

it. They made fun of it. They said it was gaudy and imperial, but really it was nothing like that. In fact, most Americans saw the ballroom as a return to grace. Finally, the White House would have a beautiful place to gather a lot of people, fitting of the important role for our Nation's most famous building to bring people together in an even more beautiful place than what it already is.

I am glad that President Trump is making Washington, DC, and the White House even more beautiful than what it was before, but, tragically, DC is also home to some of the ugliest buildings that you can find anywhere. They are some of the ugliest buildings certainly that I have ever seen, and it is because we allow brutalism to infect our Nation's Capital. Brutalism is an architectural style that emerged in the 1950s.

Brutalist buildings all look alike because they are all alike. They are made out of raw concrete. They are big blocks of raw concrete, and they are ugly because of that. They look like they are built on top of each other.

In fact, the J. Edgar Hoover Building the home of the FBI is an ugly brutalist disaster. The Hubert Humphrey Building home to the Department of Health and Human Services looks straight out of a communist, nightmarish block. In fact, Dr. Ben Carson who used to serve in that building referred to it as "10 floors of basement," is what he called it.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development is another awful building. These brutalist buildings have no place in our Nation's Capital because our country is not ugly. Actually, Dr. Carson served in the HUD building, and he called that 10 floors of basement.

We deserve to be inspired by the buildings around us, not depressed by them. The buildings that we build leave an impact on all of us. The question to ask is, How did we get here? How did we allow a cult of ugliness to take over large parts of the United States?

And make no mistake, this didn't happen by accident. Cultural elites did this on purpose. They made our world uglier because when you do that, you change what citizens expect from public life. A world that looks ugly produces a culture that only sees ugliness.

That is why the targets of the ugliness were often Federal and civic buildings. When official government business takes place in ugly buildings, the citizens lose belief in their government's goodness. But I am telling you, because of President Trump's Executive order and the bill that I have introduced, we can really change that one building at a time.

President Trump is leading the charge with his White House renovations and his Making Federal Architecture Beautiful Again Executive order, and President Trump is making our country great and beautiful again. And

that is why it is really important that we pass my bill the Beautifying Federal Civic Architecture Act.

We need to make sure that classical and traditional architecture are the preferred design preferences for all Federal buildings and that residents have a say in the types of buildings that are built in their communities. Elitist architects shouldn't be allowed to steamroll over regular Americans and force anti-American building designs on all of us.

Our country is beautiful. Our country is the greatest country on Earth in the history of the world, and we owe it to ourselves and our children to build beautiful buildings that reflect who we really are as a country.

And sure, maybe sometimes building beautiful buildings will cost more than building ugly ones—I will grant you that—but beautiful buildings last. They are transcendent; it is worth it. That is what our country deserves, especially this great country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHMITT). The Senator from Virginia.

#### SUDAN

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I come before you today to mark the third anniversary and, unfortunately, the start of the fourth year of conflict of the war in Sudan.

Sudan is home to the largest humanitarian and displacement crisis in the whole world. This conflict and the resulting humanitarian crisis are largely being ignored by people across the world, including in our country, who are best positioned to make a difference.

The war in Sudan started because a few years back, one of the most brutal dictators of the 20th century was actually overthrown by civil society and young people in Sudan looking for a better country. It was an effort to move toward a democracy, but that move was suddenly halted by two generals, each of a separate warring party and, unfortunately, fueled by external actors.

The violence in Sudan has caused upwards of 15 million people to flee their homes—a quarter of the population—and has left literally half of the country's 50 million people on the brink of starvation and acute hunger. Yet, still now 3 years in—and I understand how they feel—the Sudanese people feel basically forgotten by the world.

Now, I have come to the floor previously to speak out on this issue, and I rise again today because this conflict cannot continue to be ignored. America must lead, not back away, in times like these when suffering and terror are at their peak.

At the heart of this crisis is the ongoing violence between the Sudanese Armed Forces—remnants of the previous government—called the SAF, and the Rapid Support Forces—another militia group—both fighting against each

other for control of the country. It is estimated that the fighting and resulting food crisis may have killed more than 100,000 Sudanese and left millions more on the verge of starvation.

The remarkable thing is that there are no good guys here. Both the SAF and the RSF have inflicted horrible atrocities on the people of Sudan. The U.S. Government has accused members of both SAF and the RSF of war crimes, while in January of last year, the State Department issued a determination that genocide had literally been committed by the RSF and its allied militias in the Darfur region of Sudan.

The World Food Programme, which we are huge supporters of, has declared a famine in parts of southern and western Sudan, and there is a high risk of this famine condition spreading across the balance of the country.

Sudan's economy has collapsed. Unemployment now is close to 50 percent of the whole population. A generation of children risk being denied education because of how dangerous it is to even go to school.

Conditions, unfortunately, may actually get worse. We have seen the war in Iran dramatically disrupt fuel and fertilizer shipments—particularly devastating as Sudan enters what should be its planting season in coming months. Globally, the United Nations has warned that the impacts stemming from these fuel, fertilizer, and supply chain disruptions would place more than, again, 45 million people in Sudan at risk of acute hunger.

Let's be clear. This is a catastrophe. In fact, more people die every day in Sudan than Gaza and Ukraine combined.

It is not a new issue. I pushed the Biden administration repeatedly. But the U.S. response in addressing the scale of suffering that we see remains, unfortunately, woefully inadequate.

First and foremost, the Sudanese people need humanitarian aid. They need aid workers, humanitarian organizations. And the local Sudanese volunteers, many who put their lives at risk on a daily basis, need the access to respond.

Unfortunately, the current administration dismantled USAID and the broader U.S. foreign assistance infrastructure, so there is no clear and coordinated diplomatic strategy for addressing this conflict, for rallying the international community, for coordinating with local responders and organizations on the ground.

Now, because of the war with Iran, foreign policy choices risk dramatically worsened conditions. When we dismantled USAID and the funding of the administration, we literally had a situation where American food and medicine that we had paid for were sitting on ships in the port of Sudan, and the workers that were literally paid a dollar or two a day to take that food and distribute it, because we shut down USAID, were left without any distribution network. So in some cases, this

extraordinarily valuable food and medicine literally rotted on the ships.

Due to the absence of strong U.S. leadership in addressing this conflict and the fact that the international bodies have not been coordinated, there has been an opening here for outside influence. Foreign entities and governments are backing their surrogates on each side in a way that is, again, chilling.

In my State, in Virginia, we have a large Sudanese diaspora. Since the conflict began, I have sat with and heard from many members of that community, and it is clear what must be done.

I still remember a young family. Literally, they were in their late twenties. They had to rush and leave the country because the civil war was breaking out. They left behind at that point, I think, their 6-month-old daughter. Three years later, their aging parents are not really able to take care of that daughter, who is now 3½ years old. The parents have not seen the daughter in 3 years, and they have no idea what will happen to her on a going-forward basis.

The Sudanese people did not ask for this war. As I mentioned at the outset, the outbreak of this violence and this civil war between these warring generals, warring groups trying to divide the spoils of the country, came literally 4 years after pro-democracy protests swept parts of Sudan in 2019.

In 2019, literally the young people of Sudan overthrew al-Bashir, the previous dictator who had been around for close to 40 years. What happened was there were literally hundreds of civic, professional, and political organizations that came together at that moment in the revolution—this was a people's revolution—and they thought that after the long term of this dictator, they might finally have civil liberties and an actual democracy.

I believe very strongly that the Sudanese people deserve an opportunity to live in peace and to have a responsive, democratically elected government that incorporates civil society, women, and youth. Instead, we have some of our allies in the region—Saudi Arabia backing one side and the Emirates backing another. Because of this divide, you now have other countries, like Russia and Iran, coming in to try to make more mischief and try to bring about more hardships.

Again, I urge all of us on both sides of the aisle to do more about this crisis in Sudan. I urge the administration to go forward and choose an envoy in the way the Biden administration had chosen former Congressman Tom Perriello. Please choose an envoy that can represent the President. This is a conflict by which the President of the United States, with the enormous influence he has with countries in the gulf, could use that power to, frankly, cut off the aid that funds this civil war tomorrow.

As we enter the fourth year of this conflict, please, regardless of partisan affiliation, we all ought to urge Presi-

dent Trump to make sure this conflict comes to an end so that, at the end of the day, the Sudanese people, whether they are in Sudan or are part of the diaspora around the world, can actually live in peace, have a government that reflects their needs, have a country that is blessed with lots of natural resources, and can actually enjoy the potential prosperity that was promised—that held out that hope—back in 2019 when young people overthrew the prior dictatorship. We should no longer allow this crisis to go unheard or unrecognized. Part of the problem is that, unfortunately, the country has barred a lot of the international press.

I urge any of my colleagues, as there are Sudanese diasporas in every State in our country, to meet with those communities, to hear their stories, to hear their struggles.

You know, again, there are no good guys in this battle between these warring factions. American leadership could bring this war to an end. It would go a great deal toward restoring people's trust around the world of the value of strong, moral American leadership.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

#### DIRECT FILE ACT

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, it is tax day, April 15—the anti-holiday.

This tax day, in particular, is a tough one. Tax day 2026 is a reminder that Donald Trump and Republicans will put the interests of giant corporations ahead of the interests of typical Americans. There is no clearer example of Trump corruption in practice than betraying taxpayers and killing the Direct File Program as a favor to his allies.

Here is what this is all about: When it comes to taxes, Democrats start with the proposition that for the vast majority of Americans—wage-earning workers whose taxes really aren't complicated—filing your taxes ought to be free and easy. Our view is you shouldn't have to pay a penny to perform your basic civic duty.

That is why, back in 2022, after years of hard work, we passed funding for the IRS to build a Direct File Program, a way for taxpayers to file directly with the IRS online for free. The IRS launched a pilot project for 2024. They expanded it in 2025. Hundreds of thousands of people used Direct File. It was hugely popular—in effect, a beloved program. A lot of people are skeptical that the government is still capable of building useful things. Direct File proved the skeptics wrong. It proved that the Federal Government can still come up with great public services from the ground up.

Well, the tax prep giants saw it as a threat, and over the years, I saw them spend millions to try to defend the status quo that was failing. The prep giants unleashed a tidal wave of lobbying

to try to squash the program before it reached escape velocity. They found some willing partners in Republicans here. Going into this year, Trump and Republicans killed Direct File. Millions of Americans should have had an opportunity to use it to file for free, but now, they are back at the mercy of the tax prep companies.

The Republicans who killed Direct File say it is no big deal because there are other free options out there, programs that partner with the private companies. The reality is that tax prep companies have already demonstrated they can't be trusted. The worst example was with Intuit. When Intuit was involved with the Free File Program, it was caught burying the free option on a website you couldn't find with a traditional search engine. It steered users toward options that battered them with upcharges and misleading marketing. Finally, they quit offering Free File when they got called out on what were genuinely underhanded tactics.

My view is, the debate over this subject isn't that complicated. The government requires people to file and pay taxes, so the least the government can do is to make the filing process simple and free and as painless as possible. Donald Trump and Republicans don't agree because they destroyed a wonderful, new public service when they shut down Direct File.

My Finance Committee colleague Senator WARREN has been a terrific partner and a champion of Direct File. I have enjoyed working with her over the years on this critical issue. I am behind her effort 100 percent as the ranking Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee to revive Direct File. We are not going to let this go no matter how long it takes, and I urge all of my colleagues here in the Senate—as it used to be bipartisan—to support Direct File.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

#### DIRECT FILE ACT

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, today is tax day. Today is a day when millions and millions of Americans file their returns. On average, Americans spend about \$270 and 13 hours preparing their taxes for filing. That is just nuts. That is a higher expense and a higher amount of time than millions of Americans should be spending. Look, for people who have complex holdings and lots of economic interests, that is one thing, but for tens of millions of Americans, the Federal Government already has all of their critical data, and their tax filings should be quick and free.

The simple idea behind a bill that I am cosponsoring with Senator ELIZABETH WARREN the Direct File Act is that there ought to be a program. In fact, there used to be a program. Congress told the IRS several years ago to create a way for Americans to file their taxes quickly, simply, and for free, and