

And then there is the massive infrastructure cliff we are about to barrel over because the bipartisan infrastructure law that we passed about 5 years ago included tens of billions of dollars each year for key nondefense programs. Those programs and funds have supplemented our annual appropriations in an absolutely critical way. Those funds run out in September. We are talking about resources to repair our roads and bridges, expand public transit, lower energy costs, create jobs, and invest in communities across this country—all gone in the blink of an eye.

You know how many pages Trump spends planning to address that in his budget? Zero. None. That is unacceptable, and we cannot fail to address this infrastructure cliff and increase domestic investments that help families and put our communities first.

And as we know, meanwhile, inflation is squeezing families across the board. Electric bills are going up. Tariffs have sent grocery prices higher and higher. Childcare is expensive, hard to find, and healthcare premiums are skyrocketing.

In the face of all of that, we have to put more resources into helping people out, not funding Trump's wars abroad. Do Republicans really want to give Trump's warmongering a blank check while giving families the short end of the stick? Because that is the basic pitch that Trump has made.

The problem with Trump's budget are many, but it does boil down to this: Trump would rob our families to pay for war while still burdening our grandkids with mountains of debt. And for what? To make defense contractors rich? To buy more bombs that Trump can threaten to end civilization with?

We should be building bridges here in America, not destroying them in Iran. We should be lower costs here in America, not waging wars that send prices through the roof. We should be fighting a war against cancer, not another war in the Middle East. We should be investing in our working families, not funding whatever new war Trump decides to start.

So as we now start our appropriations process for fiscal year 2027, I am going to be pressing Trump's Cabinet about these backward priorities. As for the previous fiscal years, I hope my colleagues on the Appropriations Committee can do what we do best: Come together, write commonsense bills that put the priorities of American families first and our communities first.

As I said when I started, we are nearly there on Homeland Security funding, and we got this far despite the obstacles because we have worked so closely in a bipartisan fashion to focus on what is important, what is needed, and truly what we can do best.

And I look forward to working with my colleagues as we start this process. And throughout it, I will be clear with my colleagues: I want to work with you, but we have to write funding bills that instead of slashing funding for our

families, we provide significant new investments in the American people, especially as we face major shortfalls, a fast-approaching IJA cliff, and rising prices that are hitting every family's budget.

And instead of writing a blank check for whatever war Trump wants to start next, we have to write here a measured, strategic defense budget focused on actually keeping our country safe.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

NORTH PLATTE CANTEEN

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, earlier this month, on April 1, 2026, we marked the 80th anniversary of the end of the North Platte Canteen. Now, Nebraskans know this story, and today I rise to make sure that the U.S. Senate knows it as well.

During World War II, a small town in West Central Nebraska became famous all across the country. In 1941, a few local women began bringing desserts to the soldiers who were stopping at North Platte's train station, and that simple act of kindness grew into a waiting room that was filled with sandwiches and coffee and cakes, all donated by volunteers from surrounding communities.

From Christmas Day 1941 to April of 1946, these Nebraskans met every single train that came through with food and with friendship. Each day, up to 32 trains rolled in, carrying thousands of uniformed servicemembers. As the war raged on, support poured in from communities across that region of my State. In just 1 month, the canteen received around 40,000 cookies, 30,000 hard-boiled eggs, 6,900 birthday cakes, and 28 pounds of sandwich meat.

Over the course of the war, more than 6 million soldiers passed through this canteen. The people of North Platte gave encouragement to our country's bravest, providing warmth and kindness to those headed to the frontlines during one of the darkest periods in modern history. They gave our soldiers a small but meaningful taste of home and of hope. I like to call it the origin of the saying "Nebraska Nice."

The Lincoln County Historical Museum has preserved this history for decades, including letters written by soldiers who passed through that station. These letters speak for themselves. Allow me to share two.

One soldier, who was writing from Fort Warren in Cheyenne, reached out to a young woman named Virginia Schlueter after meeting her at the station. He reminded her of who he was by recalling that he and his fellow Ohio-

ans had borrowed her lipstick to write down her address, and he noted that in 1,400 miles of travel, North Platte was the only town that had done a single thing for them.

Another soldier, Lyle Parks of Bay City, MI, wrote that most of the journey had been over flat, flat country, broken only by that one stop in North Platte. The town may not be large, he said, but the people there had big hearts and what they were doing was making a real difference for the morale of the men.

Those words were written by men on their way to war who were inspired by a small Nebraska town that simply decided to show up.

The North Platte Canteen was a remarkable volunteer effort. More than 55,000 people, nearly all of them women, kept it running, and those volunteers raised over \$137,000. That is worth more than \$2 million today. I am proud to say that one of those women was my mom, Florence Strobel. She was a new teacher. She moved from Lincoln to North Platte to teach kindergarten during the fall of 1944. She hadn't graduated yet from Teachers College at the University of Nebraska, but the dean of the college came up to her and said: North Platte needs a kindergarten teacher, Florence, so you better go. So she went out, and she proudly served among those canteen volunteers.

She would tell us wonderful stories of her time there greeting "the boys" on the troop trains and the wonderful volunteers that she met at the station. Her stories are part of why I am standing here today.

In honor of all of those 55,000 volunteers, I introduced the North Platte Canteen Congressional Gold Medal Act, and this bill would award a collective Congressional Gold Medal to every individual and community who volunteered at or donated to the canteen. This is the highest honor that Congress can bestow upon civilians. I am proud to have 53 cosponsors, and I ask my colleagues to join us as we work toward that 67 number that is needed for passage.

Eighty years later, the North Platte Canteen still speaks of something essential about who we are as Americans—no fanfare, no orders, just neighbors deciding that the men and women that were heading out to war deserved a warm meal, a kind word, and a piece of home.

I ask my colleagues to help us give these volunteers the place in American history that they have long deserved.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the quorum call be suspended.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

REMEMBERING CHRISTINA
HARRIS-JONES

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I was very sorry to hear of the death of Christina Harris-Jones, director of the Senate Employees' Child Care Center. By all accounts, Ms. Harris-Jones was exactly the kind of person you would want to head up a center like the SECCC: knowledgeable, dedicated, warm, and deeply committed to early childhood education. She joined the SECCC during a challenging time, while the repercussions of the COVID pandemic were still being felt, and provided a sense of stability and security for staff and parents alike.

During her tenure at the center, she enriched the resources the center provides with extracurriculars like music and gymnastics. She also focused on team enrichment, ensuring that her employees had access to professional development opportunities and promoting work-life balance. Above all, she made the center a place where you could feel comfortable dropping off your son or daughter in the mornings. My thoughts and prayers are with her loved ones and family, and most especially with her beloved daughter Christiana who, like her mom, serves Senate families at the SECCC.

REMEMBERING SAMUEL R.
HARRIS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the Hebrew phrase "l'dor v'dor" means "from generation to generation," and it is an important principle in the Jewish faith. This phrase describes the passage of beliefs, values, and traditions from parent to child, mentor to student. "L'dor v'dor" is a message of Jewish resilience, a testament to their continued spirit in the face of centuries of oppression. My friend Samuel R. Harris was the living embodiment of this maxim.

As one of the youngest survivors of the Holocaust, Sam dedicated his life to telling his story of growing up in Nazi-occupied Poland. Sam played an indispensable part in expanding Holocaust education in Illinois, where he helped create the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center. In doing so, Sam inspired thousands of people to stand up against hate, injustice, and oppression. Sam was a powerful force for good, and it is with deep sadness that I share the news of his passing.

Sam was born in Deblin, Poland, in 1935, as the youngest of seven children to an Orthodox Jewish family. His childhood before the war was filled with happiness and joy, but it would last only 4 short years before the Nazis invaded Poland in September 1939. Deblin was one of the locations where the Polish Air Force trained, which meant that it was a target for the Luftwaffe, who blanketed the city with bombs at the start of their invasion. Soon after, the Nazis arrived in Sam's town, where they terrorized and beat Jewish families. They evicted Sam's family from their home and forced them to live in one of the Nazi-created ghettos, designed to starve the Jewish population who inhabited them.

Sam lived in the ghetto until 1942, when the Nazis escalated their genocide campaign and began to round up families to be taken to extermination camps. As Sam walked with his parents toward the cattle car, his father pushed him out of the line so that Sam could escape execution. Sam ran and hid with his two sisters Rosa and Sara. Rosa, the oldest of the three, was forced to work in a labor camp outside of Deblin, and she smuggled Sam and Sara with her, as they were too young to survive on their own. Sam never saw his parents or his other siblings again; they were deported to the Treblinka extermination camp and murdered.

Sam and his two surviving siblings remained in Nazi concentration camps for nearly 3 years, where they were subject to daily abuse and torment. In January 1945, they were liberated by Russian soldiers, and soon after, Sam fled to Austria, then to America, arriving in Northbrook, IL, in 1947. When Sam arrived at his new home, he handed his adopted mother his suitcases and told her that he "never wanted to see his luggage again." Sam had hoped to leave his experience and trauma under Nazi occupation behind. As he went through high school and college, he never spoke about his childhood in Poland. Sam would go on to graduate from Grinnell College and build a successful career in the insurance industry. He met the love of his life Janice—"Dede"—and had two children Julie and David.

Sam had built a life for himself in America, but he could not leave his past behind. In the 1970s, the United States witnessed a resurgence in antisemitism, with the neo-Nazi marches in Skokie, IL, and Sam was increasingly encouraged by his family, friends, and other survivors to speak out about what he witnessed in Poland. Upon the insistence of Ernest Michel, Auschwitz survivor and Nuremberg Trials reporter, Sam became involved with the Illinois Holocaust Foundation. As Sam began to share his story, he took on a greater role in Holocaust education advocacy in Illinois. Sam pushed Illinois to become the first State in the Nation to make Holocaust education mandatory in public schools, which it did in 1990. He authored a memoir about his

experience and went on to teach thousands of students about what he went through as a Jewish person suffering under Nazi occupation.

Sam's most enduring accomplishment lies in the creation of the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center in Skokie, which opened its doors in 2009. Sam fought tirelessly for its construction, organizing donation drives, public interest, and governmental support. Before the creation of the new museum, the largest Holocaust education center in Illinois was barely equipped to handle 30,000 visitors in 1 year. Thanks to Sam, more than 100,000 students now visit Skokie every year to learn about the Holocaust and the importance of tolerance. The museum itself, while currently closed for renovations, is designed to contain a dark side, depicting Hitler's rise and the Nazi plans for the final solution, and a bright side, describing the joint resistance to Nazi fascism by Jewish and non-Jewish people alike.

In a way, the museum's format mirrors Sam's life. His childhood was filled with unimaginable pain and heartache, yet he never lost his faith in humanity. In his book, Sam wrote that "everyone has both good and bad [in them]. I choose to look at the good." Sam embodied this sentiment every day. He was filled with love for the people around him, and he spent his time on Earth committed to the idea that through education and learning we might bring out more of the good in people. In 2014, Sam won the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, one of America's most eminent awards, in honor of his resilience and his advocacy. Despite Sam's numerous awards and accomplishments, he maintained that the best thing to ever happen to him was his wife Dede. Loretta and I send our deepest condolences to Dede, Julie, and Sam's grandchildren Jessica and Jeremy.

Sam wrote at the end of his memoir that "good will prevail in the long run." Through sharing his story, his faith, and his unyielding optimism, Sam brought us closer to that reality. From generation to generation, Sam taught us the lessons of his past so that we may create a better future. May his memory be a blessing.

JOINT RESOLUTIONS OF
DISAPPROVAL

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, it is time to lead with diplomacy and negotiate an end to the war in Iran. This war has cost the lives of U.S. servicemembers, worsened the economic strains facing Americans, and spread instability across the Middle East.

At the same time, we need to focus on diplomacy to end the conflict in Lebanon and to preserve the possibility for Israel and the Palestinians to negotiate a two-state solution, which I have long supported.

At this time, I do not believe that providing bulldozer equipment and additional offensive weapons will help to