

It is time we stand up for this country and for its people and put it first.

Put simply, I implore my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to remember why they are here, to remember the country they profess to serve and the people they profess to serve. Put them first. And let's fund DHS.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

SAVE AMERICA ACT

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I rise today to defend the heartbeat of our democracy, and that is and always will be the right to vote.

From the first National Women's Rights Convention held in 1850 in Worcester, MA, to Selma to Montgomery marches in 1965, Americans have been mobilizing and marching and chanting and fighting for generations to protect the right to vote, which is the most cherished right. And it is now under relentless attack by the Trump administration and the MAGA Republicans who sit right across the aisle here on the floor of the U.S. Senate.

And that is why we are here today: because when you can't win by the rules, you have to sabotage. You have to manipulate the game. That is what this bill is all about. It is not the SAVE America Act. It is the "Save Your Ass Act" because the American public is rising up in revolution against higher healthcare costs, higher gasoline prices, higher home heating oil prices, higher prices for everything on Main Street because of the sales tax called a tariff, which is being imposed upon all those goods.

That is what they are afraid of because they know that the voters are coming with pitchforks toward them this November, and they have to do something about it. So they call it the SAVE Act.

But if there was a section 5 of the Federal Trade Commission of unfair and deceptive act provision here and it was applied properly, it would be called the "Steal Act," the "Steal the Election of 2026 Act."

That is what they are doing on the Republican side. That is what they are trying to perpetrate upon the American people, upon our elections. They have to manipulate our elections through voter suppression, disenfranchisement, unconstitutional tactics to win in 2026 and in 2028 and beyond.

As Trump says, they will win every election if they can pass the SAVE Act. They won't have to worry anymore. And why is that? Because it is a craven effort to turn back the clock, institute a new modern-day Jim Crow, and take away the one right central to our democracy, and that is the right to vote.

This legislation is dangerous. It is anti-democratic, and it is wrong. The SAVE America Act would impose unnecessary and overly restrictive voter ID requirements. It would require Americans to present a birth certificate or passport in person whenever they register to vote or whenever they need to update their registration.

There are tens of millions of Americans without passports. There are tens of millions of Americans who don't have a birth certificate on them at all times. That is the goal of the Republicans: No, you can't vote today. We are going to make it impossible for you to vote.

Now the goal in America should be more people are voting. It is already too low. No, that is not the Republican Party's goal here. Their goal right now is fewer votes, lesser participation in our democracy.

That is what they are trying to perpetrate upon our democracy right now because most Americans, right now, they register to vote online, through the mail, or at their Department of Motor Vehicles.

Only 6 percent of Americans register to vote in person at an election office, and the Republicans know this. And that is why they want to establish the new standard for everyone. It is like forcing everyone to use a fax machine to register to vote. It makes no sense, it is unnecessary, and it would only prevent people from participating in our democracy.

The new requirement to present a photo ID at the polling place is more stringent than laws already on the books in all but one State in the country. If the SAVE Act—if the "Steal Act"—passes, it would be easier to buy a gun in many States than to vote.

Can I say that again? The NRA does not want it to be difficult to buy a gun. Republicans go along with that. In red States, the standards are very low to buy a gun. But to vote, oh, now they are concerned. Now we need standards, which make it almost impossible for tens of millions of Americans to be able to comply.

So just let that sink in. It would be easier to buy a gun than to exercise the most fundamental right of citizenship in our Nation.

And who would bear the brunt of this law? The 146 million Americans who do not have a valid passport.

I had never been to Washington, DC, before I was elected to the U.S. Congress. My father drove a truck for the Hood milk company. I ran when I was 29 years old for the U.S. Congress, and I won.

And my first visit to Washington was to be sworn in as a Member of the U.S. Congress when I was 30 years old. I not only had not been to Washington, I had never been anyplace outside of our country. I didn't have a passport, and I was a U.S. Congressman.

Well, ladies and gentlemen, here is a bulletin for you: 146 million Americans do not have a valid passport. I know because I would have been one of them. That is nearly half of all American adults.

The 69 million women who have changed their names after marriage and lack an updated birth certificate, they are out. Sorry. Oh, you—that is not the same name. You must have gotten married. Sorry, can't vote

today. Just using your maiden name here? I am sorry. Can't vote.

Elderly voters who would be forced to navigate bureaucratic mazes to renew their voter registration in person; an 85-year-old who helped build this Nation and has voted in every election for 60 years could suddenly be told: The ID you have been using your whole life is no longer sufficient. Prove it again or you don't get to vote.

Do you know who else loses big time? Black and Brown communities who already face preceding, already existing high barriers to their being able to vote in too many States in our country; young people who could no longer rely on their student IDs to vote; disabled voters who may face challenges in getting to polling places; Native Americans whose Tribal IDs may be rejected for registration to vote and then for actually voting. That is their goal.

You can see which one of the groups in our country they are trying to dissuade. You can see which of all of these subgroups of Americans—they are going to create barriers to their ability to go into the polling places.

How about a working American who would be forced to miss more shifts to exercise their right to vote, rural voters who would have to travel for hours to satisfy the strict in-person registration requirements, and LGBTQ+ Americans who face hurdles in obtaining accurate IDs that match their gender identity?

So instead of free and fair elections, it is bought and paid-for elections. Instead of one person, one vote, it is one White person, one vote. And everyone else gets shown to the door. So sorry, you can't vote here today.

Take, for example, a constituent of mine, a woman who legally changed her name nearly 50 years ago. Her birth certificate no longer matches her legal identity.

But now the President of the United States and Republicans want to force her to dig through decades-old documents just to prove she has the right to cast a ballot.

So give us a break. We know what you are doing here. You are trying to disenfranchise that woman. You don't want her to show up. We know what you are trying to do.

Or take a servicemember who has been serving their country bravely. Under the SAVE Act, under the "Steal Elections Act," a military ID alone would not suffice to prove citizenship because noncitizens can also serve in the military.

Can you imagine that? Somebody has served for 2 years, 4 years, 6 years, 20 years, they show up to the polling place. They show their military ID. And they are told: Sorry, that doesn't count.

It counted to send them overseas. It counted to put their lives in danger. But it doesn't count to be able to vote.

Well, this is, without question, all part of a pattern which has been created by the Republicans. And we had a

hearing today in the Supreme Court just as a continuation of that plan to reduce participation in elections in our country because without, for example, that military official who is now standing there, trying to explain why they should be able to vote, they have to provide a military record of service, showing the United States as the place of their birth.

Without that document, a servicemember who has been risking their life on behalf of our country may find themselves shut out of the voting process.

So under this bill, a servicemember can deploy overseas, carry classified credentials, the top secrets of the United States, defend our democracy, but come home and be told their military ID is not sufficient for that servicemember to engage in our democracy after they spent their entire life protecting us, and they have a military ID to prove it.

Or take a young person who just went off to college and is eager to become a first-time voter. The student hasn't yet left the country and has never had a passport. And under the SAVE America Act, they are also not allowed to use their student ID.

But by the time they apply and receive their passport, the voter registration deadline has passed, and they won't be able to cast that first ballot they were so excited about. So just think about that.

The student at one of our great universities across the country, they think that they are going to be able to register and vote where they are going to school. And they have a student ID, and now they are told: You cannot vote. You have to get a passport, which that student has never had.

Let's take a single working mom who just moved home. This new law might force her to reregister to vote in person due to her address change. Although she has the required documents, she is unable to find the time between her shifts and taking care of her children to visit an election office in person.

On the day she does show up to the polls to cast her vote, after losing a day of work, she is told she cannot vote.

This bill is unconscionable. It is un-American. It is actually unworkable, but that is not deterring the Republicans. They have a goal. They want to save their seats. They want to lower the participation in the elections this year and in the 2028 election cycle. That is what it is all about—steal elections. That is all it is about.

And this bill itself doesn't test whether you are eligible to vote; it tests whether you can outmaneuver unnecessary redtape, whether you have the time and the resources and the documentation to satisfy a system designed just to say no.

We cannot become a country that cares about representation for some instead of representation for everyone. The future and the strength of our de-

mocracy depend on every single American being heard at the ballot box, not just those who Donald Trump and his MAGA supporters deem as worthy to be able to vote.

The SAVE America Act would also force States to hand over super-sensitive voter data to the Department of Homeland Security. So just think about this. Kristi Noem—by the way, we are still celebrating “Kristi Noem Got Fired Day.” Kristi Noem and whoever her successor might be, they would have access to all of this voter data.

This would give Trump unprecedented power to interfere in local elections, conveniently just before the 2026 elections as Trump is down at 40 percent favorability and looking at a landslide heading his way, a tsunami of voters ready to change the control of the House and Senate.

So are any of these provisions an accident? No, this is designed. You know, there is such a thing that Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a great Senator who served here—he used to call something, when he didn't want to help something or hurt something, he said that people should just act in “benign neglect”—“benign neglect”—of the problem.

That is not what we are talking about here. We are talking about designed neglect. It is a plan. It is a plan that they are putting together. The SAVE America Act—“the Steal the Election Act”—is a calculated effort by Trump and MAGA Republicans to erect barriers between American citizens and their fundamental democratic rights.

Republicans can claim that this bill is meant to combat voter fraud or to prevent noncitizens from voting, but the truth is that noncitizens already cannot vote in State and Federal elections. They run the risk of criminal prosecution if they vote in our country.

In this climate, with the way the immigrant community is being terrorized and targeted, the last thing noncitizens want to do is to register with the Federal Government to vote or to open themselves up to criminal penalties because they are not qualified to vote.

It is absolutely absurd to think otherwise. States already implement many checks to ensure that only citizens are allowed to vote. And despite numerous studies and audits and investigations over the years, it has been determined that noncitizens voting is very, very, very, very, very, very, very rare. It is not a problem.

I will tell you what is a problem: High oil prices, that is a problem; high healthcare prices, that is a problem; high tariff taxes on small businesses by the millions across our country, that is a big problem; inflation going up, that is a big problem; unemployment going up, that is a big problem.

Are we debating that on the floor? Are the Republicans having hearings on the Iran war? Are they having hearings on skyrocketing oil prices?

No, they are not. They are having the Senate, now, for over a week, debate

something that is very, very, very, very, very, very, very rare, and they are trying to make a big crisis out of it.

Why is that? Because they want to distract everyone's attention away from the real crises of oil and healthcare and Iran and tariffs and all the other messes which they have created this year. It is strictly a distraction. It is a “Wag the Dog.” It is the take everyone's attention away from the actual issues that are harming families in our country right now on which we have no hearings, none—none—because there is absolutely no evidence that supports Trump and the MAGA Republican conspiracies that noncitizens are voting at a large scale.

It is simply false. It is a ghost story told for political purposes, used to justify laws whose real function has nothing to do with election security and everything to do with election outcomes so that the Republicans are not punished for their economic policies, for their foreign policy mistakes which they are making for which they do not want to be held accountable.

The SAVE America Act is a solution in search of a problem, but it is worse than that. It is a distraction from American efforts to strip millions of eligible Americans from their right to vote. Why do they want to do that? I have got five reasons—five reasons—why the Republicans want to establish this goal of disenfranchising millions of Americans:

No. 1, so that they can continue to give handouts and tax cuts to billionaire CEOs while making it harder for millions of Americans to get access to Medicaid and Medicare and affordable healthcare and looting by the trillions the money from healthcare for ordinary families to give over to the billionaires who do not need it; reason No. 1.

Reason No. 2, so they can continue their vendetta against the wind and solar energy industry, the all-electric vehicle industry, so that Big Oil and Big Gas can make bigger profits off of the hard-earned cash of American citizens because they will be forced to buy all gasoline-powered cars, and the oil companies can tip them upside down and shake money out of their pockets at the pump.

But they don't want that reversed. They don't want solar and wind and all-electric vehicles to be the future. No. That is reason No. 2.

Reason No. 3, so they can continue to give billions of dollars to ICE to terrorize immigrants while trampling on the constitutional rights of our communities. Right now, we have masked agents across our country not wearing cameras and violating constitutional rights that were built into the Constitution during the American Revolution and its aftermath. And they just hate the idea that they would have to comply with those constitutional safeguards that have matured and been codified over the centuries.

No. 4, they can continue to operate a pay-to-play pardon system, where fraudsters and friends and supporters of the President can essentially buy their way out of convictions and jailtime.

No. 5, so they can keep raising prices at home while razing countries abroad—but to do so without a peep coming out of the majority in the House and the Senate because that is where we are right now. We have a Senate; we have a Republican leadership which has been supine for the first 15 months of this second Trump administration. They have shown no courage. It is almost as though they had a vertebrae bypass operation that has made it impossible for them to be able to stand up to the illegal, to the corrupt, to the absolute disgraceful foreign policy, from Venezuela to Greenland to Iran and on and on and on, that Trump has been engaging in without a peep out of the Republican Party.

There are only three things you need in politics: backbone, backbone, and backbone. And what do they want on their side? They don't want to be held accountable for their lack of backbone. And the only way they can do that is reduce the number of people who vote this year. Don't allow for there to be a change of government by suppressing the votes of those who are most likely to be angry over what they have been doing to our country over the last 15 months.

Trump has thrown us into an illegal, reckless war, which is costing lives abroad, costing hundreds of billions of dollars of taxpayer dollars, costing American families at the pump, in-home heating oil, airline tickets, grocery prices, and in every other monthly bill. It is just going to ripple through our entire economy because he has created a global energy apocalypse. And every time Americans go to the pump, they are in for a crude awakening, courtesy of Donald Trump's illegal war in Iran.

The average price at the pump right now is \$1 higher than it was just 4 weeks ago. Cumulatively, Americans spent \$2.6 billion more last week than they did on gasoline before the war started. And \$2.6 billion, it could pay for a lot of solar on more than 850,000 homes without any incentives. Mr. President, \$2.6 billion could pay for about 350,000 drivers to use the electric vehicle tax rebate, which would insulate drivers from these crazy oil spikes.

Home heating oil prices are up by \$1.20 a gallon in Massachusetts, which many families rely on to heat their homes. That means \$350 more to fill up their tank, and it is still cold in Massachusetts in the winter.

So 500 bucks more for gasoline over the course of the year, 350 bucks more just to fill up their tank, and all as they watch television at night and watch a war going on in Iran that, so far, has had no public rationale that makes any sense whatsoever, and the Republicans are refusing to even have

hearings so that we can cross-examine the rationale, if it existed at all, that Trump is using in order to perpetrate this insane war and its consequences not only on the Middle East but on the entire planet.

Oil prices go up like a rocket, but they come down like a feather. So we are going to see this price of oil in our economy that is going to go on for months and months and months, and when the President says he needs \$200 billion more, well, it is costing \$2 billion a day to run the war. So that means at least a 100 days more—2 billion times 100 days. That takes us into the summer. He is asking us—he is asking the Republican Senators to give him enough money to fight the war into the middle of the summer, which means the price of oil is just going to continue to go up and up and up like a rocket, and people are going to be standing there with the pump in their hands, with the nozzle in their car, and they are going to be looking up at that price as it goes up and up and up and up as this war goes on.

So experts say that Donald Trump's illegal war has now caused the largest oil supply disruption in the history of the world.

Can I say that again? Donald Trump has caused the largest oil supply disruption in the history of the world, and he has yet to explain successfully what the rationale for that war is.

So, to me, Trump's entire reign has caused the largest corruption in modern American history because his entire Presidency has been a disaster for American families. Even before the war, electricity prices were up by as much as 13 percent.

Can I say that again? People are paying their bills across the country—a 13-percent increase in electricity bills last year under Trump. And now those attacks on natural gas facilities in the Middle East are spiking prices worldwide, spikes that will likely hit American utility bills soon as U.S. natural gas exports surge to chase the highest price on the international market, which has been the goal of the natural gas industry right from the beginning.

And by the way, Trump is just wholly owned subsidiary of the natural gas industry. He said to them in April of 2024: If you raise me \$1 billion, I will make sure that I kill all of the environmental laws in the country, all of the incentives for wind and solar and all-electric vehicles.

So that is cash and carry. They raise the money, and now we are living with the consequences of just having a total dependence upon those industries that Donald Trump said were going to make America great. No.

We are, right now, hostage to the oil industry, hostage to the natural gas industry. They can charge whatever they want.

This whole idea that he created energy independence for us? No. The price of oil and gas is set on a global market, not in Tulsa, OK. And I think every

American now understands that, because these Big Oil vultures are already circulating, looking to scavenge their profits at the expense of every consumer, every family in our country.

Major oil and gas companies are poised to reap record profits this year from higher prices, as Americans reap devastating losses.

So Americans are going to be paying \$2 billion a day in taxes for the war and \$2 billion more each week for high gasoline prices.

And I am not even talking about home heating oil prices. I am not talking about jet fuel prices. I am not talking about natural gas prices for people's homes.

So the rich are going to get richer, and the rest are going to pay taxes and their skyrocketing energy bills. That is what he has left us with.

Do the Republicans want to debate that? They do not want to debate that.

Is that all the American people want us to debate? Yes, please put that front and center. Please, let me know when this ends. When does this chaos and corruption end and its impact upon the lives of every family in our country?

So let's just be clear: Big Oil only serves as a destabilizing force in global politics—not a stabilizing but destabilizing force. This entire conflict is a reminder that our continued dependence on fossil fuels pulls the world toward instability and pulls it towards conflict.

And the lesson is clear: We must transition rapidly to clean energy sources that cannot be blocked or bombed or weaponized.

In reality, wind and solar are the fastest growing electricity sources in history because they just make sense. In 2025, renewables made up over 88 percent of all new electricity generation in the United States. In 2025, the United States added more than 50,000 megawatts of new solar and wind capacity, compared to just under 5,000 megawatts of new natural gas capacity—10 times more.

Do you know who hates that? The natural gas industry.

Do you know who gave half a billion dollars to Donald Trump? The natural gas industry.

And what was the promise that they wanted back from him? We will kill the solar industry. We will kill the wind industry. We will kill all of those industries that are an existential threat to our business model.

And we are now living with the consequences of that.

So just let me repeat that for the fossil fuel apologists: New solar is cheaper than simply operating an existing coal-burning plant in our country. Onshore wind is half the cost of building new gas plants.

This isn't about ideology. This is just about arithmetic. It is not complicated. It is cheaper to do onshore wind.

And yet Trump and Republicans are failing basic arithmetic. Now, this is

not trigonometry. This is not calculus. This is not algebra. This is just arithmetic. It is very simple.

We were in an energy crisis already before the war because of AI data centers, which are demanding record electricity, while Trump and Republicans have done everything possible to destroy American-made cheap, clean energy, leaving Americans dependent on the expensive fossil fuels, whose prices are now skyrocketing.

And now we are in an even bigger crisis. Trump may be crushing American manufacturing, but he sure is good at manufacturing an energy price hike for every American, every small business in our country.

We have to invest in true independence: electric and fuel-efficient vehicles; cheap, clean, energy and battery storage made in the United States; and energy efficient technologies that do more with less.

And do you know what Trump says? Oh, that is all socialism. That is socialism for wind and solar, tax breaks for all-electric vehicles. That is socialist.

Well, what do you call 100 years of tax breaks for the oil, gas, and coal industry? I call that socialism. And all we are asking for is some of that socialism for the competitive technologies that have been attacked and stopped for 100 years by the fossil fuel industry. That is all we are asking for, and that is what we have been denied.

And that is why they don't want to have any hearings. That is why they don't want to discuss what is going on in the Persian Gulf. That is why they don't want to discuss the Strait of Hormuz. That is why they don't want to discuss how we are hostage to the price of energy that comes out of the Middle East.

And the only way to break that dependence is with solar and wind and all-electric vehicles that don't need any fossil fuels whatsoever.

But because of Trump, because of the Republicans—they voted on this floor, last July, to kill all of those industries—kill them. They don't want to have that discussion right now. They know that they would be on the defensive. They know they would be backing away from the microphones while they try to explain why they would kill something that would actually break our dependence upon imported oil, break our dependence upon natural gas, break our dependence upon coal.

And, by the way, we do import oil into the United States. The Presiding Officer may not know that, but it is coming in from Canada. It is coming in from Mexico. It is coming in from Venezuela.

Just so you know, Mr. President—sometimes, it is a bulletin to you that we are part of a global oil marketplace that you are part and parcel of.

Foreign dictators and authoritarian regimes cannot stop the Sun from shining or the wind from blowing, but they can disrupt oil and gas supplies. Electricity generated by the solar panels

can't get stuck in the Strait of Hormuz. Electricity generated by our offshore wind plants can't be bombed by drones in Kuwait.

The SAVE America Act—the “Steal the Election of 2026 Act”—is a classic “shock and awe.” Trump is trying to distract us from the cost he has created by bombing Iran—costing lives, costing hundreds of billions to fund his war, and costing us at the pump, at the airport, and at the grocery store.

And he has just become so desperate—so fearful that he is going to lose—that he is absolutely willing to suppress the vote of especially minority voters in our country because he knows that, otherwise, he will probably lose in Georgia, he will probably lose in Ohio this fall, and that we will have a revolution that is heading his way.

So that is what this is all about here today. It is millionaires and billionaires, greedy corporate executives, corrupt cronies against the voters.

And that is why the Democrats are not going to go away. We are going to stand up. We are going to fight. We are going to make sure that the American people understand what is at stake right now and why we cannot allow the Republicans, the MAGA base, and President Trump to pass this legislation because it would fundamentally be the end of democracy in our country.

And how do I know that? Trump says it himself that he would suppress the votes to an extent where they would never lose an election again.

So that is where we are. It is a moment in history. There is a nostalgia that some people have for a past that never existed, instead of the ideals which we need—to fight for the poor and the sick and the elderly and the immigrant communities, because for them the past is just a memory, and the future is their hard reality.

And that is what we are standing here today to fight to protect—the protections for their hard reality—and that can only be protected if we stop the SAVE Act, if we stop the “Steal This Election Act,” if we stop the “Save Our Asses Act,” which the Republicans are seeking to pass on the Senate floor today.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I rise to join my colleagues to oppose the attempt by the President and his allies in Congress to effectively disenfranchise millions of Americans through their so-called SAVE America Act. But more than that, I rise to join my fellow Granite Staters and the majority of freedom-loving Americans to ask a question more fundamental.

I have strong issues with this legislation, which I will discuss, but more than any provision, what I object to today is what this move to make it harder for more citizens of all ages to vote reveals about the President, the President's undemocratic impulse—an impulse that dominates and motivates

this President in a way that distinguishes him from all of his predecessors.

In short, I rise today because I believe that it is worth asking: Why is it that the leader of the free world, the President of the world's greatest democracy, is so invested in spending his truly precious time making it harder for Americans to vote?

In the “Live Free or Die” State, we know that elections serve as the best means to hold elected leaders to account. In other words, elections are the very basis of self-government of, by, and for the people. That is the basic compact in a democracy. If a leader fails to deliver on his promises, fails to govern well, or fails in conduct or character, then citizens use their votes to hold him to account and vote him out.

That is what makes a democracy different. We have the means to self-correct and to improve, unlike any other form of government.

Democracy is the best form of government, not because we have always been perfect but because we always have the capacity to be more perfect.

With each generation, we have worked to more fully realize our Declaration of Independence's promise. The right to vote has steadily expanded until it was finally bestowed upon all Americans.

We have had setbacks along the way. Progress has often been slower than we would like. But the majority of Americans have understood, as President Kennedy said, that democracy is not “a final achievement” but “an untiring effort.” And it has always been an effort that required nothing less than what our Founders pledged: the lives, fortunes, and sacred honors of each generation of Americans.

But it appears that this President thinks that America's great democratic experiment has gone too far, that far too many Americans are making their voices heard for his liking.

Over the course of our history, we have had Presidents disagree on just about every issue. But in our modern history, ever since we passed critical civil rights and voting rights legislation, Presidents in both parties have agreed that our country's operation as a democracy is nonnegotiable, and that we are all better off when more and more Americans vote.

Now, though, we have the first President in these modern times who is trying to make it harder for eligible voters to vote.

President Trump's anti-voting crusade raises a fundamental question: Why is the President of the world's greatest democracy so invested in making it harder for Americans to vote?

Well, the answer is simple. The President wants fewer Americans to vote because he is the first President in American history who does not believe that he is accountable to them, the American people—“we the people”—because only a President who believes that he

is not accountable to the people would try to restrict the people's ability to hold him to account.

Leaders who believe that they answer to "we the people" do not try to overrule the people's voice and the people's vote by seeking to overturn a free and fair election.

Leaders who believe that they answer to the people do not try to silence free speech. They don't use the heavy hand of government to drive critics off the airwaves because they made jokes that the President doesn't like.

Leaders who believe that they answer to the people don't use the Justice Department and the FBI to exact revenge on their political foes. They don't seek to extend the long arm of the law into an iron fist of injustice.

Leaders who believe that they answer to the people don't defy court orders. They don't disregard the Constitution; nor do they ignore laws passed by the people's representatives and snatch from their hands the powers of the purse, taking away the people's money.

They don't send our heroes in uniform into harm's way without the people's consent nor do they launch trade wars against our own allies on the basis of nothing but their own ego and whim. They don't revel in power and self-aggrandizement nor do their references to dictators drip with admiration.

And let us be very clear. Leaders who believe that they answer to "we the people," leaders who believe that they are accountable to the people and who understand that it is freedom and democracy that make America great—they don't incite a mob to storm the Capitol—to storm this very Chamber to stop the peaceful transfer of power; to stop the count and silence the votes of the American people, and they certainly don't spend their first day on the job pardoning the mob of convicted criminals who stormed the Capitol and assaulted brave police officers.

Take these actions each as one or take them all together. Everyone in this body knows that not only has no other President behaved this way but that no one can describe these acts as resembling anything close to patriotism, not in a country that loves freedom as much as ours does.

The President of the United States of America is supposed to embody our love of freedom, of American democracy, but, today, it is an open question as to whether this President actually believes in democracy and the consent of the governed. This shouldn't be a question that any American even has to consider, but we are compelled to consider it today.

So, look. We can pretend that this is politics as usual, but all of my colleagues know that no President in our modern history—if ever, up until now—has possessed such a stark anti-democratic impulse or has been so disdainful of the people's voices or of our laws and liberties when they run counter to his own will.

For those who disagree, I direct you to the walls and windows around this great building that are scarred by bullet holes from just 5 years ago that remind us otherwise.

It is worth noting that the only reason the SAVE America Act—this legislation to purge voters that the President doesn't like from the rolls—that the only reason it is even on the floor is that the President won't give up on the lie that the 2020 election was stolen, and he is continuing this same singularly dishonorable brand of lies as we head into this year's midterm. What the majority in this body is doing, therefore, is nothing short of a large, elaborate, expensive bit of legislative play-acting—all because there appear to be no people in the President's orbit to find the courage to summon the words: I am sorry, Mr. President, but you are wrong. That unwillingness to speak truth to power is how lies become truths and how bills that are nothing less than solutions in search of a problem get written.

Now, the President can delude himself. That doesn't mean that the rest of us have to do so as well. There are legitimate debates to be had about election reforms, including voter ID laws, but not when the laws are seemingly designed by legislators to discourage or bar people from voting, not when the law is passed upon the orders of a President, as he himself has said, as the means to win a midterm election.

My colleagues have spoken at length about the details of this bill, so I won't spend too long relitigating them here.

In short, this bill would require all voters to register using either their birth certificates or their passports. Now, only half of Americans even have a passport. It has been estimated that 3.8 million American citizens do not currently have either of these documents in their possession. To put that number in perspective, a bit more than 826,000 Granite Staters voted in the last Presidential election. So this bill says that a great swath of American citizens—close to five times the number of total votes cast in New Hampshire in the last election—shouldn't be allowed to vote next time. What is more, this bill would virtually end absentee voting as we know it, which is how one in three American citizens votes. That is tens of millions of Americans.

Who are these Americans whose liberties the President would effectively dispense with?

Well, they are both Democrats and Republicans. Many are older Americans. Some have long since lost their birth certificates and don't do the kind of traveling that requires passports. Some have chronic conditions with disabilities that require them to vote by mail. Some are people who work 12-hour shifts or who have long commutes to their jobs. Others are veterans who are as patriotic as any American alive but who spend most of their time at home these days, living in the country, far from the nearest polling place, and

they have been voting by mail longer than some in this body have even been alive.

In the end, all of them are Americans, and their right to vote is sacred. It was won through sacrifice and wars abroad and given renewed meaning at places like Seneca Falls and Selma here at home.

Should the so-called SAVE America Act pass and be signed into law, fewer Americans—people who have worked hard and paid their taxes their whole lives—will be able to vote than before. It will be harder for a substantial number of Americans to vote.

If this bill is enacted, there will be more Americans who, in practice, will have less of a voice in our democracy. They will be less free. The number of Americans who will lose their ability to vote may well be in the millions. Perhaps some will eventually find a way to jump through all the new legal hoops and cut through all the redtape and get their ballots in. Even if it becomes a relatively few number who remain unable to navigate these new barriers, we are still talking about law-abiding, tax-paying Americans who will lose their ability to vote—even as citizens of the world's greatest democracy.

If this bill passes, it will also represent an enormous deviation in our history. Our country's progress has been marked by a history in which more and more Americans—Americans in each ensuing generation—have gained the right to vote; but if this legislation passes, President Trump will be the first President to turn that progress back—to work to restrict the right to vote—and to take it away, in practice, from a great swath of Americans. Among those impacted, in particular, will be women. This bill makes it harder for women to register to vote should they have changed their names when they married—names that will be different from what appears on their birth certificates.

Now, perhaps this is a simple hurdle that the administration would move with great speed to help women resolve, but I cannot see myself extending the benefit of the doubt on the rights and freedoms of American women to an administration that has worked hard to take away a woman's most fundamental freedom—the freedom to make her own healthcare decisions.

This bill would also require all States to hand over their voter rolls, including names, addresses, and Social Security numbers, to the President. To do this under any administration would be a move that raises concern, but particularly with this administration, it would be an act of supreme recklessness.

Why should any American trust their Social Security number to an administration whose internet privacy standards involve leaking war plans over an insecure Signal chat?

To have one's personal information handled by the chaotic band of untrained, unchecked, and unprofessional political appointees who ran enterprises like DOGE would be as wise as to staff the local fire department with a brigade of arsonists.

So this bill is, on substance, exceedingly harmful and unjust. It should be rejected.

However, I return to my original question: With all of the challenges in the world, why this bill? Why now? Why is the President so determined to make it harder for Americans to vote?

I understand in a way why the President does not wish to be held accountable by the American people. It is that he has failed to deliver to the American people because, of course, in a democracy, at some point, a leader has to deliver. Autocrats don't.

Do you think, in Putin's Russia, that in the depths of the Kremlin somewhere, they are drawing up plans for measures similar to the Americans with Disabilities Act or the PACT Act?

Of course not. A dictator doesn't need to make people's lives better. There is no one to hold them to account. There is no one to push them to deliver.

But a democracy? A democracy is different. In a democracy, talk can win an election, but without results, a leader can lose a nation; and 1 year in, this President has lost the majority of Americans.

The President came into office with big promises—boasts, really—about how he would singlehandedly bring down high costs. Now, of course, I disagree with the President strongly on many issues, and I didn't vote for him, but I was willing to and continue to be willing on a bipartisan basis to find ways to work with my colleagues in the Senate to help bring relief to American families, but President Trump has chosen a very different course.

The President is trying to silence the votes and voices of the American people because he doesn't want to be held to account, because he thinks he is above the people, and he does not want to hear what they have to say. He does not want to hear that this is not a nation entering a golden age; that instead, to paraphrase Thomas Paine some 250 years after he first coined the phrase: Our Nation is entering a time that tries citizens' souls.

We are entering a new American crisis. It is a crisis of costs. The American people have been clamoring for relief—relief from high grocery bills and energy costs, relief from high rent and steep mortgages, relief from a healthcare system that forces families to choose between being sick and dying or being healthy and in debt.

Our country was already in an affordability crisis, but the President, rather than solving problems, has made it worse. He chose—he chose—to take away healthcare from millions of Americans. He chose to make pre-

miums surge for tens of millions more. He did all of this while giving billionaires a tax break. Some people call this tax break unpaid for, but in some ways, it is worse. The tax breaks for billionaires will be paid for. They will be paid for by our children, who will be burdened with trillions in debt, and they will be paid for by every person who gets sick who might have been healthy had the President not taken away their healthcare—a toll summarized less on budget sheets and more on the faces of loved ones in hospital waiting rooms.

Americans want to go to the grocery store without grimacing at the cash register, but the President has launched senseless trade wars against our allies and imposed illegal and costly tariffs that have made everything more expensive. Virtually every entrepreneur I talk to in New Hampshire has felt the burden of tariffs one way or another. Some businesses have closed their doors altogether.

These trade wars should be a reminder to my Republican colleagues that a politics that exists simply to flatter the President's ego does not come without a cost, and it is a cost borne by the people to whom he has sworn an oath to serve. Now the costs of this Presidency have become even higher as gas prices surge. It is as if the President is searching for new ways to make life less affordable.

The truth is simple: It costs more to be an American under President Trump. The American people asked for lower costs. The President, instead, gave them a steeper bill.

It is no surprise that a man who has only made the crisis of high costs even worse under his watch does not wish to answer to the people. He can lie about stolen elections. It is harder to lie about the numbers Americans see printed on the very receipts that they hold in their hands.

Under this President, we are also awash in the crisis of corruption. While Americans lose more of their paychecks to high costs and tariffs, the President rakes in billions in exchange for political favors because, in Donald Trump's America, it is easier for someone rich to buy a pardon than it is for millions of Americans to afford to buy their prescriptions.

Perhaps the cause of most alarm is that we face a crisis as a country because the President has realized that he is at his strongest when America is most divided. There are great and challenging things that we need to do as a country—a new 21st century economy to build, costs to bring down, diseases to cure, veterans to care for—but we can do none of these things because we have to fight to keep our heads above water in floods of the President's own making and because the President tries to get us to spend our days fighting each other.

I am not surprised that the President doesn't want to be held accountable by the people. I am not surprised that the President wants fewer Americans to

vote because, on his watch, our country has become less affordable, our people less healthy, our world more chaotic, our government more corrupt, and our people more angry. Of course he doesn't want to hear what the American people have to say.

So, yes, it is deeply telling that in this moment of American crisis—both self-inflicted by this administration and otherwise—President Trump has decided that above all else, the most important priority is not to bring down people's costs or make their lives better; it is to try to restrict their right to vote.

What, ultimately, does the President's obsessive focus on trying to pass this bill above all others truly reveal? Sometimes it is as simple as it appears: The President wants to pass into law a bill that will allow fewer Americans to vote because he actually wants fewer Americans to vote.

It was President Reagan who said that "the right to vote is the crown jewel of American liberties, and we will not see its luster diminished." We shall find out soon if his words remain true.

The American people—they have always known how precious the right to vote is. The American people—they will wait in long lines even on a cold November morning to vote. But they will do more than just that. They will join the suffragists and rally and petition and do whatever it takes until the ballot belongs to America's daughters and not just her sons. Americans will fill out their ballots while stationed at a foreign post—in trenches in France or the jungles of the Pacific—and ship them back home as soon as they can just so they make sure their vote gets counted, casting their ballots halfway across the world as they fight to ensure that others can have the freedom to vote at all.

Americans won't just stand in line at a polling station to vote; they will march to vote, even if it means going down to Selma, just as Granite Staters from Saint Anselm College did when they joined Dr. King's marchers, even if it means trying to cross a bridge three times, even if it means enduring Bloody Sunday.

Voting is not just an American right; it is an American habit; it is an American prayer.

We do all this because most Americans understand what the President does not—that voting is the most American thing anyone can do.

I oppose the SAVE America Act because of its provisions, yes, but what I object to the most about this bill to restrict the right to vote is what it says about the current state of the American Presidency and our democracy. That an American President would try to pass this bill is an outrage.

Rather than work to pass this bill, the President would instead be wise to remember the words of his great predecessor Abraham Lincoln, who said:

In leaving the people's business in their own hands, we cannot be wrong.

This law has been called the SAVE America Act. It is a striking name to me because when I think of when America has needed to be saved, I think of our determination to be saved from British tyranny in our fight for independence; our need to be saved from the Depression or economic hardship; from disunion or division. But apparently this President thinks that America needs to be saved from her own voters, that America needs to be saved from “we the People.”

I also think it is worth noting what the SAVE America Act will not save. It will not save American families from paying more for their groceries or at the pump. It will not save the small business that has had to close its doors because the President decided to launch senseless trade wars against our friends. It will not save a young couple money on their downpayment when they are trying to buy their first home—not as long as we have a President who would rather build monuments to honor his name than help our country build more homes that people can afford to live in. It will not save a single American from pricey healthcare premiums, nor will it save the future lives lost to diseases that could have been treated had the President not fired America’s best doctors and researchers. It will not save our children from burdensome debt tomorrow to pay for tax giveaways to billionaires today. It will not save America from the dangers of dictators like Vladimir Putin, whom the President still vainly tries to appease.

But more than that, this law won’t save America from the flames of division that the President so often fans, from the meanness and coarseness that he revels in. It will not save America from the march of extremism or the grip of conspiracy. It will not save us from more discouraging broadcasts of the nightly news, of watching our supposed leaders with disbelief, of wondering just how much higher prices will soar. It won’t save a young girl who wanted to get involved in public service, wanted to help her country, from becoming disillusioned when she sees what happens in Washington these days, from wondering if our country’s politics can offer anything of promise or if only cynicism reigns. It will not save an old veteran from shaking his head and asking what yet might happen to his country he loves, in whose service he risked so much.

This law, in short, won’t save our fellow Americans—certainly not from high costs. It will not save America. This law seeks to save nothing but the President’s political fortunes. Because, in the end, one does not save America by ensuring that fewer Americans vote. One cannot save America by making America less free.

Does this body wish to save America? to learn to become a country once more? to do great things together once more? The answer remains what it has always been: Don’t restrict the right to

vote. Don’t turn to answers from the would-be strongman. Instead, leave the saving to the “we the people” and put it in their hands. When we do that, truly, as Lincoln said, we cannot be wrong, and we cannot go wrong.

I suggest the absence of a quorum. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MORENO). Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF MARKWAYNE MULLIN

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, in just a few moments, this body will vote for the next Secretary of Homeland Security. It happens to be a friend of mine. His name is MARKWAYNE MULLIN.

MARKWAYNE MULLIN is the pride of Westville, OK, which—ironically enough—is the easternmost town in our State. On a normal day, there are more people inside the U.S. Capitol than there are in all of Westville, OK. But it is a bunch of really nice folks that work really hard, and MARKWAYNE MULLIN has risen from being a country boy in a cow-calf operation with his dad, running a very small plumbing company, to now being nominated, and tonight being confirmed as our next Secretary of Homeland Security.

He graduated from Stilwell High School, but the most important thing wasn’t his graduation from Stilwell High School. It is the girl that he met in the third grade.

In the third grade, he fell in love with Christie, and they waited all the way until she was 18 and he was 19 before they got married. And now, decades later and six children later, that proud family will now be the lead family to be able to serve to keep every family safe in the country.

Responsibility at Homeland Security is dramatic. There are a quarter million Federal employees that work for the Department of Homeland Security. It is a massive operation, and it is incredibly important to our country.

And I think he will be a terrific leader for it. He not only loves our country, but he is passionate about security.

He served in the House of Representatives for a decade and has now served in this body for 3 years. He has spent a lot of time on the issues of national security. He has done a lot of research in that area.

He has worked to be able to pass the bills that actually fund Homeland Security, and now he will be the one to actually implement those same bills.

So he is keenly aware of the law and the issues that he will actually be carrying out.

Interestingly enough, MARKWAYNE MULLIN is a member of the Cherokee Nation. He is actually the second Senator ever to serve in this body that is a member of the Cherokee Nation, but there has not been a Cherokee that has

actually been in the Senate for more than two decades.

The Cherokee Nation leadership sent in a letter with their overwhelming support for him and for what he has done and his awareness of the Tribal issues, as well as just national issues and family issues.

He has been my friend, and we have worked side by side on a lot of issues.

I will never forget, multiple years ago, with my wife and MARKWAYNE and his wife Christie—the four of us—sitting down for a dinner in a quiet place in a booth in the middle of a restaurant, just to talk, because MARKWAYNE was thinking about saying, “I am done with all of this chaos that is in Congress,” and he was actually praying through what to do next.

And it was over that dinner that the four of us just talked and visited, prayed together, and he determined: I am going to stay at it because there is more work to be done.

And I am glad he did.

In the days ahead, the Nation will be glad that he did because I think he will make a fantastic Secretary of Homeland Security.

As we approach this moment, I can’t help but also note a challenge that he is going to walk into on day one, because when he walks in tomorrow morning into a new office, into a new role, and being sworn in, there will not be funding for the people around him. The staff that will be there, working alongside him, won’t have been paid for more than a month.

And this is not an anomaly for them. As of this week, half of the fiscal year, Homeland Security employees have not been paid—half of the fiscal year. They faced 43 days without any paycheck, and they are at 37 days now. Half of the year, they have not been paid. As of this week, it will be six paychecks that they have either lost entirely or partially.

This body has the responsibility to solve this problem. And as MARKWAYNE steps in to be able to lead so capably in Homeland Security, it is the responsibility of this body to be able to make sure that Homeland Security actually has the funding that it needs to be able to protect the Nation.

So my expectation is twofold tonight: One is that we will confirm my friend MARKWAYNE MULLIN, and he will be the next Secretary. And the other one is that soon we will finish this argument, and we will resolve our differences. And so the fine folks that work at Homeland Security, in all areas, whether it be Coast Guard, Secret Service, whether it be FEMA, whether it be TSA—yes, even ICE and Customs and Border Protection—wherever they may be, that their families can also reap the benefit of their service by actually getting a paycheck—what a novel idea.

Let’s finish the task tonight.

I yield the floor.