he doesn't know about it? That talks about the chaos and confusion that have taken over this administration—the idea that something is all jumbled up in the White House, that there is no information flow to the President on something so important.

So either Donald Trump is lying when he says he knows nothing about the school bombing intelligence findings—he gets these reports every day—or he is dangerously uninformed, which says his staff is really screwed up.

Equally unacceptable is Donald Trump's apparent miscalculation when it comes to the Strait of Hormuz. In the early days of this war, Donald Trump bragged that victory would come easily. "We are going to win shortly. No time. No problem." But now, after the United States has damaged so much of Iran's infrastructure, the new radical Supreme Leader is focusing on the one point of leverage Iran has always had over the world's economy: the Strait of Hormuz.

A few moments ago, in his first public comments, the Supreme Leader Khamenei, who is even worse than his predecessor, his father, said Iran will continue to block the Strait of Hormuz. Freeing it could, potentially, America, require boots on the ground.

How did Donald Trump not see this coming? How did his planners not see

this coming? This is the one bit of leverage Iran has. Of course, we knew they were going to use it. They have used it in the past. A college student with a basic understanding of geopolitics could tell you that Iran's greatest leverage is this narrow passage through which a huge share of the world's oil must travel. And now 13 days as we are into the war—I believe it is 13 days—the administration is scrambling to contain the damage and deal with rising oil prices. And Donald Trump, just by saying, “Oh, the war is going to end soon,” you are not going to fix the shortage of oil or fertilizer or other products in America.

After I said for days that he should, Donald Trump finally announced that he is tapping the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. He should have done it sooner. But in any case, even this decision was marred by chaos and confusion. It caught our allies completely off guard because for days it seemed Trump would hold back.

There is such disorganization and chaos when we are in a war. We can't afford chaos in a war. I don't know of any other time America went to war and things were so chaotic.

There is not a single strategic decision that Trump has made in this war that was not born from chaos, confusion, misinformation, and lies. And there is nobody—nobody—up there in the White House around him willing to stand up and tell him when he was wrong. In his first term, Trump had Kelly, Trump had Mattis—people who had courage, who had backbones, who had military backgrounds—and they told him the truth. He eventually fired them for telling the truth, but they told him the truth.

Where is the truth teller now? No one is there, and America is paying the price, unfortunately, in lives, in the eight brave troops we lost, in fortune—they said the first 2 days or the first week of the war cost \$11 billion; we could fix a lot of healthcare with that \$11 billion—and in strength.

This has gone too far, with too much chaos, too little thought, and it is hurting America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor this morning having just listened to the minority leader talk about the Department of Homeland Security, which the Democrats once again refused to fund.

How can the minority leader from New York have forgotten about why we have a Department of Homeland Security in the first place? It was set up after 9/11, after the Twin Towers were hit, so that it could never happen again. Yet to sit here and listen to him talk about this component of it or that component—this was a program fundamentally set in place to protect our Nation and our citizens from the terror that was rained upon us on 9/11. That is

why the entire Department was brought together and funded. Now we hear the minority leader—well, he wants to peel off this part and that part and take the Department apart as we are trying to protect the country.

He said something about what the American people are wondering. What the American people are wondering today is why the Democrat Party continues to stand up for illegal immigrant criminals against law-abiding citizens. That is what I hear about in Wyoming: Why in the world are Democrats wanting to stand up for illegal immigrant criminals and not hard-working American citizens?

So for the last 27 days, the Democrats have shut down the entire Department of Homeland Security lock, stock, and barrel. TSA agents are missing their paychecks. Our Nation's infrastructure is more vulnerable to cyber attacks. There have been two attacks by terrorist sympathizers in the last 2 weeks.

The minority leader—you listen to his comments—is completely out of touch with the American people and what people are worried about all across this country. And there they go again. Here we have it.

Less than 5 months ago, Democrats shut down the entire government. The government stayed shut for 43 days. Now we have gotten most of the government funded, but they continue to shut down the Department of Homeland Security for one reason and one reason only: because they want to protect illegal immigrant criminals. When you listen to what he is saying, when you listen to the comments by the minority leader, he wants to stand side by side with illegal immigrant criminals, not with the American people. Democrats want to defund law enforcement. They want to abolish ICE. They want to turn our Nation into a sanctuary nation.

Yesterday, once again, Democrats blocked Republican efforts to reopen the Department of Homeland Security. Now, the White House and Senate Republicans have made offer after offer. We negotiated in good faith. Democrats in the Senate have not.

What we are doing here is critical. It is critical to the safety and the security of our Nation. This is what we are doing: We are trying to fund America's Department of Homeland Security. When this was set up after the 9/11 attacks and the terrorism, what did they want to include in that? TSA, the Coast Guard, Secret Service, America's cyber defenses. It is the Department that stops smugglers, drug traffickers, human traffickers.

The Department of Homeland Security was created to protect us as a nation, and since 9/11 of 2001, this Department has been on the frontlines in the fight against terrorism and securing the border. That is the part the Democrats hate. They want an open border. They want people to come in indiscriminately from all around the world.

And Joe Biden and the Democrats allowed it, with over 10 million illegal immigrants coming into this country in the 4 years of the Biden administration.

The people that work for the Department of Homeland Security—they are the silent heroes of the Nation. They are the ones engaged in the battle to keep our communities safe and secure. They shouldn't be forced to miss their paychecks because Democrats continue to choose to play politics. Right now, 50,000 TSA agents all around the country are missing their paychecks. For the third time in 6 months, Democrats have forced the TSA agents to work without getting paid.

A veteran TSA officer in Phoenix, AZ, was very clear. He said:

We are fed up. We've had enough.

I believe he is right. All Americans are fed up and have had enough of this political posturing and gameplaying by the Democrats.

A CBS News report this week explains what is happening. Absences by TSA agents have doubled—doubled since February 14 when the Democrat-caused shutdown began. More than 300 TSA agents have left the job entirely, and lines at airports continue to grow. In some airports, the lines stretch out of the terminal and into the parking lot. Spring break travel is picking up all around the country. Families are paying the price. That is the price of Democrats' political obstruction.

It is the same and concerning story with regard to the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency. This is the Agency put in place after 9/11, under the Department of Homeland Security—the entire Department—that protects our Nation's critical infrastructure, and that includes our energy infrastructure.

Since the Democrat shutdown began last month, only one in three staffers at the Agency is working. Why? Because the others have been furloughed because of the Democrat-caused shutdown. And those who are still on the job are working without pay.

America is continually under attack in the cyber world—24 hours a day, 7 days a week. That is energy, banking, financial institutions, water, utilities, and our military. After the strikes in Iran, the pace of cyber attacks against us accelerated. The Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps made their intentions clear. They said Americans “will no longer have security anywhere in the world, even in their own homes.”

Imagine the damage that Iran could do if they hacked our critical infrastructure—because they are trying. But because of the Democrats' shutdown—and we just heard the minority leader talk about it. The shutdown is continuing, he is saying. Because of that, vulnerability scans are on pause. That shouldn't happen. We need to get these open and running. Protective guidance for our critical networks is not being issued. We need that.

Democrats don't seem to care because they want to protect illegal immigrant criminals, and we just heard it from the minority leader of the U.S. Senate, the Senator from New York, who ought to be more concerned than anybody about threats to our Nation. Our energy grids, our hospitals, our State and local governments—they are all more exposed.

It is not a question of if the Democrat shutdown is hurting the American people; it is a matter of public record. Democrats are each and every day endangering Americans on the ground, in the skies, and even in cyber space.

The American people expect their government to take our Nation's security seriously. Democrats don't seem to be thinking that way at all. The American people expect Congress to fund the Agencies that keep them safe, not that keep safe illegal immigrant criminals. And that is what we heard from the minority leader—what we could do differently to protect illegal immigrant criminals, not protect the American people.

The American people expect us to pay the people who protect us, who protect our airports, who protect our borders, who protect our networks, who protect our communities. That is what the American people want. They expect us to confront the threats at home and abroad and do it with urgency.

Mr. President, the Department of Homeland Security must be funded fully and immediately, and I am tired of excuses from the Democrats because that is all they are—excuses.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST

Mr. GALLEGRO. Mr. President, 12 days ago, Donald Trump took us to war against Iran. Since then, 7 American servicemembers have been killed, and 140 more have been wounded. Instead of protecting our troops, Trump is making it easier for enemies to kill them.

None of us are mourning Ayatollah Khamenei. The moment this war started, oil prices spiked. Anyone who has looked at a map knows that a war in the Middle East affects oil prices. It has happened every single time. But apparently no one at the White House looked at the map. So now, American families, who are already struggling to put food on the table, are paying 20 percent more for gas because of Trump's war.

The administration's response to the crisis they created is to back off sanctions on Russian oil. So American families are hurting while Trump is making more money for Vladimir Putin. The administration has given Russia a lifeline just as they needed it.

U.S. officials confirmed last week that Russia is sharing intelligence with Iran to help target U.S. servicemembers. Russia is telling Iran where our troops are and where the military assets are. Just think about that. Russia is giving Iran a map to find and kill

Americans, and in our response, we are going to allow them to sell their oil to other countries to fund their war machines—all while Steve Witkoff, the President's envoy, is happy to take Putin, a professionally trained liar, at his word when he says they aren't sharing intel with Iran.

We started a war with Iran, and we are now rewarding the ones that are helping shoot us. How is this putting America first? How many times do we have to remind this President that Putin is not our friend?

This is what happens when the administration starts a war without a plan. They are scrambling to clean up their mess and thinking twice about the consequences.

I know the consequences because I have lived them. Twenty-one years ago, I was a Marine infantryman in the Al Anbar Province of Western Iraq. Every day, someone was trying to kill us. I lost a lot of best friends there. That is why I am standing together with you here today—because I know what happens when we send soldiers into harm's way without thinking through what comes next and what we are asking these kids to do. And I know the people who pay for wars are never the politicians who started them; it is the American people, the kids from working-class neighborhoods who enlisted and their families.

What this administration did was not just wrong; it was illegal.

In 2017, Congress passed the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act—signed by Trump himself—requiring the White House to notify Congress before making any significant change to U.S. policy toward Russia. We passed a law because we understood that decisions of this magnitude—decisions that touch our national security and affect the safety of our troops—require transparency and accountability. They require someone to be able to look the American people in the eye and explain themselves.

But this administration did not notify Congress. Apparently, this administration doesn't think it owes anyone any explanation. They don't think they owe the troops they are putting in danger any explanation at all, and they don't think they owe the families of the seven Americans who are not coming home an explanation. They are making it up as they go and asking Americans to pay for it with their lives.

If this administration wants to bring gas prices down, stop the war.

Mr. President, notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of my resolution at the desk; further, that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The majority whip.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from South Dakota.

H.R. 6644

Mr. ROUNDS. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act—a bipartisan, bicameral effort to address one of the most pressing challenges facing families across the country: the cost and availability of housing.

Housing affordability is not just an issue in major metropolitan areas; it is a challenge in small towns, farming communities, and rural counties across America.

In my home State of South Dakota, communities are growing, but the housing supply has not kept pace with demand. Whether it is young families trying to purchase their first home or workers moving into our communities, the shortage of available housing is becoming a serious challenge.

I want to thank Chairman SCOTT and Ranking Member WARREN for their leadership in bringing members together to incorporate priorities from both sides of the committee. Their efforts resulted in a strong consensus-driven package that addresses housing challenges in both rural and urban areas.

We will be voting final passage on that act yet this afternoon.

I am proud that several provisions I have authored are included in this legislation, each focused on cutting unnecessary redtape, modernizing outdated Federal programs, and giving State and local partners the flexibility they need to address housing challenges on the ground.

First, the bill includes the Rural Housing Service Reform Act that I introduced with Senator SMITH from Minnesota. Senator SMITH has been a great partner as we developed this legislation over the past several years, working together to address the unique housing challenges facing rural communities across the country.

This bill provides the first comprehensive update to USDA's rural housing programs in more than a decade. Across rural America, thousands of affordable housing units financed through USDA's Section 515 Program are reaching the end of their mortgage terms.

When these mortgages mature, the rental assistance, which is tied to them, often disappears. That means that rents can increase sharply or properties can leave the program entirely.

Without congressional action, up to 400,000 Americans nationwide could face rent increases or displacement as these mortgages mature. The impact will fall hardest on the Midwest and the south regions that serve as the backbone of American ag, manufacturing, and energy production. We are already seeing the effects.

Since 2016, more than 900 properties with over 20,000 units have left USDA's

Multifamily Housing Program. On average, about 80 properties per year will mature through 2028. After that, the pace accelerates dramatically with hundreds of properties expected to mature each year in the following decade.

In rural housing markets, once these units disappear, they are almost never replaced. Many rural counties already face vacancy rates below 1 percent, and in more than half of rural counties across the country, there is little or no new housing construction at all.

The Rural Housing Service Reform Act addresses this challenge directly. It allows rental assistance to be decoupled from expiring mortgages, preserving affordability for the families who rely on these homes. It also modernizes the USDA housing programs by allowing income calculations with HUD standards, streamlining loan approval and foreclosure processes, updating outdated information technology systems, and expanding eligibility for loan guarantees to include properties with a small additional home on the property and in-home daycare services.

These are practical reforms that strengthen the rural housing safety net while helping communities maintain a stable workforce and local economy.

The bill also incorporates two additional pieces of legislation I introduced with Senator KIM to streamline housing development to bring new units online faster.

The Unlocking Housing Supply Through Streamlined and Modernized Reviews Act modernizes the environmental review process under the National Environmental Policy Act for HUD-funded housing projects.

And the BUILD Housing Act strengthens coordination between HUD and State and local units of government by expanding the ability of the local partners to participate in environmental review and developmental processes.

These reforms address a simple, but persistent problem: Too often housing projects face duplicative or overlapping review processes that delay construction without improving outcomes.

By aligning Federal standards and allowing greater collaboration with State and local partners, these provisions will help move housing projects forward more efficiently. We are cutting the redtape.

Taken together, these reforms represent a commonsense approach to housing policy. They do not rely on sweeping new Federal mandates. Instead, they focus on removing barriers, modernizing outdated systems, and empowering the communities closest to the problem.

For States like South Dakota, these changes matter. Housing shortages in rural communities can affect everything from workforce recruitment to economic development. Employers across the State—from schools to healthcare providers to ag businesses—regularly tell me that housing avail-

ability is one of the biggest obstacles to expanding their workforce and building their businesses.

When workers cannot find a place to live, communities struggle to grow and local economies suffer. The Housing for the 21st Century Act takes meaningful steps toward addressing these challenges.

I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation and help put our Nation on a stronger path toward expanding housing opportunities for families in South Dakota and across the country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). The Senator from Nebraska.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Mr. RICKETTS. Mr. President, it has now been 26 days since Homeland Security has been funded and 51 days since the Democrats have announced their intention not to fund the Department of Homeland Security.

The Democrats want the Department of Homeland Security to be closed. How do I know they want it to be closed? Well, it is because the Democrats are refusing even to talk to Republicans about what sort of deal we may be able to do to get the funding for the Department of Homeland Security.

Just this past weekend, my freshman colleague from Alabama who sits on the Appropriations Committee and has the subcommittee that oversees the Department of Homeland Security offered the ranking Democrat on Appropriations a meeting, a meeting with our Republican leader, a meeting with the Appropriations chair—the esteemed Senator from Maine—and the White House. And the ranking Democrat refused to even meet, much less negotiate.

Republicans want the Department of Homeland Security opened. Democrats want to keep it shut down. Democrats are playing politics with our national security and the safety of Americans and people in my home State of Nebraska.

The Department of Homeland Security is funded to pay, for example, our Coast Guard. In recent days, our Coast Guard in the Gulf of America just intercepted a shipment of marijuana and cocaine worth about \$1.3 million. That is what the Coast Guard does, keeps us safe from illegal drugs coming into our country, and yet they go unpaid.

In fact, a Nebraskan called in to my office. His son and daughter-in-law in the Coast Guard are deployed right now in Bahrain. They are risking their lives for us, they are risking their lives to keep us safe, and the Democrats won't pay them.

Or let's take your TSA agents that handle the security for a billion travelers in the United States every year. They, too, are working without pay because the Democrats will not fund the Department of Homeland Security. TSA agents process about 2½ million

people every day going through our airports to keep us safe, and the Democrats won't pay them.

I stood here not long ago, sadly, talking about our air traffic controllers. I read letters from them and how the government shutdown that CHUCK SCHUMER led the Democrats on just a short while ago put pressure on their families. Many of those air traffic controllers were veterans.

The minority leader led the Democrats on the longest shutdown in American history. Does nobody remember that, what it did to the families? And yet the Democrats are doing the same thing again now on the Department of Homeland Security.

The Agency that is assigned to keep us safe from the standpoint of cyber security—the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency—has furloughed 1,200 of their 2,000 people. Only 800 people are working right now, putting us at risk.

We have a conflict in the Middle East right now with Iran, the largest state sponsor of terrorism in the world, that country that regularly chants “Death to America.” We know that Iran has plotted assassinations of our President, other officials, and dissidents here on our very soil. And yet the Democrats are not willing to fund the Agency that is meant to help keep us safe. Again, they are playing politics with our national security and our safety.

There is common ground we can come to, to be able to get the Department of Homeland Security open. But if the Democrats refuse to even meet with Republicans to discuss this, the only conclusion I can draw is that they don't want the Department of Homeland Security open. And so they put all of us at risk, including my fellow Nebraskans.

Democrats must come to the table to meet. We must reopen the Department of Homeland Security. We must pay our heroes in the Coast Guard, TSA, Secret Service, CISA, all these people who are working right now to keep us safe are keeping us safe during this conflict in the Middle East with the largest state sponsor of terrorism.

The least the Democrats can do is agree to meet with leadership and have a conversation.

This must end. Democrats must talk.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority whip.

FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE SURVEILLANCE ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the sweeping surveillance powers authorized under section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, known as FISA, expire in just 40 days.

Section 702 grew out of a secret, warrantless surveillance program conducted by the Bush administration after 9/11. When this illegal spying program was finally discovered, Congress enacted 702 as a temporary measure—a temporary measure. Like so many expansive government powers that are adopted during times of emergency,

this authority has now become a fixture of our surveillance architecture.

When it comes to collecting intelligence on foreigners located abroad, the value of this tool is not in serious dispute, but there is a fatal flaw at the core of section 702. This authority is also used for warrantless spying on innocent Americans. Americans' private emails, phone calls, and text messages with friends, family, colleagues, business, and any number of other contacts around the world are swept up under section 702. The government then searches these private communications—protected by the Fourth Amendment, I might add—without a warrant or other court order.

Congress has repeatedly failed to fix this end run around the Constitution. As a result, for years, the intelligence community has abused section 702 to spy on business and religious leaders, political parties, campaign donors, journalists, and protesters across the political spectrum.

In passing the Reforming Intelligence and Securing America Act in April 2024, Congress codified new reforms intended to rein in these abuses. These measures have substantially reduced the number of unlawful searches.

But Congress failed to require a warrant for searching American communications—once again, leaving the fox guarding the henhouse.

At the same time, Congress greatly expanded 702 to include counter-narcotics and immigration vetting, and conscripted a shocking array of American businesses into section 702 spying.

Congress has a responsibility to protect our national security and the privacy and civil liberties of Americans. That is why Senator LEE, Republican of Utah, and I have introduced the SAFE Act, a bipartisan bill that would reauthorize 702 with commonsense reforms to protect our privacy as individuals.

Our bill preserves the core values of 702 as a foreign intelligence collection tool, while preventing the government from using it to target the constitutionally protected communications of Americans, unless they get court approval.

Our warrant requirement takes legitimate operational and security needs into account so that it won't be unduly burdensome or impede any action in an emergency. There is an exception for emergencies.

What it would do is stop the government from accessing the private communications of Americans without a proper basis under the Fourth Amendment to the Constitution. Such a simple requirement to comply with the Constitution should have been included in section 702 from the outset.

The SAFE Act would also prevent government Agencies—like ICE, Customs and Border Protection, and the FBI and others—from skirting the Fourth Amendment to obtain Americans' sensitive information and other personal details from data brokers.

ICE is using this data to track U.S. citizens exercising their First Amendment right to protest, which should concern Senators on both sides of the aisle.

If the FBI wants to track someone's phone, obtain their location information, or access their Google search history, the Agency should be required to get a judicial warrant.

Instead, government Agencies are exploiting gaps in our outdated laws to buy our sensitive information from data brokers. It is a loophole that Congress must address. Our bill—my bill with Senator LEE—does that.

Once again, however, those who want to avoid real reforms are urging Congress to just reauthorize section 702 without addressing this issue.

When Congress extended 702 in 2024, the argument was that we needed more time. So Congress reauthorized section 702 for just 2 years to see how the existing compliance measures were working.

"Later," they said. "We need more time. . . . Let's see how the reforms are working."

Now, here we are, 2 years later, and the opponents of real reform are saying exactly the same thing: Just give us more time.

We have been hearing these same excuses for over 20 years. It is time to stop avoiding the issue and to protect Americans' constitutional rights once and for all—not later, not next time.

In 2024, the last time section 702 was up for reauthorization, I chaired the Senate Judiciary Committee, which had jurisdiction over FISA. I held a public hearing more than 6 months before the authority expired so Members could ask the Biden administration how they were using section 702.

Now, the Trump administration refuses to testify publicly about how they are using this power.

Enough is enough. There is no excuse for ramming through an extension of 702 at the last minute without regular order and without common sense and in violation of the Constitution.

The American people deserve better from their representatives. They can and they should protect the American people from threats to their security and threats to their civil liberties.

I yield the floor.

H.R. 6644

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, today, I am voting in favor of the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act. Whether they are renting or buying, too many Americans struggle with the cost of housing. This bill includes crucial reforms to streamline and enhance housing programs, as well as important incentives for communities to build high quality, affordable housing for all. I am also proud that this legislation includes my bipartisan VA Home Loan Awareness Act and VALID Act to help more veterans and their families secure affordable home loans.

We have much more work to do to deliver affordable housing to the Amer-

ican people, but this bipartisan legislation is a step forward. We need to examine ways to increase investment in housing supply and improve financing options, as well as expand vouchers to directly assist families. There are also different perspectives on how this legislation's treatment of "build-to-rent" housing could affect housing supply and prices. Accordingly, we must closely monitor housing markets to ensure those provisions support housing affordability appropriately and make adjustments if circumstances warrant. I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues to increase the production of affordable housing communities need.

Mr. DURBIN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 5 minutes prior to the scheduled rollcall vote.

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

H.R. 6644

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Mr. President, the issue of housing is not a Republican issue or a Democrat issue. It is an issue about helping moms like the one that raised me—the amazing woman that she was—to become a homeowner.

I grew up in rental property, and my first home that I remember was the one that my grandparents were renting, a little 700-square-foot place where me, my mother, and my brother shared a bedroom and a bed. Our experience was one that was filled with tragedy and challenges and a lack of resources, but the one resource we had a lot of was love and hope.

The legislative process today gives us an opportunity to restore hope for so many people who want to just experience their version of the American dream, which is so consistently home ownership.

I am so thankful that back in those days when I was growing up, there was a group of legislators—back in the late seventies and early eighties—who created a program through the USDA that allowed my mom to become a first-time home buyer at 38 years old. But today the average age of a first-time home buyer is 40–40 years old before you ever experience the American dream. That age is too old.

We as a legislative body can do now what a legislative body did then—create opportunities, restore hope, and let young people experience for the first time the American dream—the dream of home ownership.

I am so thankful that it is so far so good, but we must finish the task today. We can do what so many folks failed to do in this legislative body for the last few decades—not a few years but a few decades—which is to pass consequential legislation that makes it easier to become a homeowner for those who are ready for that part of their journey.

I urge this body to vote yes on this bill, and let's create more homeowners at an earlier age. The age of affordability is now, and the solution to affordability is, in fact, us. I urge my colleagues to vote yes on this bill, and let's get the ball moving.

VOTE ON H.R. 6644, AS AMENDED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, all postcloture time has expired. The clerk will read the bill by title, as amended, for the third time.

The amendments were ordered to be engrossed and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN).

The result was announced—yeas 89, nays 10, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 53 Leg.]

YEAS—89

Alsbrooks	Grassley	Murphy
Baldwin	Hagerty	Murray
Banks	Hassan	Ossoff
Barrasso	Hawley	Padilla
Bennet	Heinrich	Peters
Blumenthal	Hickenlooper	Reed
Blunt Rochester	Hirono	Ricketts
Booker	Hoeben	Risch
Boozman	Husted	Rosen
Britt	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Cantwell	Justice	Sanders
Capito	Kaine	Schiff
Cassidy	Kelly	Schmitt
Collins	Kennedy	Schumer
Coons	Kim	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	King	Shaheen
Cortez Masto	Klobuchar	Sheehy
Cotton	Lankford	Slotkin
Cramer	Luján	Smith
Crapo	Lummis	Sullivan
Curtis	Markey	Thune
Daines	Marshall	Van Hollen
Duckworth	McConnell	Warner
Durbin	McCormick	Warnock
Ernst	Merkley	Warren
Fetterman	Moody	Welch
Fischer	Moran	Whitehouse
Galleo	Moreno	Wicker
Gillibrand	Mullin	Wyden
Graham	Murkowski	

NAYS—10

Budd	Paul	Tuberville
Cruz	Schatz	Young
Johnson	Scott (FL)	
Lee	Tillis	

NOT VOTING—1

Blackburn

The bill (H.R. 6644), as amended, was passed.

(Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina assumed the chair.)

(Mr. HAGERTY assumed the chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina). The Senator from North Carolina.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2026—Motion to Proceed

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to resume the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 311, H.R. 7147.

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

The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 311, H.R. 7147, a bill making further consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2026, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

HOUSING FOR THE 21ST CENTURY ACT

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I want to say congratulations and thank you for your leadership.

We just passed a housing bill with 89 Senators in favor of it. Now, this is a bill about increasing supply, and anybody who wants to try to block this bill is going to have to explain to the American people why they don't want to see us build more housing and have that housing in the hands of homeowners, to make that happen.

I thank the Presiding Officer for all you have done, for your leadership, to get us here.

Our Nation is in a full-blown housing crisis. Across rural communities, small towns, suburban neighborhoods, and major cities, home prices are sky-high, rent is through the roof, and just last year, the median age of a first-time home buyer hit 40 years old.

Housing is the single biggest purchase that most Americans will make in their lifetime, but it is far more than that. Owning a home means building economic security. It is the No. 1 retirement plan for families across the country: You pay off your home and live on your Social Security. It helps people have the financing to start small businesses in their communities, and it is the main asset that families can pass down from one generation to the next. Owning a home affects the jobs you can get, the schools your children can attend, and the kinds of communities you can live in.

But for too long, the Federal Government has been asleep at the switch while the crisis grows. Hundreds of thousands of families are priced out of homes by private equity. Many State and local governments have too many rules holding back housing construction. Young people cannot buy their first homes. Seniors and veterans are being left behind. Home ownership is out of the reach of too many families, especially Black families.

We need to act, and that is why I stand here today in support of the 21st

Century ROAD to Housing Act. This landmark bipartisan bill will help tackle the root cause of this crisis by getting more homes built in every community across this country. It will make sure that families own those homes, not giant corporations looking to jack up the rent and squeeze every nickel of profit they can out of American families.

House Republicans should immediately take up this bill and pass it. If they do not, they will have to explain to families across this country in November why they refuse to lower the cost of housing.

(Ms. LUMMIS assumed the Chair.)

This is the biggest package of bills to make housing affordable in 30 years. This bill has more than 40 provisions, every single one of which is designed to help increase housing supply and bring down housing costs.

Here are just a few of the things this bill will do. It removes regulatory barriers and streamlines environmental reviews to speed up affordable housing development and construction approval processes.

It rewards communities that build more housing, and it prods those that are not building to step up and build more. It strengthens the Community Development Block Grant—CDBG—and HOME Programs to get more affordable housing built and to permanently authorize the CDBG-Disaster Recovery Program to get more money out to disaster-stricken communities faster.

It makes it easier and cheaper to build new manufactured housing by removing the outdated chassis requirements, bringing down the cost of a new unit by up to \$10,000.

It creates an Innovation Fund, one that I have been proposing for years, to reward communities that are successfully building more housing with new funding for community infrastructure or even to build more housing.

It will make long-needed improvements to rural housing programs to preserve affordable housing for 400,000 rural families.

It offers new and streamlined funding opportunities for cities and towns to bolster local infrastructure and to convert abandoned buildings into new housing, for homeowners and landlords to make structural home repairs, and for homebuilders to finance new manufactured and modular housing.

And there is so much more in this bill. This bill supports more housing opportunities for veterans, it takes action to reduce homelessness, and it helps address appraisal bias.

And, finally, this bill takes a good first step to get single-family homes back into the hands of American families, not corporations. An overwhelming majority of Americans, across party lines, want to stop private equity from snapping up single-family homes, and this bill does exactly that. It also makes sure that corporate landlords who don't follow the law pay up, and it invests any money they pay in