

Democratic last year. We have had statewide officials from both parties with an election system that makes it easier for people to vote.

But as Steve Simon—Minnesota's respected secretary of state—has testified, the bill would cost States, counties, and cities untold millions of dollars to implement, and it would require implementation within 60 days of becoming law. As Steve put it, it is a recipe for chaos in our election system.

I think we should be making it easier for people to vote. That is why I worked with my colleagues on the Freedom to Vote Act. That is why I support the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act.

Instead of talking about this right now, we should be doing something about Americans' expenses, and why don't we also talk about how AI is being used to deceive voters? Whether you are a Democrat or a Republican, no one wants to see fake ads or robocalls where you cannot even tell if it is a candidate you don't like or the candidate you love.

While a number of States—red and blue—have enacted laws to address these threats to our elections, we cannot rely on a patchwork of State laws. Congress must act. That is why I lead legislation to ban content that falsely depicts Federal candidates in political ads to influence Federal elections. I have worked with Senator JOSH HAWLEY—not exactly a flaming liberal. There is another bill to require disclaimers on political ads with images—audio or video—that are substantially generated by AI. That is for the ones, of course, that are constitutional and that allow for parity in certain uses. You could at least put a disclaimer on those to show that it is created by AI so you know if it is real or not. Then, on the ones that falsely depict people, you could actually ban those. That is what they have done in other countries.

While we are talking about protecting our elections, we also need to talk about the need to support our State and local election offices as they work to maintain their election infrastructure to keep pace with new technology and combat cyber security.

But instead of strengthening our election security and making sure that, in our campaigns, AI is not being used in a way that is going to mislead people and that voters are given knowledge of what they are seeing, which is something that is coming right at us in this next election—instead of talking about how to get rid of these across-the-board tariffs that cost households \$1,700 last year or the small farm bankruptcies that are at a 5-year high, which has nearly doubled over the last year—as one farmer put it, a perfect, perfect storm of ugly—or instead of working together to extend the healthcare tax credits or doing something about electricity prices that went up an average of \$110 or doing something with this war that they uni-

laterally started and did not allow Congress to have a say in—and now we have seen an increase of \$30 to \$40 a barrel. Every \$10 increase in a barrel of oil is a \$450-a-year increase in gas prices for the average American family. But instead of doing all that when we have seen jobs down in January alone 108,000, and then in February, we lost 92,000 more jobs—instead of dealing with this and not rubberstamping this President's policies, we are here, talking about a bill that makes it harder for people to vote.

So I urge our Republican colleagues to change course and to work with us on where people really are, which is doing something about how much it costs for them to go on with their daily lives; to work with us on everything from permitting reform to doing something about getting more energy on the grid, to doing something about bringing grocery prices down. We are messing around here.

Protecting the freedom to vote has never been easy, and we have had to course-correct many times to ensure that our democracy is there for people. Americans have fought and died to protect our freedom to vote. They have done so on the battlefield, and they have done it in marches and the civil rights movement; and 61 years after the Voting Rights Act was passed by this Chamber and signed into law, that fight continues today. This bill is not the right bill for this country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

#### SAVE AMERICA ACT

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I appreciate the remarks from my friend from Minnesota. I think she laid out an unassailable case about how this is going to greatly constrain people's abilities to cast their votes, how it is a broad assault on democracy, how it effectively makes up a problem that doesn't exist.

I think I am the last speaker tonight before everybody gets to go home. So I am going to be very brief, and I am going to try to put today's debate in some context.

Here is what President Trump told a gathering of lawmakers at his golf resort. By the way, let's just not gloss over the fact that Donald Trump doesn't spare any moment to make money off of his Presidency, including demanding that, if you want an audience with him, you have to go down and spend money at his golf resort.

Here is what he said. He said: If you pass the SAVE Act, "[i]t will guarantee the midterms. If you don't get it, big trouble, my opinion."

Pass the SAVE Act, and "[i]t will guarantee the midterms. If you don't get it, big trouble."

Donald Trump—one of the most unpopular Presidents at this point in his Presidency in history. All he cares about is power and winning elections.

He can't maintain power in the Senate or the House this fall being this unpopular in running a war that is out of control and that is driving up costs for Americans, tariffs that are costing the average family thousands of dollars a year, an economy that is not growing; and manufacturing jobs that are fleeing. So he is seeking to gain power that he believes will allow him to manipulate who can vote and who can't vote.

That is why we are here. We are certainly not here because voter fraud is a systemic problem in our elections.

The Heritage Foundation—the organization behind Project 2025 and many of the ideas that form the foundation of this legislation—has been able to uncover 10,000 instances of non—wait a second—5,000 instances of noncitizen voter—no, not 5—no, 400—no. It is 100. They found 100 instances in a country of 300 million of noncitizen voters trying to vote since 2000—in 26 years, 100 cases.

Another study found that the percent of voter fraud in Arizona over the last 25 years was—and I have got to read this carefully—0.0000845 percent. I actually have no concept of what that number is. That number is so tiny as to be kind of impossible to comprehend. The rate of voter fraud over the last 25 years in Arizona is 0.0000845 percent.

When you ask Americans what the top problems are that are facing the country right now—this is a Washington University poll, so it is not a Democratic poll or a Republican poll—they are, 1, jobs are disappearing; 2, prices are going up—let's see—3, the President generally; 4, the cost of living; 5, corruption in government; 6, polarization in government; 7, crime; 8, immigration; 9, abortion; 10, healthcare. I would bet you, if you went 11 through 19, you would not find voter fraud on that list. Statistically, this isn't a systemic problem. Voters aren't asking for us to focus on it.

So why are we here? Why is this the emergency issue—the urgent issue—that Congress is debating at nearing 11 o'clock on a Wednesday night?

It is, first and foremost, because Trump is demanding it. He has said he will not sign any other legislation until this bill reaches his desk, and Republicans in the Senate are compliant. They are employees of the President. He has said: This is the bill I want. So they are attempting to deliver him this bill. He believes, I think wrongly, but he believes this bill will give him special powers with which to change the electorate in his favor.

But we are also here because Republicans do not want to talk about the issues that are actually top of mind for Americans. They do not want to talk about prices or the economy or healthcare. They do not want to talk about corruption in government or the cost of living. That is probably the primary reason we are debating this bill—because, if you asked Americans what should be in a "save America" law, they would not say this.

There are 4 million Americans who are losing their healthcare as we speak—4 million Americans. There are 20 million Americans who, right now, are getting ready to sit down at the kitchen table and figure out how they are going to afford a 100-percent increase in their healthcare premiums. There are millions of families right now, because of the actions of Donald Trump and Republicans in this Congress, who are deciding whether they are going to pay the tuition bill for their child next semester or whether they are going to have to come home and postpone college for a little while because they just can't afford college and healthcare.

That is a crisis in this country. That is a healthcare cataclysm that is happening in this country.

There are hospitals and birthing centers and clinics that are closing in every corner of America because of the multitrillion-dollar cut to Medicaid. There are 4 million Americans who are losing healthcare and 20 million Americans seeing an enormous healthcare increase, and there are hundreds of clinics closing. We are not talking about that tonight.

Our economy is in trouble.

The economy lost 92,000 jobs in February. The Chairman of the Federal Reserve said today that we have had zero net job growth in this country over the last 6 months. The unemployment rate is 4.4 percent, up from 4 percent when Donald Trump took office; long-term unemployment, 25.3 percent, up from 21 percent when Donald Trump took office. The unemployment rate for Black workers is 7.7, up from 6.2 percent when Donald Trump took office.

The economy grew at an anemic 0.7 percent in the second quarter of 2025. We have lost 100,000 manufacturing jobs since Donald Trump took office. We are losing jobs left and right.

This economy is in trouble, but we are not talking about that tonight.

This administration is raising prices on people all across the country. The tariffs alone, if the administration succeeds in maintaining its current level of tariff revenue, will cost the average family \$2,500 this year. Who in America has \$2,500 lying around? OK. You know the folks who pay the ticket prices to

show up and sit next to Donald Trump at Mar-a-Lago have \$2,500 sitting around, but 40 percent of Americans are living paycheck to paycheck. Forty percent of Americans don't even have \$400 saved for an emergency medical procedure or a car repair. The majority of Americans cannot afford Trump's tariffs, which are going to charge them \$2,500 in additional costs this year.

That is not a bad economy. That is not bad luck. That is the President of the United States making decisions to purposefully raise people's cost of living by \$2,500 this year.

And then he makes it worse because his war in Iran is jumping gas prices. Those increased transportation costs will soon increase grocery costs.

There is an inflation and cost-of-living epidemic in this country, and we are not talking about that either.

The White House is for sale—for sale. This is the most corrupt White House in the history of the country. No. 5 on that list of what Americans care about today is corruption in government because they are scratching their heads, wondering why this Congress is not talking about the fact that the President of the United States was just gifted a \$400 million plane by a foreign government as a gift. They are wondering why we aren't having hearings on the secret payments that the President has been getting from foreign governments as private, quiet, secret investors in his cryptocurrency businesses. They are scratching their heads wondering why we aren't spending our time talking about the fact that the President's family has all of a sudden shown up on the boards of corporations that are getting contracts from the Federal Government. This White House is a 24/7 grift operation, but we are not talking about that this week on the floor of the Senate.

And, oh, by the way, we are at war. We are at war again in the Middle East. A dozen Americans have died.

We have a new war breaking out as a consequence of the President's military action in Iran between Israel and Lebanon. A thousand people have already died in that conflict. The entire region is on fire.

The President can't articulate a single reasonable, realistic endgame scenario for this war. We haven't had a

single hearing in the Senate on a war that is underway right now in the Middle East. We aren't talking about that on the floor of the Senate this week.

And we have a Department of Homeland Security that is out of control, that is murdering American citizens, that is terrorizing our communities, that is tear-gassing schools, that is disappearing legal residents. And we aren't talking about that on the Senate floor either this week.

Inflation, the economy, cost of living, corruption in government, polarization, crime, immigration, abortion, and healthcare—these are the issues, when you ask voters, they say Congress should be focused on. They don't list voter fraud because the rate of voter fraud in this country is 0.000845 percent.

There are serious problems in this country. There are families going through hell right now because of what Republicans have chosen to do to raise people's costs and to hurt our economy. There are Americans dying overseas right now in an illegal, unauthorized war that this Congress refuses to do oversight on.

We could be spending our time saving Americans by reducing their costs, creating more jobs, or actually doing our congressional duty to make sure that we don't waste lives and treasure overseas on forever wars with no end.

But, instead, we are debating a bill that is going to withdraw people's right to vote because Donald Trump has ordered congressional Republicans to give him a tool that he thinks will help him steal this election.

I ran for the Senate to work on real problems, not fake problems and conspiracy theories, and there are a whole lot of real problems—real problems—that this country is facing right now that this Senate should be focused on.

I yield the floor.

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ADJOURNMENT UNTIL TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 12 noon tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 10:32 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, March 19, 2026, at 12 noon.