

## RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:40 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. BRITT).

## EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

## VOTE ON ST. JOHN NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the St. John nomination?

Ms. ERNST. 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 senior assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 45, as follows:

## [Rollcall Vote No. 56 Ex.]

## YEAS—51

Banks	Fischer	Moran
Barrasso	Graham	Moreno
Blackburn	Grassley	Mullin
Boozman	Hagerty	Murkowski
Britt	Hawley	Paul
Budd	Hoeven	Ricketts
Capito	Husted	Risch
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Collins	Johnson	Schmitt
Cornyn	Justice	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cramer	Lee	Sheehy
Crapo	Lummis	Sullivan
Cruz	Marshall	Thune
Curtis	McConnell	Tuberville
Daines	McCormick	Wicker
Ernst	Moody	Young

## NAYS—45

Alsobrooks	Hickenlooper	Reed
Baldwin	Hirono	Rosen
Bennet	Kaine	Sanders
Blumenthal	Kelly	Schatz
Blunt Rochester	Kim	Schiff
Booker	King	Schumer
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Coons	Luján	Slotkin
Cortez Masto	Markey	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warnock
Fetterman	Murray	Warren
Gallego	Ossoff	Welch
Hassan	Padilla	Whitehouse
Heinrich	Peters	Wyden

## NOT VOTING—4

Gillibrand	Smith	Tillis
Lankford		

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BANKS). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the

President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The majority leader.

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

## SAVE AMERICA ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, if MAGA Republicans want to bog down the Senate over a debate on voter suppression, Democrats are ready. We are ready to be here all day, all night—as long as it takes—to ensure the powers of voter suppression do not win the day.

Let me be very clear: The SAVE Act is not a voter ID bill. It is, in every sense, a voter suppression bill. It could purge millions of American citizens from the voter rolls through a screening algorithm designed by Elon Musk's DOGE squad. It could disenfranchise over 20 million American citizens. It would kill online voter registration. It would kill vote-by-mail. It would kill voter motor registration.

What does any of that have to do with election security? It doesn't. It is a naked attempt to rig our elections.

The SAVE Act also rejects the most common forms of ID for anyone trying to register.

The way this works is that you don't have to be notified if you are kicked off the rolls. You show up on election day. They say: We are sorry, Mr. Smith or Ms. Jones. You are not on the rolls anymore.

Then they make it impossible to re-register. Certainly, on that day, you would lose your right to vote.

Driver's licenses are no longer enough. The most common ID forms for anyone to register are rejected in the SAVE Act for the first time in just about every State. Not even military IDs would be enough.

Can you believe that? That would be radical. It would force Americans to register only in person—something only 5 percent of Americans do today.

It punishes married women who change their last names.

The SAVE Act is not about protecting the vote. It is about making it harder to vote and easier to steal an election.

We know what the deal is here. Donald Trump said, if Republicans pass the SAVE Act, it will guarantee his midterm. The senior Senator from Utah said Republicans will lose power, likely for a long time, if they don't get the SAVE Act passed.

That is the whole game. It is cynical. It is beneath the Senate. It is beneath democracy.

Senate Democrats will never let this rotten bill move through this body.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

SAFEGUARD AMERICAN VOTER ELIGIBILITY ACT—Motion to Proceed

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I understand that the Senate has received a message from the House to accompany S. 1383.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The leader is correct.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask that the Chair lay before the Senate the House message to accompany S. 1383.

Mr. SCHUMER. 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 senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 48, as follows:

## [Rollcall Vote No. 57 Leg.]

## YEAS—51

Banks	Fischer	Moody
Barrasso	Graham	Moran
Blackburn	Grassley	Moreno
Boozman	Hagerty	Mullin
Britt	Hawley	Paul
Budd	Hoeven	Ricketts
Capito	Husted	Risch
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Collins	Johnson	Schmitt
Cornyn	Justice	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cramer	Lankford	Sheehy
Crapo	Lee	Sullivan
Cruz	Lummis	Thune
Curtis	Marshall	Tuberville
Daines	McConnell	Wicker
Ernst	McCormick	Young

## NAYS—48

Alsobrooks	Hickenlooper	Reed
Baldwin	Hirono	Rosen
Bennet	Kaine	Sanders
Blumenthal	Kelly	Schatz
Blunt Rochester	Kim	Schiff
Booker	King	Schumer
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Coons	Luján	Slotkin
Cortez Masto	Markey	Smith
Duckworth	Merkley	Van Hollen
Durbin	Murkowski	Warner
Fetterman	Murphy	Warnock
Gallego	Murray	Warren
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Welch
Hassan	Padilla	Whitehouse
Heinrich	Peters	Wyden

## NOT VOTING—1

Tillis

The motion was agreed to.

## SAFEGUARD AMERICAN VOTER ELIGIBILITY ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair lays before the Senate the following message from the House.

The Presiding Officer laid before the Senate the following message from the House of Representatives:

Resolved, That the bill from the Senate (S. 1383) entitled "An Act to establish the Veterans Advisory Committee on Equal Access, and for other purposes.", do pass with an amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

MOTION TO CONCUR

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to concur in the House amendment to S. 1383.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows: The Senator from South Dakota [Mr. THUNE] moves to concur in the House amendment to S. 1383.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask the reading be dispensed with.

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

MOTION TO CONCUR WITH AMENDMENT NO. 4420 (Purpose: In the nature of a substitute.)

Mr. THUNE. I move to concur in the House amendment with an amendment. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows: The Senator from South Dakota [Mr. THUNE] moves to concur in the House amendment with an amendment numbered 4420.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask the reading be dispensed with.

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

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments.")

Mr. THUNE. I ask for the yeas and nays on the motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays are ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 4421 TO AMENDMENT NO. 4420

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I have an amendment at the desk to the motion to concur with amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from South Dakota [Mr. THUNE], for Mr. TUBERVILLE and Mrs. BLACKBURN, proposes an amendment numbered 4421 to amendment No. 4420.

Mr. THUNE. I ask the reading be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To protect women and girls in athletics)

Strike title II and insert the following:

**TITLE II—SAVE AMERICAN SPORTS**  
**SEC. 201. AMENDMENT.**

Section 901 of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(d)(1) It shall be a violation of subsection (a) for a recipient of Federal funds who operates, sponsors, or facilitates athletic programs or activities to permit a person whose sex is male to participate in an athletic program or activity that is designated for women or girls.

"(2) For purposes of this subsection, sex shall be recognized based solely on a person's reproductive biology and genetics at birth."

**SEC. 202. DATE.**

This title takes effect 1 day after the date of enactment of this Act.

MOTION TO REFER WITH AMENDMENT NO. 4422

Mr. THUNE. I move to refer the House message on S. 1383 to the Com-

mittee on Rules and Administration with instructions to report back forthwith with amendment No. 4422.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from South Dakota [Mr. THUNE] moves to refer the House message to accompany S. 1383 to the Committee on Rules and Administration, with instructions to report back forthwith an amendment numbered 4422.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To improve the bill)

At the end add the following.

"This Act shall take effect 1 days after the date of enactment."

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays on my motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays are ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 4423

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I have an amendment to the instructions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from South Dakota [Mr. THUNE] proposes an amendment numbered 4423 to the instructions of the motion to refer.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask the reading be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To improve the bill)

Strike "1 day" and insert "2 days"

Mr. THUNE. I ask for the yeas and nays on my amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays are ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 4424 TO AMENDMENT NO. 4423

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from South Dakota [Mr. THUNE] proposes an amendment numbered 4424 to amendment No. 4423.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask that the reading be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To improve the bill)

Strike "2 days" and insert "3 days"

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. President, I rise today to say I support the SAVE America Act. And, yes, even if that means ending the only barely more than 100-year-old filibuster, the silent filibuster, I am still in favor of the SAVE America Act.

As we just voted to get on this bill, the Senate now begins a long and necessary process to advance the SAVE

America Act. It is a straightforward bill that provides proof of citizenship to register to vote in our Federal elections, along with voter ID, and validating mail-in ballots.

The purpose of this bill is about one simple thing: making sure only duly registered American citizens cast ballots in American elections. It is about making sure our elections are secure. Now, this shouldn't be controversial. Voter ID is supported by the vast majority of Americans—Republicans, Independents, and Democrats alike. Polls show that even around 70 percent of Democrats believe voter ID is common sense and essential for fair elections.

It is something most of us do every day. Show an ID to board a plane, to open a bank account, to buy alcohol, to get a hotel room, to purchase some prescriptions. Why should voting, the most sacred act in a Republic, be the only place where we don't ask for basic proof that you are eligible, that you are who you say you are?

Yet here we are, instead of passing this with overwhelming bipartisan support, maybe even by unanimous consent, we are forced into a drawn-out battle because no one on the other side will join us.

I thought a lot about this. You know what the real question should be? The real question that America should be asking their Senator: Why won't just 10 Democrat Senators cross the aisle and support simple voter ID?

We shouldn't be having to have filibustering debates or a thousand other rabbit holes we are about to go down. I would challenge those who, as Mark Twain once said, those who "buy ink by the barrel," to ask my colleagues across the aisle: Why won't you support voter ID?

Now, my colleagues across the aisle, they are clever. They won't answer that question. They won't answer the simple question: Do you support voter ID? They won't commit to that one issue.

Instead, they are going to pivot, and they will tell you what other part of the bill they don't like. They will want to dive into Parliamentary procedures and Senate lore and traditions, but they won't answer that one simple question: Do you support voter ID, just like 70 percent of your Democrat supporters do?

And if we can start there, if we start there that we both agree that we need voter ID, agreeing on that one issue, then maybe we could piece together a compromise on the rest of the bill. But when you reject even something as simple as voter ID, we should continue to ask them: Why won't you stand with the American people who want secure elections? Why won't you stand up and listen to the over 60 percent of Americans who are concerned about the integrity of our elections?

Now, we all know that noncitizens aren't supposed to vote. It is already illegal. But without proof of citizenship

at registration, we have no real safeguard. I could even hear President Reagan now, if he were here, talking to the American people: Trust but verify.

And that is what we want to do. That is what the SAVE America Act is all about. It fixes all these challenges. It requires documents like a passport, a birth certificate with ID, documents millions of Americans already have or can easily obtain. It protects our elections without disenfranchising a single eligible citizen.

Now, oh, by the way, to my colleagues across the aisle, if you have a concern or a better way to make our elections more secure and more fair let's move forward, and if that encourages and empowers every legal citizen the opportunity to vote, then I am with you. Let's work together to make our elections safe and secure.

This isn't, to me at least, about politics; it is about principles. It is about fighting for the American people who deserve elections they can trust. It is about making sure that my vote counts and isn't canceled by an illegal vote.

Our Republic depends on it. When the people lose faith that their vote counts and only citizens decide our future, we risk everything our Founders built.

I will wrap up by saying: I urge my colleagues across the aisle, listen to your constituents, listen to the 70 percent of Democrats who support voter ID. Come across the aisle. Let us pass the SAVE America Act quickly and get back to the people's business.

The American people are watching. They want secure elections. They want us to protect this Republic. Let's show them we can still work together on something so basic and so important.

I yield the floor.

**THE PRESIDING OFFICER.** The Senator from Tennessee.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

**Mrs. BLACKBURN.** Mr. President, I am going to have some comments on the SAVE America Act, and I think it is appropriate that we move forward on that legislation.

First, I want to talk a little bit about what has happened with the Department of Homeland Security. We are 32 days into a shutdown at the Department of Homeland Security. That is an unpleasant thought for a lot of our citizens in this country. Think about our TSA workers and our Secret Service agents who are out there working without a paycheck. FEMA, the emergency management response, FEMA has been suspended as communities in Tennessee, I know Michigan, the East Coast, places where we have had these storms, they are needing FEMA and the help that is there. But nope, because of the Democrats, the DHS is not funded.

Now, the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, CISA, is facing staff shortages, increasing risk of cyber attacks from foreign adversaries like Iran, or the rest of the "axis of evil," Russia, China, North Korea,

and Iran. In that Agency, people are not showing up for work.

The Coast Guard, core operations of the U.S. Coast Guard, have been disrupted, maritime search and rescue, port security, patrols that stop drug traffickers, that has been disrupted. Why? Because our colleagues are refusing to fund the Department of Homeland Security. They have voted repeatedly to keep DHS shut down.

Now, I think it is irresponsible at any time to block these programs and this Department, but especially now. It is so reckless because of the elevated terror threats that we are seeing, especially from Iran, which, by the way, Iran is the world's largest state sponsor of terrorism.

Now, you can look at what has happened since Operation Epic Fury started. You had the shooting at a bar in Austin, TX. The attacker wore an undershirt displaying an Iranian flag. The FBI is looking at that as terrorism. On Thursday, a man from Lebanon plowed a truck strapped with explosives through a synagogue in Michigan.

Same day, you had an immigrant from Sierra Leone who opened fire on an ROTC class at Old Dominion University, killing one person, injuring two others, and we had some students who were able to apprehend this individual.

And the suspect was previously convicted of providing materiel support to ISIS, but he was released early in 2024 under the Biden administration.

Now, last Monday, the Justice Department charged two men for allegedly igniting homemade bombs outside the mayor's residence in New York City, and that was an ISIS-inspired attack.

Late last month, a Federal trial started against a Pakistani national who was allegedly recruited by Iran to kill a United States politician ahead of the 2024 election. President Trump was a potential target.

Now, it is important to note these are not isolated incidences; they are part of what we are seeing as a very unfortunate trend.

Over the course of his administration, Joe Biden and his administration allowed at least 18,000 known or suspected terrorists to enter our country. They had that open border. They liked that open border. They were working overtime trying to make illegal legal. And along the way, they let in 18,000—18,000—known or suspected terrorists. This does not include the more than 2 million "got-aways" that also came across that border without being apprehended.

I know that Homeland Security Investigations is working overtime to find these individuals to apprehend, detain, prosecute, and deport them, to get them out of this country, but there again, Homeland Security Investigations has a limited capacity to work on these threats because the Democrats have chosen yet again to shut down the Department of Homeland Security.

Now, one would think that addressing this issue would be important to

them, but we think that they continue to say they want more restrictions on ICE.

What this is really about, Mr. President, is our friends across the aisle have promised their base—promised them: Look, we are going to defund Federal law enforcement. You leave it to us; we are going to abolish ICE. You leave it to us; we have got a plan.

Their plan, it turns out, is to use not only the American people but TSA agents, FEMA personnel, Homeland Security investigators, the Secret Service, and the Coast Guard as pawns in their political game—pure pawns.

The President has tried to work with them. They had agreed to a funding bill, and then they changed their mind.

The thing that is so interesting about this is they keep talking about "Defund ICE. We need to defund ICE." ICE is funded through 2029. We did that in the Working Families Tax Cut.

What we have to look at is what the Democrats are doing is saying they would rather abolish ICE, open up our borders, and defund Federal law enforcement than actually provide for the security of our homeland—give paychecks that are earned, give these paychecks to the TSA, to FEMA, the Coast Guard, and CISA.

So I would encourage our colleagues to think about this and think about the danger and the risk they are causing to our homeland, the stress they are placing on TSA agents as they are trying to screen luggage to make certain that the flying public is safe, the inconvenience and the harm that are being caused to communities that really need FEMA to step in right now. They need to think about the work that is being done in communities all across this country by Homeland Security Investigations to apprehend drug traffickers, child predators, and to keep our communities safe.

S. 1383

The other thing that—and my colleague from Kansas had mentioned the SAVE America Act, and I am delighted we are finally on this bill. This is another area where we are watching the Democrats come full display of their loyalty to illegal aliens that are in this country. I mean, they are on it. Give them a choice between protecting the rule of law and protecting U.S. citizens, and they are going to choose somebody illegally in the country every single time. That is really a disappointment to me because the SAVE America Act is something that 83 percent of the voters in this country support—83 percent. These are not my numbers; these are numbers from public polls. Anyone can go and look these up.

It is common sense that you are going to show a photo ID many times a day to prove that you are who you are, and it is common sense that everyone should show a photo ID when they go to the ballot box to cast that vote. Indeed, they should be a citizen and prove they are a citizen if they are going to register to vote, thereby protecting "one person, one vote," protecting the integrity of our election system. This is a way that we help ensure that we preserve the system.

You know, in Tennessee where I reside—my State, my wonderful State is ranked No. 1 when it comes to election

integrity. We make certain that our voter rolls are cleaned up. We make certain that voter ID is enforced. We have accurate registration lists and verification of citizenship—all common sense.

If you are going to cast a ballot in our elections, be a citizen. Let's prove that you are the person showing up to cast that vote. And be respectful of the situation.

You know, Mr. President, we have said: Let's make it easier to vote and harder to cheat so that we protect the integrity of the system, so that we eliminate fraud, and so we preserve confidence in our election results.

Well, it is just nonsensical that our colleagues across the aisle oppose this. Can you imagine that? Eighty-three percent of the American people say: You are right. Let's show an ID. Let's be a citizen if we are going to vote.

But, no, our Democrat colleagues oppose it. They want to make it easier for noncitizens to cast ballots.

In fact, 14 States in this country—and by the way, these are overwhelmingly blue States—14 States do not require any documentation whatsoever to go cast your vote. Can you imagine that? You just walk up, claim to be somebody, and you vote.

You look at States like California and New York, which are home to more than 3½ million illegal aliens combined, and that is what you are seeing—making it easier to cheat, making it easier for noncitizens to vote.

You know, I think that you look at these issues, and you realize that our friends across the aisle, Mr. President—they might have been picking the wrong fight. People want DHS funded. They want the SAVE America Act passed. They want the integrity of our elections to be protected. And I think it is imperative that we come together on this floor and that we pass the SAVE America Act and make certain that we know who is voting and that they are a citizen.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, later this year, American citizens across the country will exercise one of their most valuable and sacred rights: the right to vote—a right that has been hard-earned and fought for from the founding generation of our Republic to today.

How was the right to self-government, the right to vote secured? It was secured by American colonists who rejected the royal edict and hurled tea into Boston Harbor, declaring “no taxation without representation.” It was secured by ordinary men who seized their muskets and fired the shot heard around world at Lexington and Concord. It was secured by Continental troops who marched to the fields of Saratoga and the coastline of Yorktown, repeating those immortal words of Patrick Henry: “Give me liberty or give me death.”

For nearly 250 years, Americans have cast their votes for leaders at every level—from local officials, to State representatives, to the President of the

United States. Every Member of this body is here today because we were elected fairly and honestly and given a mandate by our constituents to serve them here in Washington and to protect the liberties and freedoms our Founders fought to preserve.

The power of the ballot box determines the course of our Nation, the history we are writing, and the freedoms we continue to defend. And while no single ballot in isolation may seem decisive, together, the votes of the American people shape the course of our Nation and the course of history.

But it is worth remembering that our voting system did not begin as it exists today. When this Nation was founded, the right to vote was limited, and over time, through debate, sacrifice, a bloody Civil War, and constitutional amendment, the right to vote was quite properly expanded. The 15th Amendment prohibited denying the vote based on race. The 19th Amendment guaranteed women the right to vote. The 26th Amendment lowered the voting age to 18. At every stage of our constitutional amendment process, the goal was the same: to ensure that the right to vote belonged to American citizens and that it was exercised with integrity.

While our system has evolved, one principle has remained constant: Elections reflect the will of the American people. For a right so sacred, for a privilege so hard fought, it is shocking, it is tragic how neglected and vulnerable the protection of our elections has become.

That is why I am here today on this very floor urging the Members of this body to pass the SAVE America Act. It says that when you register to vote in a Federal election, you must provide proof that you are a citizen of the United States and you must provide photo ID to vote. In simple terms, that is it.

This is not some radical, politicized, or weaponized piece of legislation designed to restrict Americans from voting; it is a commonsense measure that protects the integrity of our elections by ensuring that American citizens and only American citizens are voting in them.

Legitimacy in a democracy rests on two pillars: first, the mechanical integrity of the system to produce a valid result, and second, the public's confidence in that system. If either one fails, the system falters. If both fail, the system collapses. A system that cannot be trusted is a system that cannot govern.

If you look around the world, between two-thirds and three-quarters of countries require some form of identification to vote. Why? Because it safeguards the integrity of their elections and reinforces public trust in their system.

So it begs the question: Why hasn't the United States fully embraced this standard?

Well, for the last several months, we have heard claim after claim about

how this legislation would somehow inhibit people from voting, that requiring identification is discriminatory, and that the American people do not support voter ID.

Our Democrat colleagues are fond of bellowing into the TV cameras that photo ID to vote is Jim Crow—they tell us with mock earnestness. Now, I will admit our Democrat colleagues should be experts in Jim Crow because it was Democrat politicians who passed the Jim Crow laws. It was Democrat politicians who founded the Ku Klux Klan. It was Democrat politicians, decade after decade, who enforced discrimination, separate-but-equal poll taxes, and a host of other laws designed to prevent African Americans from voting.

But do you know who has rejected their disingenuous claim that a photo ID to vote is Jim Crow? The Supreme Court of the United States—the Supreme Court of the United States.

The State of Indiana passed a photo ID law requiring that you show a photo ID to vote, and a group of leftwing plaintiffs filed litigation challenging that. The case went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court.

At the time, I was the solicitor general of the State of Texas. I led a coalition of States before the Supreme Court defending photo ID to vote, and the leftwing plaintiffs made the same argument that our Democrat colleagues make today—that requiring a photo ID to vote would somehow disenfranchise minorities.

The Supreme Court, by a vote of 6 to 3, rejected their argument. The author of the majority opinion was John Paul Stevens. John Paul Stevens was one of the great liberals on the Court. He was not a conservative. He was not of the rightwing. He was the leading liberal for years on the U.S. Supreme Court. He rejected that claim, and he pointed out that when someone votes illegally, they are stealing the votes of legal voters; they are stealing the votes of American citizens. The Supreme Court explained that when photo ID laws have been implemented, minority participation in the election goes up, not down, and the Supreme Court explained that requiring photo ID enhances the integrity of an election and the integrity of democracy.

Now, our Democrat colleagues don't want to acknowledge any of those facts, and I guess it is understandable because the American people have heard their specious arguments, and they have rejected them. Eighty-one percent of Americans support requiring a photo ID to vote.

But my Democrat colleagues might say: What about African Americans? Well, about three-quarters of African Americans in the United States support requiring a photo ID to vote.

How about Hispanics? More than 80 percent of Hispanics in America support requiring a photo ID to vote.

How about Democrats? Here is an astonishing statistic: If you get out of elective office and you ask a Democrat

on the street, 70 percent of Democrats in America support requiring a photo ID to vote.

The one group that doesn't is elected Democrats in the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House.

By the way, the premise of their argument that minorities, if you require a photo ID to vote, are not going to be able to vote is, frankly, insulting.

I am proud to be an Hispanic American. I have been Hispanic all my life. Do you know what I have in my wallet? I have a driver's license. I look at my colleagues across the way, and I feel confident they have driver's licenses in their wallets as well.

Hispanics are not morons. African Americans are not morons. When you claim minorities can't figure out how to get a driver's license—well, gosh, what do you need a photo ID to do right now in America? You need a photo ID to purchase alcohol or to purchase tobacco. You need a photo ID to gamble or to purchase lottery tickets. You need a photo ID to go into a bar. You need a photo ID to get on a plane. You need a photo ID to rent a car. You need a photo ID just to drive a car—not even to rent a car but to drive a car. You need a photo ID to apply for government benefits. You need a photo ID to enroll in college. You need a photo ID to open a bank account. You need a photo ID to check into a hotel. And—I have to admit this is my personal favorite—you need a photo ID—actually two photo IDs—to shovel snow in New York City. These are routine, everyday activities.

The Gallery is full. I feel confident everyone in the Gallery who is not a child has a driver's license. By the way, you wouldn't be admitted to the Gallery if you didn't. And I feel confident every Member of this Chamber has done just about anything I listed—well, except shoveling snow. I am not convinced many of my colleagues have shoveled snow, although they do shovel other things.

The question is not whether Americans are bright enough to obtain a photo ID. We know they can, and we know they do. The real question is, Why would we not require the same level of verification for something as consequential and vital as voting? Are our Democrat colleagues saying voting doesn't matter or is it something else?

Voting is not just another everyday activity; it rolls around every year or few years, and it is the vehicle that protects the principles of our Republic. It is safeguarding what matters.

This legislation is necessary because there are individuals and systems that can undermine confidence in our elections if proper safeguards are not in place. One of the most apparent ways that we have seen is through the masses of illegal immigrants that our Democrat colleagues let in through open borders for over 4 years.

During the Biden administration, more than 12 million illegal immigrants flooded into this country—the

vast majority through my home State of Texas. Now, understand that was not an accident. That was not something the Democrats could not stop. That was their desired outcome. How do we know that? Because the instant President Trump was sworn into office for his second term, illegal border crossings plummeted 99 percent overnight.

The Democrats said: No, Joe Biden can't secure the border. He needs new legislation.

We now know that was a lie. It was objectively false, and they knew it was false.

Well, if they could have secured the border for 4 years, they chose not to. They chose to let murderers into this country. They chose to let rapists into this country. They chose to let child molesters into this country. They chose to let gang bangers into this country. They chose to let terrorists into this country. We have had four radical Islamic terror attacks in the last 2 weeks.

Why would the Democrats choose to allow more than 12 million illegal aliens to invade this country? I am going to suggest the obvious reason: because the Democrats look at those illegal aliens and they want them to cast a vote for Democrats in Federal elections.

Why are the Democrats lined up and saying: No. No. No. Under no circumstances should we test to see if you are an American citizen. Under no circumstances should we require photo IDs.

There was one activist a few years ago who filmed himself going into a DC polling place.

The DC polling place said: Sir, what is your name?

He said: My name is Eric Holder.

Now, this activist was not the Attorney General of the United States at the time, but yet DC handed him a ballot and said: Mr. Holder, please cast your vote.

The Democrats are lined up in this Chamber because they want our elections to be insecure; they want voter fraud to be rampant and to be easy.

Ask yourself: Do the American people have a difficult time buying a beer? Do they have a difficult time getting into an R-rated movie? Do they have a difficult time getting on an airplane? Well, yes, because the Democrats have refused to fund the TSA, so there are long lines right now. But the lack of a photo ID is not an impediment that stops people from flying.

This debate is about something very simple: Do our elections matter? Does our democracy matter?

And, boy, I have got to say that that is a phrase the Democrats love—that they are defending democracy. It is interesting that their voices usually drop an octave when they say that. They clutch their pearls—and that is just the men. "Defending democracy" is what they say.

Ask yourself: Why are they not concerned at all about the 12 million

illegals whom they let into this country voting illegally? I will submit that Occam's razor provides that the simplest solution is usually the right one. The simplest solution is very clear: The Democrats in this body want illegals to vote. They want power enough that they are more than happy to undermine democracy to try to seize power. I get that from their personal self-interest, but it is not in the interest of the men and women they represent; it is not in the interest of the people of America.

This bill is rightly called the SAVE America Act. If we were voting on the merits of what was good for America, what was good for democracy, and what was good for American citizens, the vote would be 100 to nothing.

Although I would note that on the other side of this building, at the State of the Union Address that the Presiding Officer was at and that I was at, we saw why our Democrat colleagues are so adamantly opposed to this bill. President Trump turned to the Democrats on the right side of the floor of the House, and he gave them an opportunity to demonstrate with absolute clarity.

He said: If you agree our first priority should be to fight for American citizens and not for illegal aliens, please stand.

Every single Democrat in Congress remained seated.

I would note, as we are on the floor today, of the 47 Democrats in this body, only 1 is here on the floor, but a whole lot more were on the floor during the State of the Union, and every one of them chose to remain seated because they could not support the statement that we need to support American citizens and not illegal aliens. That is why they oppose the SAVE America Act. It is because they want to be handed power over this country by the illegal aliens they let into this country.

That is why we need to save America, and it is why I urge every Member of this body to pass the SAVE America Act.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about something that unifies our country.

Here in the Senate, often, we talk about things we disagree on. We are going to talk today about something Americans agree on. The American people overwhelmingly want election security. They want our border to be secure. They want our elections to be secure. They want to feel that their government is acting with integrity and fairness and to have a representative government that protects its people.

I rise in support of the SAVE America Act. For many of us, this isn't a new fight. My good friend Senator LEE and I have been working to pass the SAVE America Act for years because

we know this isn't just about election security; it is about protecting the future of our Nation for all American families.

The SAVE America Act is very simple. First, you need an ID to vote. Second, you need proof of citizenship to register in our elections. These aren't controversial ideas. In fact, a vast majority of Americans, no matter their party affiliation, their race, their gender—you name it—support these ideas. Why wouldn't they? Americans want to know that our elections are both free and fair and that our democracy is safe. They believe in our country and that citizens can make good decisions. They want to know that their votes count and are not diluted by someone who is not a U.S. citizen.

Americans deserve that because this question cuts to the very core of who we are as a country. To survive, a republic needs its citizens to know and trust that their vote is secure, that their vote matters, and that they can trust the outcome. People have died for the sacred right to vote, and that sacred right should not be diluted by non-U.S. citizens.

And if Americans can't trust their elections or who is legally allowed to vote in them, then they can't trust that their elected officials actually represent them.

Yet, somehow, congressional Democrats, funded by George Soros and forever cowering to the radical left, are ignoring—they are ignoring—the will of the American people. The minority leader tried to say this bill was a "dagger at the heart of our democracy," even though the mayor of the largest city in the State he represents requires not one but two forms of ID just to shovel snow. I would say not passing this bill and allowing illegals to vote and the integrity of the election to be undermined is the real dagger.

That is why the SAVE America Act is crucial. The fact is, so much of what Democrats are saying about this bill simply—it is not true. Democrats are lying to all of us, and they know it. It is the same tired playbook they have tried time and time again.

So let's unpack their arguments. You are going to hear them say this is "Jim Crow 2.0." Yep, that is right. We have once again reached the point where Democrats claim the thing that they don't like is racist.

It is wrong, it is insulting, and the Democrats know it. Everyone knows it, but they hope the American public won't notice. And here is why this is so wrong: What Democrats are really saying is that the 83 percent of Americans who support voter ID laws are all racist.

And let's remember, it was the Democrats who passed Jim Crow law, not Republicans.

Everyone who is paying attention can see what they are doing. Democrats are openly calling most of America racist, and the mainstream media acts like that is normal.

But the Democrat attacks on hard-working Americans aren't done. After they call us all racist, they double down and say: The SAVE America Act is an attack on married women.

There has been a lot of talk recently about what is fair to women in America. The Democrats have said that the SAVE America Act is bad for married women. Liberals have also claimed that biological women need to shut up and accept that biological men can compete against them, shatter their dreams—sometimes their bodies—and steal their championships. Democrats somehow say that is fair, but it is sure not fair to biological women.

And the most deranged members of the radical left have now convinced Democrats in Congress it is OK to tell little girls that God made them wrong and allow the mutilation of their bodies before these children can truly comprehend or consent to the consequences of hormone therapy or gender reassignment surgery.

Now, I am not a woman. I can confidently say that because, unlike the Democrats, I know what a woman is. And I am married to an amazing woman. We have raised two incredible, smart, and strong women who now have families of their own. They are independent and can make decisions for themselves. They don't need anyone to tell them how to run their lives. And I am lucky enough to have one little girl in my life who calls me grandpa. Even at 5, she is very comfortable telling me what to do.

While I am not a woman, I do have pieces of advice for the Democrats: One, stop telling Americans that women can't figure out how to register to vote because you want to keep illegals voting. Women are smarter than Democrats think they are, much smarter. And, two, stop destroying women's sports by telling Americans that women can physically compete with biological males.

Stop telling Americans that just because a little girl wears shorts instead of dresses and wants to hang out with the boys instead of the girls that it is OK to permanently disfigure her. It is disgusting, and every Democrat here knows it, but they are too cowardly to tell the truth to the radical lunatics running their party.

Thankfully, when we pass the SAVE America Act, we will end these dangerous attacks on women by Democrats for good.

Look around and acknowledge what the Democrats are doing. They are saying to women: Don't support the SAVE America Act. You will never figure out how to register to vote again.

Do you realize how insulting that is? Do you think I would ever look at my wife or my daughters and granddaughter and think they aren't smart enough or, in the case of my granddaughter, won't be smart enough to do what they need to do?

Now, I am not going to stand here and let Democrats in Washington claim

that these amazing, strong, smart women cannot figure out how to register to vote. This is nothing but a made-up talking point from Democrats because they want to allow illegals to vote. It is real simple.

I am tired of hearing Democrats use every excuse in the book to allow illegals to vote in our election.

Now, we all know the Democrats can't win on their radical ideas, so they have to try to weaponize our elections. That is wrong.

Americans who are perfectly capable of showing their ID to board an airplane, visit a doctor's office, and prove their citizenship deserve secure elections.

We are only here today because Democrats have created a system in this country that has totally failed the American people, and Americans want secure elections. We must make sure Americans can have the faith that their vote counts and that the election results reflect the will of the people. We must put simple standards in place that a majority of Americans approve of and that will help Americans trust that our elections are free and fair.

And why wouldn't Democrats want to make certain that elections in the United States of America are free and fair? We want that for every other country in the world. Why wouldn't we want it here?

The fact is, over the last decades, Democrats' priorities are totally out of whack with what Americans want. Under the Biden administration, Democrats purposefully opened our borders, and our country was flooded by illegal aliens, the same illegal aliens that Democrats are now putting above Americans as they do everything in their power to destroy this bill.

Then when Democrats saw how enraged the American people were about their wide-open borders and all of the crime they were allowing into this country, the left claimed we needed new laws to fix it. As we all know, in the case of our border security, that was a complete lie.

But for election security, we do need new laws because the ones we have aren't strong enough. And President Trump, on his own, can't secure elections.

President Trump secured our border, and now, Congress must secure our elections.

The facts are simple: Illegal aliens should not vote in American elections. We know it is happening, and we must do everything we can to stop it.

Democrats still say it is racism, but they say everything is racism when they don't like it. Is it racist that before I board a plane, I have to show my ID? Is it racist that in order to buy certain medicines, apply for a job or a bank account, check into a hotel, rent a car, purchase a lottery ticket, order a drink at a bar, or get into the DNC convention—or shovel snow for goodness' sake—that we, as Americans, have to show ID? Absolutely not, and anyone telling you otherwise is lying.

Now here is my simple question for Democrats: Why should voting in our elections, something that dictates the direction of our country and is essential to building trust in government, have a lower ID standard than buying a six-pack of beer or a lottery ticket? The answer is simple: It shouldn't.

When the minority leader isn't calling minorities and women too stupid to show ID and register to vote, he has claimed that we can't pass this bill because President Trump is trying to rig the elections.

He is lying, and he is telling on himself. The minority leader and the Democrats think that stopping illegal aliens from voting in American elections is rigging the system. Now that is a remarkable thing for them to admit, but when they tell you who they are, we have to listen.

What is clear to me is Democrats don't think they can win. They don't think they can win unless we allow people who are not legally allowed to vote to cast a ballot.

Clearly, the minority leader is more concerned about what passing the SAVE America Act would mean for his future as majority leader than he is about election security, faith in our democracy, or delivering for the American people.

Democrats, George Soros, and the radical left will try to convince you that their opposition to this bill is about fairness and integrity; it is about protecting American democracy. Don't listen to them.

It is not fair for illegals to vote in American elections. I don't get to vote in the French elections or the British elections or the Canadian elections.

It is not fair to let men compete in women's sports. It is not fair to allow the mutilation of children with gender reassignment surgery for minors.

The fact is that fairness, integrity, and our future are on the line. It is this bill that will protect them, and it is what Senator LEE and I and so many others are fighting for today as we once again call on this body to pass the SAVE America Act. I urge my colleagues to support it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, there are some issues we consider so logical and so obviously rooted in common sense that I have got to believe the American people are sitting at home and wondering why Congress is even having this debate. And such is the case with the bill the U.S. Senate is considering this week, the SAVE America Act.

Let me be clear. The bill before us today requires proof of citizenship when registering to vote, and it requires photo ID in order to vote in a Federal election.

If you come to my office here in Washington, DC, you will see fairly quickly I am an avid outdoorsman. There are a lot of hunting and fishing

pictures on the walls that say a lot about the great State of Montana.

As many know, Montana has some of the very best outdoor recreation in the country, even the world: hunting, fishing, backpacking, you name it.

I remember growing up in Montana. My grandpa and my dad had a fly rod in my hand when I was still a little boy before fly fishing was cool even, back in the early seventies. And I remember fly fishing before Brad Pitt discovered it with Robert Redford and made the movie "A River Runs Through It." If you want to fish in Montana, if you want to fly fish, if you want to get a tag to hunt, you want to shoot a mule deer or an elk or a white tail, you know what you need to get a tag? To get a fishing license? You have got to produce a valid ID. To go fishing, you need a license. And to get a license, you need a valid ID.

Now, nobody has a problem with this when it comes to America's great outdoors. So why does the left protest so hard against ID requirements to vote?

It is an explicit law that only American citizens can vote, and all Americans have an ID or the ability to easily obtain one.

The right to vote and participate in democracy is a core principle of this great country. It is what gives us our freedom. It is what gives us a voice. But when election integrity is compromised, our institutions suffer, and the people don't trust the outcome of elections or their government anymore.

And that is why 95 percent of Republicans and 71 percent of Democrats support having voter ID. It is truly that bipartisan. I am not sure there is a more bipartisan issue right now facing us in Washington.

People want to restore trust in their elections and their government. So why is this so hard?

I will tell you why it is so hard. Our friends on the other side of the aisle are captive to their radical base. I grew up as the grandson of a Democrat in Montana. My dad was a Democrat growing up. But this is a different kind of Democrat today. The radical base is steering the party that we debate with across the aisle here in Washington.

Remember under Joe Biden's border catastrophe, at least 10 million—and that is a conservative number—10 million illegal aliens poured into the country unchecked. And in many States, these illegal aliens are eligible for driver's licenses, which makes it easier to illegally register to vote.

And that is why you need to have proof of citizenship. That is why the SAVE America Act is so important. Requiring a photo ID is basic. It is common sense. It is not controversial. It is time to get this done.

I am very grateful to my colleague Senator MIKE LEE of Utah and my colleague Senator ERIC SCHMITT of Missouri who have been fighting so hard to get this bill across the finish line.

I urge the rest of our colleagues to get on board, support the SAVE Amer-

ica Act, stand up for election integrity, and vote for the SAVE America Act.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CURTIS). The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. SCHMITT. Mr. President, there are moments when the Senate is asked whether it will merely manage decline or whether it will still govern. This is one of those moments.

What is before us today is a test, a test of whether the Senate still understands what it is for, a test of whether article I of the Constitution still means what it says, that Congress possesses the power to write the rules of the road, a test of whether this body still exists to defend the American people, strengthen the Republic, and use constitutional authority for the common good.

That is why I rise in support of my substitute amendment to the SAVE America Act, and it comes before us at a fitting hour in our Nation's life. America is approaching her 250th birthday. We were taught in schools to think of the American founding as though it were unimaginably far away, sealed off behind glass, but 250 years is smaller than it seems.

President John Tyler was born during the First Congress in 1790. He was born in the very infancy of this Republic. President Tyler's last living grandson died only last year. That is how near the founding it still is and how recent this great experiment in self-government remains. And if the founding is that near, then our duty is that much clearer.

We are not the curators of a dead tradition. We are the stewards of a living Republic. Our Republic was founded on a daring claim: that free people could govern itself—not that a free people could drift forever; not that a free people could live off inherited greatness while its leaders refuse every hard question; not that a free people could dissolve every boundary, mock every limit, and still expect to remain free. No. The American founding rested on a harder truth: Liberty is fragile, and so it requires structure. Man has fallen, and so self-government requires virtue. A republic requires citizens, truth, and the courage to defend both. That is why this bill matters.

Some will say that this bill and all of its titles don't belong together; that five-pronged, three-titled amendment is just a package or a wish list or a collection of unrelated priorities. But that only proves they do not understand what time it is, and they don't understand what our Republic is.

The five prongs and three titles of this amendment are united by one central question: Will American law still defend the basic conditions of self-government?

Title I, Save American Voter, says the franchise belongs to its citizens and voting should be secure.

Title II, Save American Sports, says that women's sports exist for women and girls, acknowledging biological reality over a legal fiction imposed by elite ideology.

Title III, Save American Children, says that children should be protected from irreversible harm, not handed over to the appetites, fashions, and confusions of the age.

Citizenship, reality, responsibility—those are the basic truths a nation must defend if it intends to remain a nation.

Let me begin with title I. A republic has the right to distinguish citizens from noncitizens. That should not be controversial. That should not even be difficult. The vote is not a global entitlement. The vote is not a participation trophy for anyone who happens to cross our borders. It is one of the central privileges and duties of political membership. If citizenship means anything, it must mean something here first. That is why requiring proof of citizenship to vote in Federal elections is foundational. It is a minimum requirement. It is so common sense in a self-governing nation because a people who cannot say who belongs to the polity cannot remain a polity at all.

The same is true for voter identification. We are told endlessly that asking a voter to identify himself before casting a ballot is somehow oppressive, somehow unreasonable, somehow outside the bounds of democratic decency. The American people know better. That is why over 80 percent of American voters support voter ID.

Identity verification is ordinary in every serious sphere of life. We require it for small things, for lesser things, for trivial things. There is nothing wrong with requiring lawful voters to identify themselves before participating in the elections of those who will govern the United States of America. Honest elections require lawful voters, lawful ballots, and lawful verification.

And then there is the question of mail voting. For too long, this country has been told to accept a system of mass mail-in voting as though it were the settled inheritance of the American Republic. It is not. In its current form, mass mail-in voting is a modern phenomenon, and in many places it is a direct holdover from the COVID era. COVID is over. The emergency has passed. The extraordinary accommodations of that period should not become the permanent architecture of American elections.

For most of our history, the presumption was simple: If you could vote in person, you voted in person. You appeared before lawful election officials. Your identity could be verified. Your ballot could be secured. The chain of custody could be protected. The people could trust what they were seeing. That is not cruelty. That is not oppression. That is what republican government looks like.

Now, of course, there are those who are unable to vote in person, and they should be helped. Military voters should be helped. Individuals with disabilities should be helped. Those who are sick should be helped. Caregivers

with real burdens should be helped. Those with genuine, qualifying hardships should be helped. But accommodation should remain the exception, not the organizing principle of the whole system because voting is not a consumer transaction.

The highest values in election administrations should be on legitimacy, public confidence, and trust. Not so long ago, even Democrats shared these values. The Carter-Baker Commission, formed by former Democrat President Jimmy Carter and former Republican Secretary of State James Baker III, made many of the recommendations that my amendment promotes: voter ID, proof of citizenship, and limiting mail-in balloting. Democrat Senators may not support these provisions, but their voters do. Seventy-one percent of self-identified Democrats support voter ID.

A free people should want its elections to be visible, accountable, and resistant to bad actors. That is what title I is trying to restore—not the denial of lawful voting but the integrity of lawful voting; not confusion but confidence; not looseness but legitimacy.

I know this issue because I have experienced these fights myself. When I served as Missouri's attorney general, I fought in court and defended our State's election integrity laws against a coordinated assault from the left in 2020. The left's dark money-funded election superlawyers did not merely challenge one rule here or there; they challenged the very idea that we can get serious rules to protect the ballot, deter fraud, preserve order, and sustain public confidence in the vote. They came for the safeguards that made elections credible. They came for the principle that absentee and mail voting must be governed by rules. They came for the simple proposition that the people are entitled not only to cast a ballot but to trust the system by which ballots are cast, handled, counted, and certified.

And Missouri won. We defended the truth that election law is the framework by which free people govern itself. Election law isn't the arcane inconvenience to be brushed aside whenever the left sees a tactical advantage. We defended the proposition that deadlines matter because finality matters. We defended ballot security because legitimacy matters. We defended verification requirements because public trust matters. We defended the authority of the people acting through their laws to insist that elections be honest, orderly, and worthy of confidence. And Missouri won.

That fight has taught me something I have never forgotten: The fight over election integrity is about more than mechanics or procedure; rather, it is about whether we still have the moral confidence to defend the elementary conditions of self-government—because once every safeguard is treated as suspect, once every verification measure is denounced as oppression, once every

effort to secure the ballot is caricatured as hostility to democracy, what is really under attack is the public's faith that elections are fair, lawful, and real.

So when I speak today about voter ID, proof of citizenship, and limits on mass mail voting, I do so from experience. I have fought these battles before. I have seen the pressure campaign to dissolve the rules that protect the vote. I have seen how quickly common sense is denounced when it stands in the way of ideological ambition. I have seen when the public officials are willing to stand firm and that, when you do that, you can win.

That is what title I and Saving American Voters is all about. It is not extreme. It is not novel. It is the restoration of an old and necessary principle that, in a republic, the vote must be lawful, secure, and worthy of confidence of the American people.

Now, let me turn to title II. If the law cannot defend women from men acting as women, it cannot defend reality. Women's sports exist because men and women are not the same. That is biological reality. It is moral reality. It is the plain reality on which fair competition depends. And when the law refuses to recognize that reality, the category of women's sports becomes fraudulent.

Girls are told to surrender fairness. They are told to surrender privacy. They are told to surrender safety. They are told to surrender recognition. And they are told to do all of this so the ruling class can flatter itself for its own moral sophistication. The State has no right to impose that sacrifice.

I have two daughters. They both love sports. But this is more than just about sports; it is about whether the law is still going to reflect reality or whether it will be scripted into enforcing a falsehood. It is about whether a civilization still possesses enough moral competence to say: What is the truth? And that is not cruelty. It is about whether we still believe that girls deserve a realm of fair competition that is actually their own. A serious republic does not ask girls to bear the cost of elite confusion. A serious republic tells the truth about the world and builds laws on that truth. That is what title II does.

Now, let me turn to title III. A decent nation protects children. Children are not ideological property. Children are not experimental material. Children are not raw material for the ambitions of activists, or for the cowardice of institutions, or for the self-indulgence of adults who have forgotten the law exists first to defend those who need protection.

There are lines that a humane society does not cross. Irreversible medical interventions on minors for ideological ends are one of those lines. A child in distress needs guidance, protection, patience, love, stability, truth. A child in distress does not need a civilization so morally exhausted that it answers confusion with scalpels, sterilization, and

permanent medicalization. The burden of uncertainty should favor preserving the child, not fundamentally remaking the child.

Too often, our ruling class has preferred euphemism to honesty here. We are told this is compassion. We are told this is care. We are told that the enlightened position is to ratify distress with irreducible harm.

It is not compassion to mutilate what cannot be restored. It is not compassion to medicalize what may pass. It is not compassion to turn children into lifelong patients before they are old enough to understand what is being taken from them, permanently. That is not mercy; it is cruelty masked in liberation.

A republic worthy of the name protects children from adult passions, from ideological capture, and from the fashionable madness of the age. That is what title II is trying to do.

And that is why these three titles belong together—because this amendment is more than a list of 80–20 issues that the American people are demanding. The SAVE America Act is the defense of the elementary truths on which republican life—small “r”—still depends: America belongs to its citizens. Men and women are real. Children should be protected from permanent harm. If a nation will not defend these truths, it will not defend truth for very long. If a nation will not defend these boundaries, it will not keep any boundary for long.

And that brings me to this Chamber itself. Americans still love “Mr. Smith Goes to Washington” for a reason. They love it because they still want to believe something about this institution. They want to believe that the Senate, a uniquely American invention, can be used for the common good. They still want to believe that conviction can defeat cynicism. They want to believe that a man can come here and fight for his country rather than merely manage its decline.

Well, here is our chance to prove that hope is not foolish. The Senate is not a museum. It is not a Visiting Angels retirement village for proceduralism. It is not here merely to confirm nominees, pass omnibuses, and fund the legislative achievements of long dead men while the living Nation loses confidence in its own government.

The U.S. Senate is here to legislate in defense of the American people. The Senate is here to draw lines. The Senate is here to make judgments. The Senate is here to govern.

So the question for this Chamber is really simple: Are we here to govern or merely preside? Are we here to act for the people or simply explain why action is impossible? Are we here to use power rightly or merely to congratulate ourselves for the restraint while the country pays the price?

Because the stakes here are plain. We see distrust in elections. We see the collapse of moral clarity. We are seeing girls told to accept injustices as

progress. We are seeing children offered up to the altar of extreme ideology. We are seeing a governing class that refuses to draw any line into the line that has already been erased.

And republics don't usually fall in one dramatic stroke. They weaken when truth is no longer defended. They weaken when citizenship is diluted. They weaken when institutions lose the will to govern. They weaken when elites ask ordinary people to live under conditions they themselves know are disordered. They weaken when men without chests hold positions requiring virtue and enterprise.

That is what this debate is really about. It is about whether the country still defends first principles. It is about whether the Senate understands what time it is. It is about whether constitutional power can still be used for the common good.

And as America approaches her 250th birthday, that question becomes even more urgent. A republic approaching its quarter millennium should not be content merely to remember greatness. It should show that it still knows how to govern itself. It should show that it still has the strength to defend citizenship. It should show that it still has the courage to defend women. It should show that it still has the decency to defend children.

Article I is supposed to be the branch of action. This body exists to do more than simply fund legislative achievements of long-dead men. The legislative power exists to make judgments, draw lines, and defend our country. The Senate should prove that it still understands that duty.

So pass this bill to restore integrity to Federal elections. Pass this bill to defend women and girls. Pass this bill to protect kids. Pass this bill to show the American people that we can still act in the defense of the American people. Pass this bill because these are commonsense reforms. Pass this bill because Americans are tired of being told that their most basic moral instincts are somehow beyond the pale. Pass this bill because a nation serious about the future doesn't apologize for governing itself. Pass this bill because America 250 should be more than some commemoration. It should be a renewal.

The age of excuses should end. The era of drift should end. The Senate should act, and the SAVE America Act should pass.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. SCHMITT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the next 60 minutes be under control of the Democratic leader or his designee, followed by the next 60 minutes by the Republican leader or his designee, and, finally, the next 60 minutes by the Democratic leader or his designee, and following that, the majority leader or his designee be recognized.

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

The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, you know, when it comes to broken promises, it seems like Trump and Republicans have raised every price that they ever said they would lower—costs on groceries with Trump's sweeping tariffs, the largest tax increase on working families in American history.

They sent energy costs higher by canceling clean energy projects. They sent gas prices skyrocketing by starting a new war in the Middle East.

And they let healthcare premiums skyrocket for patients—doubling, tripling, and more through sheer indifference.

And now, desperate to avoid the wave of angry voters to whom Republicans had promised to lower prices and no new wars, Republicans are even going to raise the cost of voting, because their “Save Trump Act” would nickel and dime Americans who are just trying to vote but have to slog through one new Republican roadblock after another.

Under the Republicans' bill, one of our citizens' most basic freedoms now comes with a price, and it comes with a lot of brandnew hurdles that serve no purpose but to trip people up. Some folks will have to shell out for a copy of their birth certificate. Some will have to get a passport. That is 165 bucks, by the way.

Some folks will have to travel hours away to register in person, costing time and travel fare or maybe gas costs, which Trump is now sending through the roof.

And that is not the half of it.

Just consider all the people who will face new challenges just to vote for no good reason. If you are a student who just moved to start college, Republicans will make it harder for you to vote because, if this bill passes, you will need to show a photo ID and proof of citizenship in every single State. But a student ID won't count.

Many Tribal IDs also won't be enough under the new Republican restrictions.

If you are a married woman who changed her last name, like me and the overwhelming majority of moms across the country, Republicans will make it harder for you to vote because you would now have to bring an ID, proof of citizenship, and some additional paperwork showing your name change. That could affect 70 million people.

If you are a senior who just moved into a new nursing home and has mobility issues, Republicans will make it harder for you to vote because you can no longer just register online or by mail. You now have to show up in person to show your papers.

Voting will also be harder for rural families far from any place where they could show their papers and register in person.

In Washington State, we have a lot of families who might have to take a

ferry just to register to vote. Or heaven forbid you are someone living abroad, maybe working for an American company or working at a nonprofit or even serving our Nation as a diplomat. You might just have to buy a flight all the way back home so you can register.

And the inconvenience doesn't stop at registration because Republicans will make voting by mail harder for everyone as well. They are going to require you to photocopy your ID when you apply for that mail-in ballot, and then they are going to require another photocopy when you send in your mail-in ballot—at least as long as Trump doesn't get his wish to scrap mail-in voting altogether.

And if you are someone who doesn't know where your birth certificate is or doesn't have easy access to it, or if you are one of half of Americans who doesn't have a passport—that is 146 million people—you are going to have to pay fees and fill out a lot of paperwork.

And what is the Republican plan for when the State Department gets flooded with a recordbreaking number of passport applications, by the way, because there is no money for surge capacity in this bill?

What are Americans supposed to do when their paperwork gets delayed for weeks on end or, heaven forbid, the President just slow-walks it?

And, by the way, under the "Save Trump Act," there is a perfectly awful chance that you do everything right and still get robbed of your vote by Republicans because this bill pushes States to rely on a DHS-verification tool that just frankly is a dumpster fire.

States that have tried this got results with huge errors where DHS was wrongly saying many citizens were not citizens. The Trump administration tool has already wrongly advised States to purge lawful voters from their voter rolls.

But the biggest problem with this bill goes to its roots because the biggest problem is that Republicans' own premise is built on a lie. Trump has been lying for years now about our elections—lying about winning in 2020, lying about winning in States like California, lying about crazy conspiracies that have been debunked, time and time again.

He has been debunked by Republican elections commissioners. He has been debunked by thorough news investigations and carefully conducted audits. He has been debunked by million-dollar legal cases where other liars were sued for defamation.

That has not stopped Trump.

Instead of calling out the lies like so many of them once actually did, first, Republicans just started ignoring this, and then they started normalizing them. And now, many of them are repeating these lies and conspiracies.

Our elections are free, and they are fair. That is beyond question. Anyone who values our democracy should be

shouting that from the rooftops. But instead of defending our democracy, instead of defending our elections from misinformation and conspiracies and a President who has stated, quite directly, that he wants to take control over the elections, Republicans are joining Trump in the same sort of ruse he pulled to rile people up on January 6.

The biggest fraud here is this: Republicans who know their agenda is unpopular; Republicans who know that when entrusted by the voters to fulfill their promises, all they have done is break them, raising prices, starting new wars; Republicans who know they will not keep their majorities in a free and fair election. So they are pushing for this bill instead.

This is not how elections work. This is not how America works. In this country, we fight for change with our voices and our votes. And if Republicans think for a second Democrats will let them take away people's votes, they better buckle up because you can bet we will use our voices to block this bill for as long as it takes.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise today to join my colleagues in standing up to protect Americans' constitutional right to vote and to fight back against this administration's most recent attack on access to the ballot box.

Instead of making the case to Americans about policies and what you want to do and why you think it is important to have say—the tariffs that in my State are wreaking havoc for our farmers with more yet to come—this legislation would actually be an end-around of the voting process.

This legislation would make it hard for a whole bunch of American citizens to vote, which appears to be the endgame, given what the President has said about it. By his own admission, he said that passing this bill "will guarantee the midterms."

That is not my quote. It is an exact quote by the President of the United States.

The SAVE America Act will kick American citizens off State voter rolls. And how is this happening?

Well, this is a complete invasion of the privacy of voters. It makes secretaries of state give the voter rolls—the voter information, the voter data—to the Department of Homeland Security, as in the same Agency that brought us ICE, and then run that information through some kind of DOGE-like system that is somehow going to spit back out to the States which voters they should kick off the voter rolls.

Then the bill also creates the bureaucratic hurdles that make it complicated and costly for American citizens to register to vote or change their registration, particularly for the 69 million women who have chosen to change their name when they got married. Why should they be penalized?

And millions of American citizens don't have the specific document required by this bill to prove citizenship because this bill won't allow for driver's licenses anymore. You have got to produce other documents like a passport or a birth certificate.

More than half of Americans don't have passports, and they cost at least \$165 to get. Birth certificates can cost \$30. In my State they are \$24. And they can take tons of in-person time to obtain.

For anyone that has ever had that experience, maybe for some other purpose that you have to get your birth certificate, it is not always as easy as people think.

And this bill also requires people to register to vote in person at their election offices, effectively ending proven and popular methods of registration used by millions of Americans in Democratic- and Republican-led States all across the country, like online and mail-in registration.

This would be a significant barrier for registration for millions of voters, especially for people in rural areas who have to drive hours to get that registration completed now. Rural Americans in many places would be forced to travel an average of about 4 hours round trip, and some voters in Alaska and Hawaii would be forced to take a flight just to register in person.

This bill creates chaos. Maybe that is not the motivation of some of my colleagues, but I do believe it is the motivation of the President, who basically said:

It will guarantee the midterms.

It is designed to make it harder for American citizens—certain American citizens—to vote. It is designed to undermine mail-in voting and lay the groundwork for this obsession that the President seems to have with banning mail-in voting, while in some States, it is actually the prevailing way that people vote, including a number of red States, as the Presiding Officer is aware.

Because the administration can read the polls, they see that there is major concern in America with high costs. So instead of maybe passing a different bill, which we could call the Save Americans Money Act, which would be doing something about these gas prices when we know it has happened—now gas prices are up \$30 or \$40 a barrel, \$30 to \$40 a barrel, and every \$10 in increase for a barrel of oil is a \$450-a-year increase for the average American family. For the second time ever, the average price of diesel has reached \$5 per gallon. Look at what is happening with groceries. Electricity prices were up an average of \$110 last year on Americans' bills. Healthcare costs continue to skyrocket.

There are things we can do. We have a bipartisan housing bill we just passed in the Senate that needs to get passed in the House. We have some permitting bills. I was long a supporter of Senator Manchin's proposal on permitting. We

could get that done. We should be adding energy to the grid. This idea that somehow we are going to think that North Dakota wind is bad in a pretty red State and then ban grants that would have brought that wind, which was good for North Dakota and Minnesota, to Minnesota with a power company in northern Minnesota—that is one of the grants that had gotten singled out and I think has just recently gotten released.

All that stuff are things that we could do to help Americans with their costs. So we should be working on the Save Americans Money Act instead of this.

So I urge my Republican colleagues to change course and stand with us and stand up for the fundamental right to vote. That always used to be bipartisan.

The idea that you are going to make all these people reregister or register with an expensive passport or birth certificate, that they can no longer use their driver's license, that their private voter data is sent to Homeland Security to go through some Elon Musk-designed computer system, is not what people want in this country right now.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. KIM. Mr. President, the average price of a gallon of gas in New Jersey right now is \$3.68. A month ago, it was \$2.94. In that month, we have started a war with Iran—a war that this administration doesn't have a plan to end; a war that has cost 13 American lives and has injured hundreds of others. That is putting America's reliability as a partner further in doubt and driving up costs across the board at a time when costs are already too high for most Americans.

Now, what are we doing about this crisis and trying to address it? What are we doing to drive down the costs that the American people are demanding that we take on? What are we doing to make it easier for Americans to pay their bills and to be able to provide for their families?

We are here on the Senate floor today debating a bill that Donald Trump wants because he is afraid. He knows that he is at the weakest point of his Presidency. His approval numbers are way down. And in a little more than 230 days, voters will go to the ballot box for the midterm elections.

So instead of working to lower costs, instead of ending this war and getting gas prices down, instead of focusing on working families, Donald Trump has Senate Republicans here to peddle a bill because, in his words, "It will guarantee the midterms"—a bill, by the way, that, again to quote Donald Trump, "supersedes everything else"; a bill that Trump says he would "close government" to ensure it passes.

So clearly we see something that is not what the American people want to see get done, not of benefit to the American people at a time when they

are demanding that we take on the high cost of living, but instead something that is good for Donald Trump.

So while you are cutting back on driving because gas prices are skyrocketing and you are seeing prices at the grocery store go up because it is a lot more to transport food and you are rethinking that vacation because the CEO of Delta just said airline tickets are about to go up too, Donald Trump and congressional Republicans are focused on passing a bill that drives up your costs.

The SAVE America Act is an awful bill, and I will talk a little bit about this bill in a moment. But what this bill represents at its core is Donald Trump's extreme agenda when it comes to elections. It is an election that is built to, in Trump's own words yet again, "guarantee the midterms." He said that Democrats won't be able to win for 50 years if this goes through.

He is saying the quiet part out loud about why he is doing this, and that is because his agenda has three core tenets: No. 1, let the billionaires buy the elections; No. 2, let politicians pick their voters; and No. 3, price people out of voting.

Let's start with the insane amount of big money in our politics today. According to a report last year by the Brennan Center, the amount of dark money spent in Federal races in 2024 was nearly \$2 billion. That is hard to imagine, just unfathomable amounts of money being poured into our elections right now. It is nearly double what it was just 4 years prior in 2020.

That dark money represents a real threat to the integrity of our elections. A report published last month by the Campaign Legal Center highlights the way that the superrich can use our weakened campaign finance laws to basically bribe public officials. The report exposed the story of a man named Velutini, a Venezuela billionaire who was charged with criminal bribery and was later pardoned by Donald Trump after his daughter gave \$3.5 million to a Trump-supporting super PAC.

These kinds of straw donor actions can take place when we have a campaign finance system that has been built for corruption. That is exactly what we are seeing—a system working exactly how it is supposed to, which is marginalizing the American people and average working families and lifting up the power of billionaires and corporations. It is a system that has been built so billionaires can buy the candidates they want, and if they get into trouble, they can buy themselves a get-out-of-jail-free card literally.

If my colleagues are concerned about election integrity, getting \$2 billion of dark, corrupt money out of our system would be a good place to start, and I think you would find bipartisan support to be able to take that on.

The next place is getting rid of a system that Donald Trump has supercharged where politicians get to pick their voters, not the other way around like the Constitution says it should be.

Gerrymandering has never been weaponized like what we are seeing right now under the direction of Donald Trump. He is so afraid of losing the House of Representatives that he has threatened Members of his own party who didn't want to go along with his plans. Just a few months ago, he targeted Republicans in Indiana, saying that "anyone that votes against redistricting . . . will be met with a MAGA primary."

So we have a system, championed by Donald Trump, that lets billionaires buy the elections and politicians pick their voters. So where does that leave you? Where does that leave the American people? Well, if this bill passes, it will make it harder for people to be able to vote. It will make it such that they have to pay for a constitutional right of voting, which is so sacred to our democracy.

Voting shouldn't cost people extra money; it shouldn't require you to be able to have a poll tax. For millions of Americans, they will need to potentially scramble to get a new form of ID.

Maybe my colleagues will say: Oh, just go get a passport.

Well, look, a new passport costs \$165, and to expedite it in order to vote costs much more than that. And we need to be able to deliver that quickly, so that is an added \$22 on top of that. That is nearly \$250 for your right to vote. That is nearly \$250 when this administration has hurt our ability to get healthcare, be able to fill our tanks with gas, be able to get groceries. They made it more expensive across the board, and they have given massive giveaways to those at the very top.

This bill will make it harder for married women to vote if their current legal name doesn't match the name on their birth certificate. How does that make sense? It will make it harder for seniors and young people to vote by throwing up new restrictions on mail-in voting, requiring seniors and others to have to go and register in person when they haven't had to do that before.

Why is it that we are trying to make it so hard for Americans to be able to vote? But then you realize that is the point. That is actually the point of this all. Trump wants to make it harder for you to vote and make it easier for him to have his bidding. Why else did we see this happening right on the tail of so much of what he was doing in pushing gerrymandering so blatantly against our Constitution and our laws? Trump wants to make it more expensive for Americans to vote because that makes it easier for him and his supporters and his donors to be able to buy their way to power. He wants congressional Republicans to cease doing anything else and pass this bill so he can "guarantee the midterms."

Well, that is not what the American people want. They want a choice. It is their choice. They are supposed to be in the driver's seat of their democracy. The American people want our elections to be secure.

I want our elections to be secure. I want to make sure that voters can have full faith in our electoral process.

I have been fighting for years to get dark money out of our politics, to reverse Citizens United, which I believe is going to go in the history books as one of the most dangerous moments of our democracy. That has unleashed a torrent of dark money and problems and this nightmare we are seeing ourselves in.

I have been fighting to end the practice of letting politicians pick their voters since my first day here on the House side. I even stood up to my own party in New Jersey by suing to fix a broken ballot that let power players pick candidates, not voters.

This is not about partisanship; this is about delivering for the American people and preserving their ability to be able to drive our democracy.

We have real work that we can do to make our elections safer, get rid of this dark money, and make sure the voters get to pick their politicians. But that is not the bill that we have before us, and that is not the bill that Donald Trump is pressuring my colleagues here to push through. Instead, this bill is a distraction from Donald Trump's failures and is a desperate attempt to compensate for the power he sees slipping away right between his fingers.

We can't let him do this. We can't let him distract us from the real problems our constituents are facing today of \$3.68 a gallon in New Jersey for our gas. Let's put an end to this distraction. Let's stop doing Donald Trump's bidding to hold onto power and do what we are supposed to do—to focus on what the American people want—which is, right now, so clearly about lowering the prices that they see skyrocketing every single day. That is what we are here for, and that is what they want us to do.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, let me, first of all, thank my colleague and friend the Senator from New Jersey who, I think, has brought us a fresh voice, has incredible energy, and is somebody who has a history of working extraordinarily well on national security issues.

I agree with virtually everything he just said in that this is a bit of a distraction. I think part of the reason it is a distraction is that, at the end of the day, this President has frankly refused to acknowledge that the American people's will in 2020 was not to rehire him. He cannot accept the legitimate outcome of the 2020 election. Despite officials from his own administration calling the 2020 election the most secure in American history, the President continues to promote unsubstantiated claims of voter fraud, and that is after investigations from multiple courts and the States' attorneys general and election officials from both parties strongly declaring that there was no

evidence to support allegations of substantial fraud. Simply put, the 2020 election was certified, litigated, and affirmed.

Tomorrow, we are going to hear from some of the intelligence officials as our committee takes on the worldwide threat assessment where, unfortunately, senior intelligence officials seem to be still focusing on relitigating the 2020 election rather than making us safe for 2026 and 2028 because the truth is, after all of these years, the President and his allies haven't been able to find any evidence of legitimate voter fraud in past elections. As a matter of fact, there have been studies ad nauseam that show millions and hundreds of millions of votes and that the number of people who were undocumented and voted by mistake were in the single digits.

Now, they are looking forward to the effort that is on the floor right now toward suppressing and wrongfully influencing future elections through this so-called SAVE America Act.

Again, I know the Presiding Officer and my friend from Wisconsin and others are going to say I am going to go over the top, so let me just use the President's own words. The Presiding Officer comes from Utah, which has a proud history of States' rights and local control, but in the President's own words, he wants Republicans to "take over" election administration, going so far as to say Republicans ought to nationalize the voting. If there were ever an "Alice in Wonderland up is down and down is up," that is what is happening.

Again, I don't know if this comment led to her firing, but before he fired her, the President's DHS Secretary Kristi Noem pushed for the passage of the SAVE America Act while stating that her goal was to have the right people voting so we can elect the right leaders. I mean, this sounds like it comes out of some dystopian novel or 1930s advocacy. I just don't get it. We all know that the strength of our democracy depends on voter participation and access to the ballot box. I have been doing this, I guess, long enough that I remember when things like "motor voter" and "let's make it easier to register" were all bipartisan.

Unfortunately, contrary to the name the SAVE America Act, this legislation undermines the very foundations that it claims to protect. This bill would impose sweeping requirements that would make it extremely difficult for eligible voters to participate in our democracy. New voters, married women, and servicemembers would face additional hurdles when registering to vote. That is because, under the SAVE America Act, Americans who have voted for years and have had no question about their citizenship would have to go back and provide documentary proof of citizenship to register to vote in Federal elections.

Let me say, at the front end, that I support voter ID. We have voter ID in

Virginia. I don't think you should be able to vote without showing a legitimate ID, but under this bill, that so-called reasonable policy would put in place requirements that are so stringent that it would mean if you don't have access to the right documentation, like a passport, you wouldn't be able to vote for the President of the United States.

The truth is, according to the U.S. State Department, only half of all Americans possess a passport. That means, if this bill passes, half of all American citizens would not be able to provide one of the primary acceptable forms of documentation that would be required to vote under the SAVE Act.

Additionally, under this bill, States would be barred from accepting online and mail-in voter registrations unless the applicant also presented proof of citizenship in person. So this is somebody who made the choice to change their name who is now 85 years old and who has to go back and find a birth certificate or get a passport and has to show up in person to kind of get registered again, even though she has been voting for the last 50 years with no question about her citizenship.

This effectively, frankly, guts the online and mail-in voter registration processes that are available across many States, which creates, I think, an unnecessary burden for all voters, particularly rural voters, senior citizens, and individuals with disabilities disproportionately.

I see my friend from California here. It has been States in the West, whether it is Oregon or California or Utah, that have used these tools to get more people involved. In fact, these efforts don't make our elections more secure. All this does is disenfranchise millions of eligible voters.

My view is that the goal of the SAVE Act is more about cutting out voters and suppressing the vote than it is about saving anything going forward. We are having this debate, and we are going to probably go through lots of procedural antics that most folks won't understand. I just wish that my Republican colleagues would come back to what I think we should be spending all of our time on. If we are going to spend all night, let's focus on funding the TSA, FEMA, CISA, and the Coast Guard.

Frankly, I believe we need to fund all of the folks at the Customs and Border Patrol who aren't assigned to interior immigration enforcement. So, last week, Senator MURRAY and Senate Democrats attempted to say: Hey, we have got to debate about ICE, and we have got to debate about some of the CBP people who are doing domestic enforcement. If we can't come to an agreement there, let's fight over that, but let's not make sure that we hold all of these other folks hostage.

Unfortunately, my Republican colleagues blocked five separate bills that were offered by Senate Democrats that would have fully funded all of the components of DHS. I think about our

hard-working TSA officers who, thank goodness, got a paycheck on March 12—a partial paycheck—but now, they are going unpaid.

The amazing thing is that this is kind of a crisis that doesn't need to be a crisis. The fact is, last July, my Republican colleagues voted to give the Department of Homeland Security a slush fund worth nearly \$170 billion. Of that funding, \$75 billion was a blank check to ICE, providing the Agency with a budget larger than of most global militaries. I actually think the ICE budget is now bigger than the French military's, and I know it is bigger than the FBI's budget. You know, the truth is that \$75 billion could actually fund ICE for the next 7 years without any additional appropriations.

I am here today because I and my Democratic colleagues are fighting to ensure that all the funding that is used for immigration enforcement will no longer be used in inappropriate ways. I think even most of my Republican colleagues have acknowledged that what happened in Minneapolis kind of went off the rails in that we were seeing ICE agents literally abuse and brutalize Americans and disrespect basic human dignity.

The unfortunate thing is, under this administration, ICE has been turned frankly into kind of a secret police that I believe has waged enormous violence against Americans. I know in my State, that of the daily quota of people they have to pick up, 80 to 85 percent have never violated any other law other than coming into the country and most of them are going through an amnesty process that was set up. You know, we have seen the images of ICE ripping apart families and arresting moms as they drop off kids to daycare. As a matter of fact, I know that I tried to do some oversight, which is part of my job, and it took a lot of hoops to get through to even do that oversight.

I believe, because of these actions, all of our citizens are less safe. So we have got to make meaningful reforms to ICE which I don't think are outrageous, like requiring body cameras, making sure that immigration enforcement officers show their faces and identify themselves, and making sure there is proper training and upholding traditional use-of-force standards. These are the same requirements that my local law enforcement has to deal with every day and has had to for years. These aren't new. These are commonsense, basic accountability measures that, as I said, our State and local police abide by because that is how you keep communities safe.

Unfortunately, so far, the White House doesn't seem to see it that way. They continue to drag their feet on negotiations at the expense, frankly, of the TSA, FEMA, the Coast Guard, and Customs and Border Patrol—not the folks doing interior enforcement—who are not getting paid. That doesn't make any sense.

As a matter of fact, we have even seen tools where, in the last shutdown,

the administration didn't decide to cut off Global Entry or TSA PreCheck because those are actually funded by separate fees, but suddenly, they decided to amp up the political pressure and close off those programs. Now, thank goodness, because of pressure from the public, the Trump administration has reversed course and restarted the Global Entry program, but it should have never been suspended in the first place. We have got to get these folks paid. Take yes for an answer. Take yes for an answer.

As I pointed out earlier, with \$75 billion for ICE, it is not going to stop. We have got to get the reforms in place. So let's keep the negotiations going. We ought to get them done. I am going to make sure that the TSA agents at Dulles, at National, and at airports across my Commonwealth get their paychecks.

As a State on the ocean, I want to make sure that the Coast Guard gets their paychecks. We have been hit hard by Hurricane Helene, and I want to make sure FEMA gets funded. And CISA—the Cybersecurity Agency, which is one of the things that guards against foreign malign influence—has been decimated by this administration. As we go into an election season where I extraordinarily fear foreign interference, close to 50 percent of the personnel have been cut or eliminated.

So we can do better. We must do better.

We can debate the SAVE Act, which I think is, again, about voter disenfranchisement, not voter safety or integrity, but I do think, while we debate this, why not go ahead and take yes for an answer and fund all of the other components of DHS so those folks who help protect us day in and day out get their paychecks?

Let's reopen these critical Agencies. Let's acknowledge that ICE has a \$75 billion slush fund that we could complain about as Democrats—Democrats do—but it is the law of the land. They have the resources. In the meantime, why hold up the pay of these Americans who are doing so many things to keep us safe? I think those folks deserve better. I think we all deserve better.

I guess I am a little old-fashioned. I actually think, back to the subject at hand, you know, our elections are better if more people participate. I am welcome to having more folks participate—citizens participate. Citizens participate. Unfortunately, this SAVE Act cuts back on a whole lot of Americans that will be disenfranchised simply because, oh my gosh, they did the radical thing of changing their name when they got married; or, oh my gosh, they were willing to join our military; or, oh my gosh, they are aged and they don't want to spend 150 bucks to get a passport.

Our country deserves better.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, I, too, rise in opposition to S. 1383, the so-called SAVE America Act. I think a better name—more, actually, representative of the contents of the bill—would be the “Save Republicans From the Consequences of Their Actions Act.” I have some other choice names for it, too, but not exactly appropriate for the Senate floor, so we will stick to the SAVE Act just to be short.

Last year, President Trump and Republicans in Congress promised the American people that they would lower costs—costs across the board but specifically healthcare costs. If you recall, just a few months ago, they promised to do something about the 15 million people that were being kicked off their health insurance when they failed to extend the Affordable Care Act tax credits. They failed on that promise.

The administration's war on clean energy has driven electricity prices up 13 percent since Trump took office. So much for “all of the above” energy strategies. So much for energy dominance. The price of oil is up 40 percent and gasoline is up 25 percent and rising in these few short weeks since Donald Trump initiated an unauthorized war on Iran. That is the largest single-month increase in gas prices since Hurricane Katrina, just for context.

I don't need to tell you all that many people are struggling with the rising cost of rents or their mortgages while the Speaker of the House reportedly told House Republicans that the President thinks “No one gives a [bleep] about housing.”

Well, President Trump, listen to this: 76 percent of renters and nonhomeowners, asked in a recent poll by the National Association of REALTORS, say that they don't think they will ever be able to afford to buy a house.

This Senate, at least, passed the bipartisan ROAD to Housing Act last week. If our colleagues in the House got their act together, that bill has the potential to do a whole lot of good.

In addition to healthcare and housing, Congress urgently needs to act and deliver long overdue disaster assistance for California and a number of other States and regions affected by disaster this last year.

So there are a lot of truly pressing issues for us to be focusing on and taking action on right now, but are we addressing any of those on this to-do list this week? No. Not even close.

Instead of focusing on the affordability crisis or trying to save us from endless wars, Senate Republicans are once again doing Donald Trump's bidding. This time, they are making his conspiracy-fueled election takeover bill their top priority.

Since we have launched into this debate over the bill, we have already heard all sorts of debunked lies and misinformation and misrepresentations repeated over and over again by our Republican colleagues.

Let me make a few things very clear. First of all, no, this is not a simple

voter ID bill. The latest version of the SAVE Act is a Trojan horse, actually. It is a voter suppression bill filled with poison pills and designed to change the rules of the election as we are in the middle of primary election season already and the November election is on the horizon. And for what? For partisan political gain?

The President himself has said that if this bill passes, Republicans will “never lose a race. For 50 years, we won’t lose a race.”

The lead sponsor of this bill in the Senate has stated:

Republicans will lose power—likely for a long time—if we don’t get the SAVE America Act passed.

Colleagues, it doesn’t get any more obvious than that.

Here is how it works. The voter ID rhetoric is actually a bait-and-switch. The SAVE Act does not allow Americans to use their driver’s licenses or other common forms of ID to register to vote. That is right. The SAVE Act does not allow Americans to use their driver’s licenses or common IDs to register to vote. The SAVE Act would require a passport in order to vote—something that half of Americans don’t have, not to mention the \$165 it costs and a 4- to 6-week wait time to get one.

If you are one of the 148 million Americans who do not have a passport but you are otherwise eligible to vote, you will need to, what, maybe dig through the attic or call your parents to try to find your original birth certificate—that is if you still even have it.

According to 1 survey, there are an estimated 21 million people who lack access to these documents. That is a big chunk of the electorate.

If you are one of the 69 million married women who chose to change your name when you got married, tough luck. Your name doesn’t match your birth certificate anymore, even if you can find the birth certificate, so now you have to jump through additional hoops and bring your birth certificate and your marriage license to the election office. That is your recourse.

Just to make this even more of a burden, the SAVE Act mandates that you bring these documents—and let me quote from the bill—“in person to the office of the appropriate election official” and sign an affidavit. That is what the text of the bill says. As a result, millions of women are going to face additional barriers to the ballot than their spouses have to face. When does anybody have time for that? Some evening after work? Maybe on a weekend? That is assuming elections offices are open in the evenings and on the weekends. So more than likely, someone is going to have to take time off from work to register to vote or renew their registration.

What does the SAVE Act mean in practice if, Heaven forbid, this passed and was signed into law? Bottom line: It is the complete elimination of voter registration as we have known it for

decades. The voter registration drives we see in communities and on college campuses—gone. Online voter registration or mailing in a voter registration card—which you sign under penalty of perjury, by the way—gone. Motor voter—remember that element of the 1993 National Voter Registration Act that was passed with overwhelming bipartisan support of Congress creating an opportunity to register to vote when you are doing your business at the department of motor vehicles? That, too, gone or thrown into chaos.

It seems like the goal is actually very, very clear: Let’s eliminate opportunities for people to register to vote and have their voices heard in the elections.

All of that was in the original SAVE Act, which, thankfully, this Senate had the good sense to not even take up, but this new version of the bill that is now before the Senate—we know it was rushed through the House of Representatives and now seems to be rushed through the Senate without a single hearing, and this version is even worse. How can it get worse? Folks, you are going to love hearing this. This bill mandates that all 50 States share their confidential voter roll information with Trump’s Department of Homeland Security. That is right. Let me say that again. Every State would be required to hand over confidential voter data to Trump’s Department of Homeland Security, which, by the way, does not run elections. If they have any role in elections, it is to assist State and local governments with cyber security, but they are backtracking on that responsibility.

By the way, this is the same Department of Homeland Security which has been found in violation of 200 court orders since December alone just in Minnesota alone. This is who the SAVE Act would entrust to take over voter list maintenance for every State in the Nation? For what purpose? So that political appointees of this administration can go through the lists—again, every voter in every State—and order people that were on the voter rolls to be purged from those lists.

This isn’t a hypothetical, folks. The fact is they are already test-driving this power with States that are choosing to cooperate. At least 12 States have provided the full statewide voter registration lists, including driver’s license information and Social Security information. They either did it voluntarily or they succumbed to the political pressure by Donald Trump. The results of this demonstration should alarm all of us.

ProPublica, the Texas Tribune, and other sources have found that, rather than identifying noncitizens on the rolls, DHS is sending back to the States false positives, directing people to be removed from the voter lists who are actually U.S. citizens and eligible to vote. That is right. This lawless and incompetent DHS is already trying to purge thousands of eligible Americans

from the voter lists. If this bill were to pass, it would supercharge those efforts with actual congressional authorization.

Is that what your goal is? Is that what you intend to do? Not on my watch. Not on my watch.

But there are even more troubling provisions in this voter suppression bill. If you listen to Donald Trump or, better yet, just check the White House website, it says, and once again I quote, “No Mail-in ballots,” with only a few, very narrow exceptions.

So this bill would also ban no-excuse absentee voting, which is widely used in 28 States across the country. And according to reports, President Trump himself has voted by mail. Over 48 million people voted by mail in 2024. That is about one in three voters across the country—or ballots cast across the country.

And let me be clear about something: This is not a blue State versus red State dynamic. The list of States that have used vote-by-mail include Alaska, Florida, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Montana, Nebraska, North Carolina, North and South Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

But, sadly, too many Republicans simply cannot admit that “Emperor” Trump has no clothes when it comes to elections.

Why are we doing this? I have to suspect that there are two primary reasons for this voter suppression effort. First, because President Trump and the agenda that this Republican majority has supported has been so bad—not just so unpopular but so harmful to American families—that they are trying to limit who can have a voice in the midterm elections.

The second, clearly, is Donald Trump’s obsession with the Big Lie and his refusal to accept the fact that he lost the 2020 Presidential election. Now, we all know that, after losing the 2020 election, Donald Trump encouraged a mob of his supporters to storm this building—the U.S. Capitol—including this very Chamber, on January 6. Why? Because every single court case, every investigation and recount, confirmed the same exact thing: Donald Trump lost that election. But he felt like he needed to stop the peaceful transfer of power.

Thank God for all the officers, for the more than 15 Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies, as well as the National Guard, who protected the Capitol that day. And I am grateful—I hope we are grateful on a bipartisan basis—that we have a plaque commemorating their heroism finally hanging in the Capitol.

But here we are, 6 years later, and Trump is as obsessed as ever with vengeance: pursuing vindictive prosecutions of his perceived enemies, seizing ballots in Georgia because I guess he is still trying to find those 11,870 votes, sending subpoenas for the 2020 Cyber Ninjas audit—yes, the one that

found that Joe Biden won Arizona by even more votes than originally thought.

So, make no mistake, the SAVE Act isn't about protecting our elections; it is about attacking them.

As the Presiding Officer can tell, I am strongly opposed to this anti-voter bill, and I will do everything in my power to defeat it. And, no, I am not alone. Senate Democrats will fight this voter suppression bill—tooth and nail, day after day, night after night—for as long as it takes to protect our democracy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, 250 years ago—actually, 250 years ago this summer—we wrote a letter to good King George III, and in that letter we now call the Declaration of Independence, we complained about foreign intervention into the activities of Americans, the colonists. We wanted the right to be able to actually control our own destiny. We wanted the ability to be able to speak for our own future, decide for our own families, without having foreign interference coming across an ocean to be able to affect us. We determined that we wanted to run our own Nation.

Now, 250 years later, we still want to run our own Nation. We want to make our own decisions without foreign interference, without anyone stepping in and telling us, as Americans, whom we are going to be and what we are going to do. We disagree with each other enough; we don't need individuals from the outside coming in and expressing their opinion. We handle this as Americans, and the way that we do that is with elections.

Elections have been routinely done through the history of our country since our Constitution was ratified in 1789. It has been a distinguishing mark of the United States. We are the oldest functioning constitutional democracy in the world. And in our Republic, we choose representatives. Those representatives speak on our behalf. And if we decide we don't like them for whatever reason, we choose different representatives. But we, as Americans, choose our own path through our own elected officials. That is what we do, and we do it on a regular, consistent basis.

Now, in the earliest days, it was literally a wooden box and slips of paper. We have improved that over the years. Step by step, decade after decade, we have done elections a little bit differently.

Now, they are done differently all over the country on it, but we have some basic foundational rules that are also guidance. We choose our own leaders, but we do it the right way.

It wasn't always that way. But as we have improved, we make our elections more transparent, better, with faster responses, giving more trust.

Many folks in my generation will never forget the photograph of staring

at a hanging chad from the Bush election, with a person in an election board closely staring through a magnifying glass to try to figure out if there was a dimple on a piece of paper.

There is no election system in the country that does chads anymore because we all determined that is a terrible idea. It is just a bad way to be able to prove the intent of a vote. And the whole younger generation has no idea what a hanging chad would even be because we no longer do that anymore.

We protect the right of all individuals to vote—every American citizen—because in the middle of the 1960s, we as a Nation passed the Voting Rights Act, determining that every person in America has the right to be able to vote and that would be protected, that if there would be any jurisdiction in the country that would violate that, a Federal court could literally step in and just say: No, every single citizen of the country would have a protected right to vote.

In fact, if you want me to read it to you, the Voting Rights Act actually begins with this simple statement:

All citizens of the United States who are otherwise qualified by law to vote at any election by the people, in any State, Territory, district, county, city, parish, township, school district, municipality, or other territorial subdivision, shall be entitled and allowed to vote.

But the simple statement that the Voting Rights Act begins with—"All citizens"—what is interesting is the Voting Rights Act protected the ability of a court to step in and say, if some citizen is not being allowed to vote, the courts can step in and mandate that that actually occur. But it did not set up a way to say: Are you a citizen at all?

It was just assumed that only citizens would actually be the ones to vote. It is the baseline of the civil rights in that time period and in the Voting Rights Act—that our elections would be protected only for citizens. But this is a "trust" bill in that way, and there is no "verify."

What we as Republicans have brought—we have brought out of the House and brought to the floor of the Senate—is not a "trust" bill. It is a "trust and verify" bill. It takes the next step from the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which mandated that it would only be citizens that would vote.

In fact, there was a penalty actually established that if you are a noncitizen, you get up to 5 years in prison if you vote in a Federal election. That is a big deal.

The challenge is, we have no way to be able to track it. That doesn't actually occur anymore. So we want to just be able to bring a most basic thing that all Americans can agree on—we would hope—that only citizens of the United States would be able to vote, and that before you register to vote, we would have some way to be able to show you actually are a citizen. That is, the Vot-

ing Rights Act of 1965 said that all of those American citizens have a protected right to be able to vote, and they can choose to—hopefully, they do—or not. That is up to them as an American.

So let me walk through this.

The first thing I wanted to be able to say is thank you to the State election board folks and all the State election officials and the poll workers that work for every election all across the country. We lose track of this at times.

It takes almost three-quarters of a million people just to run a Federal election—three-quarters of a million. Those are poll workers. Those are poll watchers. Those are State election officials. Those are folks that work behind the scenes in every county and parish, in cities and municipalities all across the country—three-quarters of a million people just to be able to pull together an election.

Those folks are incredibly important to be able to protect the most basic rights of individuals to be able to vote and to protect the basic right of one person, one vote.

Let me share this with this body. Here is how we do it in Oklahoma. In Oklahoma, we have one of the highest rated, secure election systems in the country—in the country. And we encourage people to come out and to vote and to participate in the entire process.

Some of the things that we choose to do is, in all of our polling locations and every time ballots are actually presented, there is always a Republican and a Democrat poll worker that is always there in every area—always—so both parties are always represented in that and so everyone can look at each other and constantly be able to check the system.

We are still old school. We do a piece of paper and a marker, and you mark your ballot. And it runs through an optical scanner, and it registers that ballot was actually fully handled. So at the end of the night, if there is any challenge at all to that ballot, we can go back to the paper ballots and actually count them by hand and be able to verify all of them, because we want to make sure, every single election, we can verify every single vote, every single time.

In fact, at the end of the night, when machines are finished, we literally print out on a piece of paper and post on the window of the election board location, wherever this was that the election was being held—we actually publicly post, at the instant the election was done that night, at 7 p.m., so that it is public information immediately how many votes were taken in this area. So if, at some point, it shows up later that it was a different number, everyone could see it.

We have full verification through the entire process.

In Oklahoma, we have voter ID at every single location, at every single vote. How do we do it? If you vote in

person and you show up to vote on election day, you pull out an ID, and you show an ID—every single person.

If you vote early, absentee—we have that all over our State in county election boards everywhere—as you walk up, you have to pull out an ID and to be able to show that ID to vote.

And if you are going to mail in your ballot, we welcome that, but you have got to show ID when you actually do it. That means actually going into a location where you can get a notary that, before you put your ballot in the mail, it shows your envelope, you show the ID, it shows on the envelope who the person is on it, and you actually have a notary to do that.

We have voter ID at every single stage. We don't allow ballot harvesting at all. We are a very, very secure system, and we are proud of that. We want every single person to be able to vote, but we want to make sure it is one person, one vote.

We occasionally still do have some folks who try to vote twice in Oklahoma. I am sure that happens in other States, as well, where they will do a request for a mail-in ballot, they will mail it in with a notary and verify that it is them, and then, on election day, they will show up and vote again.

During the last Presidential election, we had a little over 1.5 million people that showed up to vote on that. We found 2 people that double-voted in multiple counties and 27 people that actually double-voted in the same county—29 folks total that double-voted in over 1.5 million people.

By the way, we didn't ignore those 29. They were all referred for prosecution because according to Federal law—Federal law, now—according to Federal law, it is up to 5 years in prison if you vote twice.

So we refer folks for prosecution to say we don't allow that. We are careful in how we do the balloting and the voting on this. But we have a voter ID, and we walk through the process to make sure that every person actually has that opportunity to be able to vote.

Interestingly enough, in Oklahoma, we asked a question several years ago: How many folks showed up for jury duty and, when they showed up for jury duty, were excused from the jury duty because they went before the judge and said: I am not a citizen of United States?

This happens all the time, actually, where someone comes in and says: I am not a citizen of the United States, and so I need to be excused.

They are not eligible for a jury if they are not a citizen of the United States. We had about 40 people in Oklahoma that made that claim and said: I am not a citizen of the United States.

But when we checked voter rolls, they were registered to vote—40. They were excused from jury duty but were also registered to vote.

So in Oklahoma law, do you know what we do? Anytime, in any county, if someone says, I am not a citizen of the

United States in the jury duty, that now gets turned into a list. And if they are registered to vote, their registration gets purged because we are serious about only Oklahoma U.S. citizens voting in Oklahoma.

Do you know why? Because 250 years ago, we fought a war against good King George to say: We make our own decisions, not someone else outside our country. We make our own.

So we make sure that we purge our own voter rolls. In fact, that is State law, to be able to do that.

Listen, we have a very simple, straightforward proposition. It is called the SAVE America Act. The two most basic features of the SAVE America Act should not be controversial. They are simple and straightforward.

We have to verify you are an American citizen. It is already Federal law—already right now—that you have to be an American citizen. We just don't verify it. So this is the “trust and verify” portion of the bill. We trust you that you are an American citizen. How about we just check?

So you have to show that you are an American citizen to be able to register to vote.

The second part of it is you have to have ID to be able to vote. Again, we have done this in Oklahoma for years. This can be done and should be done, and it just shouldn't be that controversial.

I have to share, though, just as who I am as a person. Mr. President, as a personal note of privilege on this, I had to smile when I saw the title of our bill, when it started working its way through the very calm House of Representatives and was sent over to us: The SAVE America Act.

There are a lot of things that can save America, and this bill is incredibly important. It is vital that we get it done. But just as a personal privilege, can I just say: I personally believe what saves America is that more people had a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. I think that would be the greatest thing ever to be able to save the nature of our country.

Our country has become incredibly divided and angry. People are mad and screaming at each other and don't even know why anymore.

Two thousand years ago, a young lawyer walked up to Jesus, and said: Rabbi, of all the teachings, of all the commandments that are out there, what is the heaviest? What is the greatest commandment?

And he said: The biggest one is to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and spirit.

And then he said: You didn't ask me for two, but let me give you the second one. The second one is just like the first one—he said—to love your neighbor as yourself.

If we are going to save America, protecting our voting integrity is incredibly important, and let's get that done. But if we are really going to save America—not just a bill—I think we

need to get back to the most basic truth, to restart again and ask ourselves, as individuals that make up a nation, if we are going to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love our neighbor as ourself.

And as the old joke says, when the person says, “Who is my neighbor?” the response is, “probably the person you wish I wouldn't say.” That is the person who is your neighbor.

Jesus was headed toward his execution. He knew it, but the people around him didn't. And he was heading through Jericho, and as he approached Jericho, there was a tax collector there. His name was Zacchaeus. He was up in a tree because he was a little guy and because he wanted to see Jesus come by.

Now, he was a wretched guy who had stolen from everybody in town, and everybody knew it. When Jesus saw this wretched guy, he looked at him and he said: Why don't you come down? I want to spend some more time with you.

And the one person in town that everybody thought Jesus would ignore, Jesus actually pointed him out and said: I want to spend more time with you.

At the end of the conversation, everybody looked at him and said: Why did you spend time with that broken, depraved person?

Jesus responded: Because I came to seek and to save what was lost. That is why.

Just a personal privilege, if we are going to talk about saving America, maybe we should start with our own souls.

But in the meantime, as we contemplate that as individuals, why don't we just do the most basic thing? Why don't we verify that only American citizens are voting—because we all know it is happening, and I just told you stories from my own State.

Why don't we just verify, as we go through the polls, to increase the trust of all Americans for our election process? I am looking forward to the debate on the floor this week and for folks to have the opportunity to be able to talk this through. This is something important that we need to be able to finish, and it is something strongly the American people are supportive of.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

HONORING CAPTAIN CURTIS ANGST, CAPTAIN SETH KOVAL, AND MASTER SERGEANT TYLER SIMMONS

Mr. HUSTED. Mr. President, I come today to request a pause in the political discourse of this Chamber for a moment of reflection.

As those both in this Chamber and across the Nation know, last Thursday, March 12, 2026, an American KC-135 refueling aircraft went down in western Iraq.

The crash claimed the lives of the aircraft's six crew members. I would like to take a moment of the Senate's time this evening to honor three of

Ohio's favorite sons, the airmen who were serving in the Ohio National Guard with the 121st Air Refueling Wing at Rickenbacker Air National Guard Base in Columbus.

And listening to my colleague Senator LANKFORD, I will say this, quote a passage from John 15:13:

Greater love has no one than this to lay down one's life for his friends.

Let me first speak of one of Ohio's favorite sons, Capt. Curtis J. Angst. He was 30 years old from Wilmington, OH. He was a KC-135 pilot with 10 years of military service.

He graduated from Wilmington High School in 2014 and enlisted in Ohio's Air National Guard a year later. He earned a degree in aerospace engineering in 2020 from the University of Cincinnati. His family states that his commitment to his country was matched only by his devotion to his wife Mary and his passion for music, traveling, and the outdoors.

His family stated:

Those who knew Curtis remember his steady kindness and the joy he carried with him everywhere he went.

His constant smile and instantly recognizable laugh made people feel welcome, valued, and part of something bigger.

Another family member described Captain Angst's life as one defined by service, generosity, and a genuine love for people.

The Air Force says he logged 880 flight hours, 67 of which were in combat. He was promoted to captain just last November. He earned multiple honors, including the Air and Space Achievement Medal and the Meritorious Unit Award.

He will be missed by his wife Mary, his parents, and many more friends and family.

MSgt Tyler Simmons. You see them all pictured here. There is Curtis. Here is Tyler. MSgt Tyler Simmons was 28 years old from Columbus, OH. He was a 2015 graduate of Eastmoor Academy on Columbus's East Side, where he was his high school's quarterback.

He loved football and was a loyal fan of Texas Christian University, TCU. His service began in April 2018. His father said that Master Sergeant Simmons loved airplanes and always had plans for joining the Air Force.

His unit commander reports that Master Sergeant Simmons has been posthumously promoted from tech sergeant to master sergeant. He was a musician and played both the viola and violin in his high school. Amazing talent.

His family says he loved to roller skate. Tyler loved his family but was particularly fond of his grandmother Bernice, who, at 85 years old, is described as his confidante and workout buddy.

Tyler's smile could light up any room. His strong presence would fill it, his family says. His mother said he loved serving in the military and that he was born for it.

We mourn today alongside Master Sergeant Simmons' entire family. You

see him pictured there. You can see his smile. You can tell what they mean when they talk about his smile.

The third individual I would like to honor is Capt. Seth Koval. He was 38 years old from Mooresville, IN, and he was an aircraft commander with 19 years of service to our country. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in aviation operations from Purdue University in 2011. He was a KC-135R Stratotanker instructor pilot. You see Captain Koval there.

Captain Koval first enlisted in 2006 as a machinist with Indiana's National Guard 122nd Fighter Wing and transferred to the Ohio National Guard, which we welcomed and loved to have him, in 2017. He flew a total of 2,076 hours, 443 of those in combat.

His wife said he grew up dreaming of being a pilot, a dream that his hard work made come true. He was a man of devout faith in Jesus. He was a man of devout faith in Jesus as his Lord and Savior. He was described as loving, generous, selfless, kindhearted, smart, devoted and a fixer of all things and a real outdoorsman.

His loss is one mourned by many but most of all by his wife Heather, his son, and countless other close family members and friends of Capt. Seth Koval.

You see our three heroes right there. These servicemembers, alongside their three other brothers and sisters in arms, gave the last full measure of devotion to their country last week.

I thank my colleagues for hearing their stories this evening, for honoring their service, for celebrating their lives, and for mourning their loss alongside a grateful nation.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate observe a moment of silence in remembrance of Capt. Curtis Angst, MSgt Tyler Simmons, and Capt. Seth Koval.

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

(Moment of Silence.)

Mr. HUSTED. Mr. President, may God bless these servicemembers and their families.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Ohio.

Mr. MORENO. Mr. President, I would like to echo my colleague's sentiment. I think he said it beautifully and perfectly. I think he honored these three brave soldiers really well.

I would like to, of course, join him in recognizing Capt. Seth Koval, Capt. Curtis Angst, and MSgt Tyler Simmons, who made the ultimate sacrifice for the United States of America and gave their lives for our country.

You see them pictured here. I am a dad of kids that age, and I can't imagine what their mom and dad, their siblings, and family members must be going through. It is far too easy for us to take the blessings of freedom and liberty for granted here in America. We are lucky to live in a stable democracy.

And while our public discourse can sometimes be heated, I look at my col-

league from Vermont, and sometimes at the end of the day we leave and we are frustrated and aggravated about why we can't get this or that, I think it is important for us to acknowledge that at the end of the day, we can still break bread together. At the end of the day, we acknowledge, at least we must acknowledge that what unites us is much, much greater than what divides us.

The honest truth is that we live in the luckiest—we are absolutely the luckiest people on earth to live here in the United States of America. We enjoy the blessings of liberty every day, but on days like today, it is important for us to remember why we can live with these liberties, and it is because of the selfless sacrifice of young men and young women, but in this case, three young men, that gave their lives for that.

They signed up, as my colleague from Ohio said, without hesitation. They served honorably, and with incredible sacrifice they gave the ultimate to this Nation. These three Ohioans were the most courageous and selfless individuals of our great Nation.

They were in the National Guard, not for fame, not for fortune, because they always felt ready to be called on to protect and defend our great Nation. As distinguished members of Ohio's National Guard, they answered that call that their unit was activated. They didn't hesitate. They didn't doubt. They didn't worry. They were ready to go and serve, not for themselves, for all of us, every single one of us.

It is their sacrifice that allows us to debate the issues of this democracy every single day.

So when the Senate concludes its business today and each of us goes our own merry way and we sleep in safety and peace, let us not forget that there is a soldier in some distant corner of the world standing watch on our behalf, looking out for us.

And if their families are anything like my family or like my wife, there is a mom waiting by the phone, hoping and praying that they never get the call that these three soldiers' families got.

As we think of those young airmen, Captain Koval, Captain Angst, Master Sergeant Simmons, who put their lives in harm's way for this country. Let us remember these words from the Air Force chaplain's "Book of Prayers":

Our Heavenly Father, in this hour of stunned grief, our first reaction is silence. But in our silence, as many airmen before us have done, we turn to you and ask for your presence and reassurance and guidance.

My colleague Senator HUSTED and I have put together a resolution honoring the families. We will file that tomorrow in the U.S. Senate. We will also fly to the Dover Air Force Base to pay our respects to the airmen in person.

I think what all of us have to do in a moment like this is to understand that, with the issues that we debate

here every single day in this Hall—that will live well beyond any of our lifetimes and that existed well before any of us walked the Earth—we will have the humility to understand the weight of our decision making; that, while, yes—sadly, by the way—politics always plays a role in a political environment, we will take note of how everything we do affects many, many American families.

I would ask at this moment in which we are debating a lot of issues, that we just take one step back and realize, with deep humility, the responsibility we should all feel for these families. When we see these young men, we should realize that the decisions made here in Washington, DC, carry enormous weight and not to be flippant about it and don't think about what it means for a social media post.

These are really important decisions we make here. Thank God we have soldiers like these three young men who were willing to answer the call of this country. As we get into heated debates between Republicans and Democrats and we start posturing and wondering what this group or that group is going to think, let's just take a little moment and realize that, if not for the sacrifice of men like these, we would not even be able to do any of it.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to honor these three men. Hopefully, what this will add during this week that is obviously going to be contentious will be a moment of self-reflection and humility for this Chamber which, I think, is so desperately, desperately needed.

To the moms and dads of these three young soldiers, I can't even process what you are going through. I can't even imagine the emotions that you are feeling. Just know that America is grateful beyond words for the sacrifices that your heroic sons made.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I would like to begin by referencing the remarks of my colleague from Ohio and expressing my gratitude for the service and sacrifice of the airmen lost in action over Iraq recently.

As many know, Dover Air Force Base, in Dover, DE, is where the remains of every American who falls in service to our Nation overseas first returns to our soil. My State and the men and women of the Dover community and of the Dover Air Force Base have long considered it a sacred obligation, a blessing, and an opportunity to welcome the families who are grieving in order to help prepare their sons and daughters for ultimate burial in their home States. We have welcomed many Senators from across the country to what is known as a dignified transfer, which they carry out with great solemnity.

So let me join my colleagues from Ohio in expressing deep gratitude to the families of those who have fallen in

action in the air over Iraq and for their service and sacrifice and for the support to the United States military that all of us should be offering at this time of great solemnity.

S. 1383

With that, Mr. President, I am going to turn to the issue of the day in front of this Chamber.

What is the issue of the day? It is a bill known as the SAVE Act. It is a bill that is principally focused on voter disenfranchisement and voter suppression.

Americans today face a whole series of crises: the cost of living and the war in Iran. Our war of choice in Iran is now in its third week, and the cost to American families continues to rise. Prices—costs at home for consumers—are rising as well. I just checked a few minutes ago. A month ago, in my home State of Delaware, a gallon of gas was \$2.87. Today, it is \$3.68. That is a 30-percent jump in just a month, the fastest increase in gas prices since the 1973 oil embargo. Nationally, there is a similar rise of \$2.95 to \$3.84.

The larger point is that most Americans know they are paying a lot more at the pump. They are paying more at the pump, and it is going to end up having all sorts of secondary consequences for costs because what passes through the Strait of Hormuz isn't just oil—it is oil, it is natural gas, it is petrochemicals, it is fertilizers, it is helium. It is a whole series of things that are essential to our modern economy.

We are on the verge of planting season—it will soon be spring—and American farmers are seeing their fertilizer prices jump as well. You might not have ever thought of it, but helium is absolutely critical to a whole series of advanced industrial products, both medical and semiconductor, and it is a byproduct of natural gas production. Most of the world's helium also passes through the Strait of Hormuz. As I am sure you have heard many times today on the news and on the floor, Iran has blocked the Strait of Hormuz not for Iranian ships and not for allied ships that are going to China or to other countries but for the United States and our allies.

We have watched in the last few years as our adversaries have come closer and closer together—Iran, China, North Korea, and Russia. These four countries have deep and rapidly deepening partnerships in military security, in cyber offense, and in the support for terrorism throughout the world, and we chose—President Trump chose—to take us to war against Iran.

The recent polling of Americans shows that, by an 18-percentage-point margin, the Americans polled actually think President Trump is focused on the wrong thing, that instead of focusing on the cost of living, instead of focusing on growing our economy, instead of focusing on making American manufacturing and innovation strong again, he is focusing on the war in Iran, and that, here in the Senate of

the United States, we are focused on a bill that will take away the chance to vote for millions of Americans.

In 2024, 48 million Americans voted by mail. Vote by mail has been the law for decades in several of our Western States. It is secure. It has been shown to be resistant to fraud, and it is a longstanding tradition in majority Democrat States. If the SAVE Act were to become law, vote by mail would end. Seventy million American women would be disenfranchised by this law, including my wife and my mother, because their birth certificates and their current names on their passports and their driver's licenses are not the same. Like millions and millions of American women, they changed their names upon getting married. This law would require them to go through an expensive and complex process to restore their right to vote.

Last, the mandated sharing of every State's voter rolls with the Department of Homeland Security and for them to run them through some DOGE algorithm and throw off the voter rolls of millions and millions of Americans is a solution in search of a problem. The Heritage Foundation looked at the last 20 years of voting and found virtually no examples of those who are not here legally voting in American elections.

That handful of examples is what is being demanded that we pass today, that we focus today on a bill that we know would disenfranchise tens of millions of Americans. I think it is a profound misdirection of the time and energy of this body. When the No. 1 issue that I am hearing about from Delawareans is why are we at war in Iran, I don't really have an answer. In classified briefings I have attended recently with my colleagues on the Foreign Relations Committee, the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, and the full Senate, I haven't gotten a better answer in those classified briefings than we have gotten in public.

The military is focused on a few fairly clearly defined objectives, but the President and his so-called Secretary of War keep throwing out other goals, other objectives: regime change, ending any possibility in the future of any nuclear enrichment by Iran, and stopping Iran's ability to project power influence in the region.

Our core challenge is that President Trump has offered a maximum goal: Overthrow the regime of a large and populous country that has, yes, a brutal and murderous regime that has suppressed its own people and spread terrorism throughout the region but that is very powerfully ensconced. They are bombing them day after day after day. Unfortunately, what the Iranians are showing is that, when we have pushed them to the wall and said that we intend to overthrow your regime, they are unleashing everything they have got.

I think President Trump learned the wrong lesson from killing Qasem

Soleimani, who was the general in charge of the IRGC in his first term—General Soleimani, an evil man, whose passing I would not grieve for a moment and who had the blood of Americans on his hands. When previous Presidents considered taking him out, they were cautioned that Iran would strike back. It would use its cyber capabilities and its global terrorism network. It would close the Strait of Hormuz. It would go after Americans.

Trump took that bold action, and Iran did not respond in those ways. We waited, but despite threats to carry out terrorist attacks against Americans, we did not see Iran respond with full force.

Then, last summer, President Trump ordered Operation Midnight Hammer—something that had been funded, practiced, and developed over many Presidencies, over decades. Massive bombs were dropped on Iran's nuclear enrichment facilities—at Natanz, at Isfahan, at Fordow—that were designed underground to have the capability to resist any but the most massive attack. Again, when weighing the possibility of using military force to deny Iran the possibility of having a nuclear bomb, previous Presidents were cautioned that Iran would use everything they had. They would close the Strait of Hormuz. They would carry out cyber attacks. They would carry out terrorist attacks in the United States, and they largely didn't.

What is the difference?

In those two previous attacks, President Trump and the Secretary of War never said that our goal was regime change. This time, they did.

So, when the leaders of this administration—when this President—says they are surprised that Iran is attacking all of our partners and allies in the gulf, surprised that Iran is launching drones at American Embassies, surprised that Iran is using its naval mines, its light, fast, cheap, effective drones to close the Strait of Hormuz, how could they possibly be surprised?

This has been prepared for by folks in the Pentagon for many, many years. In every intelligence briefing I have had on Iran over my 15 years here, they have said that they have three tools: their ballistic missiles and drones, their capability as an aggressive cyber force, and a global network of dispersed terrorists who are capable of inflicting pain on civilian populations. When we came short of an all-out assault on the regime, they deescalated. We negotiated, and we were able to step back from the brink of full-on regional war.

But, in this war, our President did not seek the approval of this Chamber. He did not fully brief the American people. He posted a midnight Truth Social video that had been recorded in his West Palm Beach resort. He did not address the American people. He did not address the American Congress. Instead, he launched into a war with our ally Israel that he said was about regime change. What he has succeeded in

doing is killing an aging, cancer-ridden ayatollah and replacing him with a 30-year-younger, more conservative, likely to be more aggressive and repressive ayatollah.

They are showing us the lessons of Vietnam, of Iraq, and of our own Revolution. Two hundred fifty years ago, a small, hardy band of American patriots took on the world's greatest military power. Over the course of that long war, the Americans showed we didn't have to win any battle. In fact, we lost almost every major battle, but we kept melding back into the woods, reappearing, and imposing costs on the British and their Hessian mercenaries. All we had to do was not lose, and we survived.

In our war in South Vietnam, in a war in the region against North Vietnamese forces, we dropped huge amounts of munitions from the air. We enjoyed massive air superiority and technical superiority, and all the North Vietnamese had to do was not lose, meld into the jungle, avoid ever engaging with us in a major conflagration where we could win. And in the end, exhausted, we left.

I could give a summary of what happened in Iraq, but it is largely the same. We have been tempted to believe that our massive technological superiority, our ability to deliver weapons and armaments with great precision at huge volume will inevitably win the war in Iran, when, in fact, with their back against the wall, this hateful, murderous regime of the mullahs and ayatollahs in Tehran is perfectly capable of suppressing their own people and of using their thousands of drones to keep plinking away at Dubai, Qatar, Oman, and Saudi Arabia, at our Embassies, hurting our families, and taking the lives of our soldiers.

Folks, in my view, the costs are just too high. We have lost 13 brave American soldiers so far. We have had chaos and dislocation at our Embassies and consulates that were not adequately prepared to be evacuated.

We have seen the cost of gas, fertilizer, and natural gas and oil skyrocket, all of which could have been dealt with more responsibly through better planning.

Last, when you are going into a fight, you want as many allies as possible by your side. President George W. Bush made the case to the United Nations, to the Congress, and to our allies and assembled a coalition.

Today, when President Trump acts surprised that Iran is closing the Strait of Hormuz, he is desperately, at the last minute, calling up and haranguing leaders of our long-trusted and closest allies. And, surprise, because they weren't involved in the runup to this war, many have demurred.

Then Trump commits again what I think is a horrible offense against our NATO allies. He said yesterday: NATO has never stood by us. I knew all along we couldn't count on NATO.

Well, it was earlier this year that I led a bipartisan delegation to Denmark

at exactly the time that our President was threatening to extract Greenland from Denmark either by force or by the use of tariffs against our closest NATO partners. And during that fight, President Trump said: We never asked NATO for a thing, and they never did a thing for us. And Senator TILLIS and I and our delegation went and laid a memorial wreath at the site where Danes remember the 52 Danish soldiers who died serving alongside Americans in Afghanistan and Iraq.

It is not true that NATO has never come to our defense and NATO has done nothing for us. In fact, only once has the NATO Mutual Defense Treaty been invoked, after 9/11, by our NATO allies at our request for our defense.

And nearly a third of the combat casualties of the very long and violent war in Afghanistan were NATO troops.

So, Mr. President, rather than distracting the American people with this flawed bill designed to accomplish voter suppression, I think you might want to go back to the history books because it is recent history, and we all lived through it.

We have been blessed by the strongest alliance in human history, and our NATO allies last year stepped up and offered tens of billions more for their defense and ours. They have stood by us.

And had you done your job and planned for this war appropriately and consulted with Congress and the American people and engaged our allies, you would be in a very different place than you are today, a place today where our costs are rising and our creditability is sinking—not a great place for the American people.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, I would like to speak about the SAVE Act. The SAVE Act, the SAVE America Act, is part of President Trump's and the Republicans' agenda to disenfranchise voters.

You know, I heard my colleague from Oklahoma talk about the Voting Rights Act, and that was really an effort on the part of this Congress to respect and ensure that people who are being denied the vote had the right to vote, and it did take Federal action to make that citizens' right a reality.

The SAVE Act is really an effort to interfere with the right of people to vote, and it is based on an assertion that is flatout false about widespread voter fraud. And, of course, that goes back to January 6, after the election defeat in 2020, when President Trump then said that that election was rigged and that it was false; the outcome was not correct.

There was litigation. Sixty-three courts ruled that the President had lost to President Biden.

The President is now relying on conspiracy theorists like Kurt Olsen, one of the lawyers that pushed Trump's "Stop the Steal" efforts in court to

now lead the effort, seizing election materials related to the 2020 elections.

And those claims have been debunked, even by many Republican elected officials. A lot of our local Republican elected officials care deeply about protecting the right of citizens to vote.

Last month, President Trump said that the Republicans should “take over” the election administration in 15 States. Any attempt by a President, including this President, to take over elections is flatout unconstitutional, as article I, section 4, of the elections clause of the U.S. Constitution gives States the duty to administer elections and Congress the ability to legislate laws around election administration.

The executive branch itself has literally no role in direct election administration.

And this system works. It has worked well for 250 years because the States are best positioned to identify and create policies that meet the needs and accommodations of their own communities.

There is public reporting that officials in President Trump’s White House have been coordinating with far-right activists and operatives like Jerome Corsi to declare a baseless national emergency. We have heard that term used quite a bit in this administration. But to declare a “national emergency” surrounding the 2026 election—that term has been used. It has been invoked to justify the imposition of tariffs unilaterally by the President with respect to the IEEPA tariffs. The Supreme Court held that that position was unconstitutional. We haven’t had the Court weigh in on a “national emergency” that may be declared around voting, but it is worth very much taking seriously.

The Trump administration has defunded election security infrastructure while at the same time making false claims that our elections are insecure.

The administration has gutted the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Act, known as CISA, which Congress created in 2018 to oversee programs responsible for securing our elections, like the cyber threat intelligence.

The administration is also trying to seize voters’ personal data in violation of Federal privacy laws, despite research proving that noncitizen voting is very, very rare.

This is a concerted effort on the part of the President whose ire over losing the 2020 election resulted in January 6 and has also been a sustained campaign on the part of the President to insist that that election was bogus.

The SAVE America Act, in any form, as it is drafted, would block millions of U.S. citizens from voting. And we can have reasonable ID requirements like allowing U.S. citizens to register with a driver’s license or a military ID. Several States have them.

Vermont does not have that, except at the initial point of registering, and

we have such good, high-level participation by voters and basically zero election fraud.

But voter registration should permit all eligible citizens, and only eligible citizens, to register and vote in Federal elections. That is already Federal law. That is not what this SAVE America legislation does.

Your driver’s license wouldn’t work. That wouldn’t be a valid ID. Your REAL ID wouldn’t work. It gets us on a plane, gets us through security, but it wouldn’t work to get you in to vote.

Your military ID—you know, we just had a tribute to our soldiers. But our soldiers with that ID would not be allowed to use that to be able to register to vote.

If your passport has your maiden name on it, as millions of American women’s passports do, that won’t work because it doesn’t correspond to their married name.

The list of acceptable identification under the SAVE Act to register to vote, such as passports or birth certificates, is stricter than many of the 36 States which do require some identification to vote. And therein lies the problem because the more onerous you make this, the more difficult it is—a person who doesn’t have a passport, doesn’t have a driver’s license, has to do something just for the purpose of voting—the fewer people who are going to be able to do that.

So here are some facts that we should not ignore. About 146 million Americans don’t have a passport. In 2024, 153 million Americans voted. And, by the way, passports are pretty expensive. A new passport is at least \$165 for the passport application and the facility acceptance fee or even more if you want it expedited.

And approximately 69 million women have a birth certificate with their maiden name and not the name matching their identification, meaning their birth certificates would be insufficient identification for voter registration under this bill. How can we do that to millions of American women?

Eleven percent of registered voters don’t have access to their birth certificate; 52 percent of registered voters do not have an unexpired passport with their current legal name; and 9 percent of all eligible voters do not have or do not have easy access to documentary proof of citizenship.

These details really matter. You know, it is not just the top-line name “voter ID.” It is what is in this legislation that limits what can be a legitimate voter ID for the purposes of voting.

And even if voters were to provide documentary proof of citizenship, verifying the authenticity of those documents is an inherently complex task, one that election officials in motor vehicle departments often don’t have the resources or the training to perform.

The SAVE America Act would disenfranchise Americans of all ages and races. But younger voters, rural voters,

poorer voters would suffer disproportionately. Rural voters—and by the way, 60 percent of whom identify as Republican—would face some of the largest hurdles to showing up in person at their election office to register to vote. Many rural voters rely heavily on remote voter registration methods that would be effectively blocked by the SAVE America Act, such as registering to vote online or mailing in an application, and also these voters rely greatly on mail-in voting.

This has been an incredible convenience for voters, and reliable. This would become much more difficult under this legislation, with the need to scan and print out copies of their voter ID.

By the way, when it comes to seniors, nearly half of all seniors don’t have a passport.

The SAVE America Act would make it harder for Americans to register and vote in 2026. If the SAVE America Act were signed into law, it would go into effect immediately—overnight—changing the requirements for voter registration for all Americans from the day before the act was signed to the day after. This would effectively block voter registration methods nearly all Americans use and add new restrictions on voting at the polls and by mail in virtually every State. It would be a mess.

The bill not only requires proof of citizenship but also proof of residence in order to register. This could block even more voters from voting. Roughly 9 percent of the U.S. population has moved to a new home within their own State in the past year, but many will not update their driver’s license until they expire—more people who aren’t going to be able to vote who are entitled to vote. Right now, we have protections 90 days out from an election that prevent voters from being removed from the rolls. This bill would end those protections.

The SAVE America Act would eliminate mail registration, and it would disrupt online registration. In 2022, more than 7 million Americans registered to vote by mail and almost 11 million Americans registered to vote online without any problem to election integrity. These bills would also require online registration systems to be overhauled to fit the bill’s requirements. The bill would also prohibit universal mail voting, requiring all mail voters to submit an application in order to receive a mail ballot—a lot of bureaucracy here being created. This would end the longstanding principal method of voting in eight States and in Washington, DC—and, by the way, in my State of Vermont.

The bill would require voters registering to vote by mail to submit documentary proof of citizenship, which States do not currently require. And, by the way, that is without incident.

Mail-in voting supports rural communities that local election administrators can’t reach well. This is why

several of my Republican colleagues' States—Nebraska, Idaho, North Dakota—make mail-in voting possible for certain voters. Arkansas and Louisiana allow digital IDs as valid voter identification.

The Trump administration has been on a furious effort to silence citizens and deny them our most fundamental constitutional right: the right to vote. The "show your papers" requirement is an attack on the freedom to vote.

Congress should stand firm to protect the right of all of our citizens to vote and reject the SAVE America Act.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I am honored to follow my very eloquent colleague from Vermont in the common cause that brings us to the floor tonight, which is to say no—no—to a bill that so fundamentally and far-reachingly would undermine—in fact, destroy—our democracy. It may sound like an exaggeration, but it is the truth.

Republicans want you to believe that this bill is about making sure that citizens vote. Actually, it is about making sure that citizens cannot vote. Trump and the Republicans can't win on their policy decisions, so they must win by taking away the vote this November and for elections to come.

Make no mistake, this bill will take away votes from millions of Americans. Literally, it will roll back the clock on the civil rights era, on decades earlier during Reconstruction, on the Civil War itself. It will move America back in time and jeopardize our very democracy.

The simple fact is 21 million Americans do not have the requisite documentation this bill requires to register to vote. Passports are expensive. A passport book costs more than \$100. And birth certificates are not readily accessible to many, many people. I have to admit, I don't know where my birth certificate is. There are many people who may not have their birth certificate at all and will have to try to track it down and then spend the money that is necessary to obtain it.

Then, for 69 million married women who have changed their name but whose documentation reflects at birth their maiden name, they will be required to provide documentary proof of citizenship plus additional documentation like a marriage certificate or they will have to sign an affidavit.

The SAVE America Act is not about saving America. If it were, it would not make it harder for service men and women, our veterans, and our military families to vote. Think of it for a moment. It fails to recognize military IDs as valid proof of citizenship.

I want to emphasize this point for a moment because I think it so epitomizes what is evil about this legislation. A military ID can grant servicemembers access to military bases; highly secure, sometimes classified and

in some cases restricted facilities; but under this Republican proposal, it just isn't enough to allow those servicemembers access to the ballot box, the foundation of democracy. They go to bases. They go to restricted areas. They can go to other kinds of military facilities. But they cannot go to vote.

It imposes burdens on servicemembers abroad, including children of servicemembers. It excludes them—military voters born abroad—and it imposes burdens on servicemembers and military families stationed overseas, requiring in-person proof of citizenship at a government office in the United States when registering or updating voter registration. So in order to vote, they have to know about the law, and then they have to make a trip to a government office, probably while they are on leave with limited amounts of time. They want to be with their family, and they have to spend additional time going to a government office to register to vote. These are men and women defending our right to vote, and this bill restricts their right to vote.

The bill would also impose unacceptable barriers to voting for disabled veterans and veterans living in rural communities. It would require veterans to travel long distances simply to register or update their registration. Yet, for veterans with service-connected disabilities, mobility challenges, or limited transportation options, this requirement will create unacceptable obstacles for them to exercise their right to vote—veterans, again, who served and sacrificed for our country, who defend our rights and liberties, including the right to vote, themselves effectively being denied that right.

It is wrong. It is wrong morally. It is probably wrong constitutionally. Our servicemembers, military spouses and children, and veterans sacrifice so much for this country. It seems unfathomable and unforgivable to make it harder for the military community to vote because of one President's vanity and vengeance and political games—and the effort to win election.

Senate Republicans make a lot of promises when it comes to our veterans and our military. They have the best rhetoric going. I want to remind them that promises are meaningless unless they are kept; words are ineffectual unless there is action to support them.

While we sit here debating a bill that will make it harder for members of the military and veterans to vote, I want to remind this body that Senate Republicans continue to block the Major Richard Star Act—a bipartisan bill to deliver combat-injured veterans their full military pension. That is right. Republicans have blocked it twice just this year.

Let's keep in mind what this legislation does and why it is supported by the vast majority of Members of Congress and the people of the United States. It says, in effect, you cannot deduct from a combat-injured retiree's

pay the amount that goes to that person for disability compensation. Republicans say the cost is too high. They say it is double-dipping. Our veterans have earned both retirement pay and disability compensation. They have earned it. It is not something given to them out of charity.

They have not only blocked the passage of that bill, but they have also blocked my efforts even to allow floor consideration of it. I asked for unanimous consent twice just to give us a vote. Let that sink in. They will not even allow a vote. It wouldn't take more than 30 minutes. Let's see if we have the votes. Let's see who is going to be accountable.

We made a promise to these veterans that they would receive both retirement and disability benefits. Our legislation would deliver on that promise.

Republicans in leadership can't find the courage to give this legislation a vote despite 77 Members sponsoring it—both sides of the aisle, across the ideological spectrum. Yet they have found floor time to try to pass this mockery of a bill, to pass the SAVE America Act—a bill that will make it harder for our military and our veterans to vote.

This isn't the message we should be sending to Americans, especially amid action that is putting more troops in harm's way. What a time. American troops deployed in kinetic action, in harm's way, and the SAVE America Act has a single, simple goal: turning away American voters at the ballot box, including our military and our veterans.

We have seen this discouragement of voting time and again: sending Tulsi Gabbard to Fulton, GA, continuing the false narrative that somehow there was fraud in the Georgia vote; continuing the distorted message that there is voting fraud rampant in the Nation. The statistics and the facts prove this contention is absolutely wrong. It is false, fallacious, mistaken.

The intimidation of poll workers, the demand for voting information, private information not available to the public—all of it unjustified, probably illegal. This administration continues to pursue it because the goal is to suppress the vote.

Let's be clear. Voter suppression is the objective. This bill is the cornerstone of that vast voter suppression effort. I will give him credit for his consistency. It has been constant, the effort that President Trump is demanding of Republicans in Congress to pass the SAVE America Act—a bill that would constitute the most significant restriction on the right to vote in generations—because Republicans cannot win this November without it, and they have said the quiet part out loud. In fact, President Trump has shouted the quiet part out loud. We don't have to read between the lines. He has made it absolutely clear that voter suppression is the end, the strategy, and the goal.

Over 20 million Americans—1 in 10 voting-age Americans—simply don't

have access to the documentation that this bill would require to vote. Voting identification in some form ought to be required, no question. This is not a voter identification bill; it is a voter purge bill. It would take that private information from voter rolls and in effect eliminate those names from the rolls based on other information available to the administration.

If President Trump were really serious about stopping voter fraud, especially cyber interference and possible foreign influence, he would not have dismantled the Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency, he would not have decimated the Agency that is responsible for stopping voter fraud, he would not have dismantled the counterterrorism units of the FBI and the Department of Justice. He would make them more robust, devote more resources to them, because that is the way to stop voter fraud, is to have investigators and experts go after it, pursue it, prosecute it. But the goal here is not to go after noncitizen voting because that problem is negligible. It is miniscule. The objective is to stop legitimate voters from going to the polls.

Mr. President, 250 years ago, America broke from the chains of monarchy. They chose democracy, a government that is supposed to be by and for the people. But as we approach this Nation's birthday, we are challenged as never before to defend democracy by advocating the right of every American to vote in free and fair elections and defending that right—not enough to talk about it but to defend it.

Thankfully, we still do have our democracy. It is under threat as never before. We are seeing the tentacles of totalitarianism begin to strangle the free press through the FCC's vicious attacks, through the effort to stifle legitimate dissent within our government and among our people. But we know there are people willing to stand up and speak out. We have seen it in the indivisible rallies across the country. We have seen it in voter registration. We have seen it in the anger that we are all hearing and the angst and anxiety about the future of our great Nation in peril at the moment.

We will have it as long as we recognize that democracy is not a spectator sport. It is not something that is guaranteed unless we defend it. We will have it only so long as we keep it, as Benjamin Franklin warned. And we will have a republic, as he told the person who asked him after the Constitutional Convention, only as long as we can keep it. It is up to us. Our time is now.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, my colleagues across the aisle are presenting what they call the SAVE Act and are saying it is about stopping noncitizens from voting, but that is not true. This bill is entirely about stopping citizens from voting, taking

away the ballot box from millions and millions of Americans.

So let's call this bill what it really is: the "Stop Citizens From Voting ACT" or "Stop Act." It is about rigging the next election, and we know so because Donald Trump said it himself. He said: You pass this act, and "It will guarantee the midterms" and "every election for a long time."

Why did he have such confidence that it would guarantee the November election for his party? The answer is because this bill is about stopping groups from voting who tend to vote for Democrats. This is, again, about rigging the next election.

There are repeated investigations by law enforcement, by news organizations, by universities that have found that you are more likely to get struck by lightning than for a noncitizen to vote. It is not just rare for a noncitizen to vote, it is super rare.

In Oregon, a review of vote-by-mail by the State over 19—actually 20 years, 2000 through 2019, found less than 1 in a million cases of voter fraud.

In Utah—my colleague who is presiding tonight is from Utah. Utah completed a citizenship review of its voter registration list of more than 2 million voters. They identified one noncitizen—one—and zero instances of noncitizen voting. One registered out of 2 million; zero voting.

Even Speaker JOHNSON admitted about noncitizen voting that "it's not been something . . . provable." Well, actually, what he really should have said: It is not provable because it is rarer than rare.

That is why we know this bill is not about noncitizens voting; it is about stopping citizens from voting.

Let's just take a look at the impact, starting with the impact on married women.

The Republican plan: Stop married women from voting. A slightly softer version of that is, make it very difficult for them to vote, because this is what the bill does. It says that each State has to submit its voter registration database to the Trump administration. The Trump administration will go through and identify anyone it suspects might not be a citizen. And it has clarified that that means if your last name is different than the name on your birth certificate, you are suspect.

Well, where we are—69 million married women in America changed their names when they got married. That means 69 million American women get pinged by the Trump administration saying: We are not sure you can vote, and you are going to have to start from scratch and reregister.

Reregistering is very difficult. You have to have a passport or you have to have a combination of a birth certificate and another form of approved ID in combination—either a passport by itself or two forms of ID, one of which is your birth certificate, and that other piece has to be very specific, meeting the terms of the bill.

In Oregon, our estimate is that 700,000 married women would have to reregister to vote, including my wife. My wife's name is Mary Sorteberg. That was the name on her birth certificate, except on her birth certificate, her middle name is different because when we got married, she changed her middle name to honor her grandmother Rose. She would have a hard time voting. Millions of American women would have a hard time voting.

It is also about stopping Tribal citizens from voting. The "Stop Act" makes it impossible to use your Tribal ID to register to vote, and it makes it impossible to use your Tribal ID by itself to actually vote. You can't use it for registration, and you can't use it by itself to actually vote.

Tribal citizens are less likely to have a passport in the first place, and we know that many do not have a birth certificate. All across America, there are people who have been born at home who do not have birth certificates—more common in some Tribal communities.

Tribal communities are remote. Often, they have to travel a long way to get to a place where you can register to vote because you have to register to vote in person.

So all of these things are designed to make it harder for Tribal members to vote, and that is wrong.

This bill is also about the less affluent being able to vote. It makes it hard for them. Stop the less affluent from voting or at least make it much more difficult for them.

You know that a passport takes 6 months to get and costs about \$165. That is a big toll. A couple, if they were trying to get that passport so they could vote, might not get it in time for the election, and they would have to pay \$330. Wow. That is a poll tax on the less affluent to be able to vote.

If they can locate the county registrar and their specific county in America and if they were born in a hospital and if there was a birth certificate, they might also be able to acquire their birth certificate. That also costs money.

We know that the less affluent are much less likely to have a passport in the first place, and therefore it is much more expensive for them to undertake the qualifications of this bill. In fact, only one in five Americans who earn less than \$50,000 has a passport. And we know that poorer States are less likely to have passports, including many States in the South—Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, and Louisiana.

So we are facing an attack on each of these groups, but those are not the only groups. Let's talk about students.

The "Stop Act" is designed to make it hard for students to vote. First of all, it says you can't have a voter drive. Why? Because you can't register people at their dorm room with ordinary documents the way it has always been done everywhere. No. They have

to go in person to an election center, and who knows where that election center is.

And they are going to have to miss class or go to do it, and they are like, well, why can't I upload these documents online to be examined? Well, because they are trying to make it hard for you to vote. Why? Because students tend to vote on the blue side of the aisle.

And if you need your birth certificate to register, now, if you are going to school in a different State from where you are registered to vote or where you would register to vote, you would have to travel home.

Well, many students don't travel home during holidays because it is expensive, and students often don't have money.

Oh, they are rich; they are fine. I am sure they will take a private jet to go get their voter registration.

But ordinary students, they are struggling to pay that tuition. That is a big imposition to say you have to travel to another State in order to be able to register to vote.

So here we are with yet another attack beyond these groups, and that is an attack on vote-by-mail. Under the amendment that has been filed by the Republicans this evening, it bans vote-by-mail.

Now, let's think about how hard it is to hold an election in a State like Oregon or a State like Utah that votes by mail. Oregon hasn't had a vote at a polling booth in 28 years.

So here we are. This law goes into effect immediately. Our primary election in Oregon is on May 20. How are you supposed to get all those polling places in place, all that whole new system, in just a few weeks' time? Extremely difficult.

And then you submit your voter database to Team Trump. They purge it with a very big bias to make it hard for demographic groups that associate more with Democrats to vote. They ping them and say: You are no longer registered. You have to reregister.

And maybe they get that ping. I don't know. The election in Oregon is on May 19. Maybe they get that notice on May 10. You have 9 days to get a passport. It is not going to happen.

You have got 9 days to reach out to your county somewhere around the country, where you were born, and get a birth certificate. It is not going to happen.

Millions of people are instantly disenfranchised in an impossible-to-set-up system in a few weeks' time.

Those groups that I talked about—students, Tribal members, the less affluent, women—this bill is targeted at them with extraordinary precision because this bill is about rigging the November election.

And that is exactly what Trump said: You give me this bill; my party will win November and every other election for a long time to come.

So, colleagues, this is wrong. Every one of my fellow Senators on both sides

of the aisle knows what this is. This is an attack on a partisan basis to rig the November election. Every person here who took an oath to the Constitution to defend the right to vote knows that this is about rigging the election by stopping people from voting. It is really a violation of your oath of office.

So let's not let this happen—this egregious assault by an authoritarian President. We have already seen this authoritarian President take away powers from this body—the House and the Senate, Congress—that belong under the Constitution to Congress.

Our Founders said the power of taxation, including tariffs, belongs to Congress. This President took it anyway and said: I don't care that I am violating the Constitution. Challenge me in court.

It took a year for the courts to act.

He proceeded to say: I am going to cancel programs that are both funded and authorized by Congress—which is a violation of law and the Constitution.

It is the power of the purse, and he said: I don't care. Challenge me in court.

He proceeded to launch a war without authorization, even though the Constitution requires this body to authorize a war.

So here we are, three major powers—power of the purse, power of taxation, power of war—all stolen by the President and not confronted by the House or Senate leadership.

And now we have House and Senate leadership conspiring with the President to strip the vote from millions of Americans, an extraordinarily unconstitutional act. But this time, it is not the President acting alone. He is acting with the support, the cooperation, the partnership of the majority party.

There is probably nothing more sacred in a democratic republic than the ballot box. It is the beating heart of what it means to be a democratic republic. This bill takes a knife and stabs it through that beating heart.

Let's not let this happen.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

#### MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 2:30 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Alli, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, without amendment:

S. 1884. An act to clarify the Holocaust Expropriated Art Recovery Act of 2016, to appropriately limit the application of defenses based on the passage of time and other non-merits defenses to claims under that Act.

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 528. An act to require the Secretary of the Interior to carry out a program for Post-Disaster Reforestation and Restoration Program, and for other purposes.

H.R. 831. An act to establish an interest-bearing account for the non-Federal con-

tributions to the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1422. An act to impose sanctions with respect to persons engaged in significant transactions related or incidental to the processing, refining, export, transfer or sale of oil, condensates, or other petroleum or petrochemical products in whole or in part from the Islamic Republic of Iran.

H.R. 1665. An act to require the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture to establish online portals to accept, process, and dispose of certain Form 299s, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2196. An act to provide for an extension of the legislative authority of the National Emergency Medical Services Memorial Foundation to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs.

H.R. 2294. An act to reauthorize the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009.

H.R. 2709. An act to improve the health and resiliency of giant sequoias, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3073. An act to confer jurisdiction on the State of Utah with respect to civil causes of action arising on or within the Indian lands of the Shivwits Band of Paiutes, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4284. An act to amend the Small Tract Act of 1983 to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to convey, without consideration, certain cemeteries, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4467. An act to modify the boundary of the Vicksburg National Military Park in the State of Mississippi, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5254. An act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to enter into an agreement with the Gateway Arch Park Foundation to host private events in Gateway Arch National Park buildings, and for other purposes.

H.R. 5729. An act to authorize direct emergency acquisition flexibilities for the National Park Service for the purpose of retaining, vetting, approving, and expediting contractor approval for the clearing rebuilding, maintenance, and improvement of the Grand Canyon grounds that have been impacted by the Dragon Bravo Fire.

H.R. 6380. An act to redesignate the Chiricahua National Monument in the State of Arizona as Chiricahua National Park, and for other purposes.

#### MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 528. An act to require the Secretary of the Interior to carry out a program for Post-Disaster Reforestation and Restoration Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 1422. An act to impose sanctions with respect to persons engaged in significant transactions related or incidental to the processing, refining, export, transfer or sale of oil, condensates, or other petroleum or petrochemical products from the Islamic Republic of Iran, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign in whole or in part Relations.

H.R. 1665. An act to require the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture to establish online portals to accept, process, and dispose of certain Form 299s, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

H.R. 2196. An act to provide for an extension of the legislative authority of the National Emergency Medical Services Memorial Foundation to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its