

This week, Republicans are delivering it.

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.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

The minority whip.

#### IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, remember the rallies? President Trump would stand up at the rallies and say: We are going to get rid of the “worst of the worst” criminals who managed to sneak into the United States in violation of our immigration laws—the rapists, the murderers, the terrorists, the criminally insane, those who are exploiting our children. That was his goal, stated over and over again.

But let’s look at the record. Earlier this month, in the midst of President Donald Trump’s mass deportation campaign, members of my staff traveled to Southwest Texas to conduct oversight of ICE’s Dilley family detention facility. ICE allowed my staff 2 hours—just 2 hours—for the entire visit and notified them of the limitation when they were en route to the facility.

What is ICE and this administration trying to conceal?

My staff’s visit uncovered serious issues. Let me tell you some of their findings.

If the Dilley detention facility sounds familiar, that is because that is where ICE held 5-year-old Liam Ramos, the boy in the blue bunny hat and the Spiderman backpack, whose image symbolizes this administration’s inhumane detention agenda as part of their gross deportation effort.

After public outcry and a Federal court order, 5-year-old Liam was released after 10 days, but that is not the outcome for many children being held at the Dilley ICE facility.

Hayam El Gamal and her five children—ranging in age from 5 to 18—have been held for nearly a year. That is believed to be the longest anyone has been detained during Trump’s second term.

Hayam’s husband faces serious State charges for a violent attack in Boulder, CO, last June. There is no question that he should face the full weight of the law. But the FBI and an immigration judge found Hayam and her children engaged in no wrongdoing and had no prior knowledge of their father’s horrific actions. Should they be punished for his crime too?

Just yesterday, a magistrate judge recommended the family’s habeas petition be granted. The judge found the family had been detained in violation

of their due process rights and recommended they be released after being held for nearly 1 year.

The judge ruled:

[T]he government has engaged in procedural maneuvers aimed at thwarting the possibility of [El Gamal family’s] discretionary release from the moment they were taken into custody.

If, despite the judge’s recommendations, the Department of Homeland Security still objects to the release of an innocent woman and her five children, we know exactly why that is the case. It is not because they present any danger to the community or a flight risk. It is because they are immigrants—Arab Muslim immigrants at that.

Earlier this year, through their attorney, the El Gamal family submitted to the Senate Judiciary Committee letters and drawings describing their life inside the Dilley detention facility in Texas.

In one letter, their 9-year-old child wrote:

We have been here for 9 months. I really miss playing with my toys and my watch. Please get us out of here.

In another, the 16-year-old wrote:

I have seen, with my own eyes, food that has mold in it. I even saw food with actual worms.

These are children in a facility run under Federal contract, paid for by you and me, the American taxpayers.

The mother has experienced despair and a recent medical emergency. Only 1 hour after my staff left the facilities, this mother was rushed to the emergency room in pain. The doctor recommended she receive an ultrasound. ICE denied it. Hayam has a history of cancer. She was denied a recommended diagnostic procedure. ICE is allowing this medical neglect, even when so many people are dying in immigration detention.

The El Gamal family’s case is an extreme one, but, unfortunately, their experiences in detention are not uncommon, as there are widespread reports of inhumane conditions at ICE facilities across the country.

Earlier this month, the peer-reviewed Journal of the American Medical Association published a 22-year study of deaths in ICE custody. Its finding: The death rate in fiscal year 2026 is the highest in the entire study period—higher than any year on record, higher even than during the COVID outbreak.

And this year alone, 17 people have already died in immigration detention. They are people who died in American custody, many of them from treatable conditions, such as cardiovascular disease and infections.

This is happening inside a detention system that congressional Republicans injected with \$45 billion in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, and now the Republicans want to use the partisan budget reconciliation process to pour even more money into this system. It is a system where about 90 percent of detention beds are run by private corporations for profit—not care stand-

ards but profits—and they hit record highs last year.

In February, I sent a letter to Secretary Kristi Noem, sounding the alarm on the dramatic increase in deaths in ICE detention. While she was shown the door—and thank goodness for that—problems at these facilities and at ICE persist.

The El Gamal family has been at Dilley for nearly a year. Hayam is a mother. Her youngest children are 5-year-old twins. They have done nothing wrong. It is time for the Federal Government to heed the recommendations of the magistrate judge and release them.

As the partial government shutdown of DHS continues, House Republicans refuse to even consider the bipartisan Senate-passed bill to fund all of DHS except ICE and CBP. Democrats will not fund cruelty without accountability. We will continue to demand the reforms ICE and CBP require, including the end of roving patrols, requiring a judicial warrant to enter someone’s home and conduct searches, a uniform code of conduct to restore trust—one similar to those followed by police departments in every corner of this country—and clear identification and the removal of masks to improve accountability.

As they prepare to turn to the partisan budget reconciliation process to fund ICE, Republicans in Congress have a choice: Demand accountability for every dollar we give this Agency or keep signing checks to a slush fund while people are detained by ICE.

Remember what the President said? We are going after the “worst of the worst”—the terrorists, rapists, murderers, the criminally insane, those who are exploiting our children.

Does it sound like this family, which has been waiting in detention for 1 year with no charges, fits into that category? Of course not.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ARMSTRONG). The Senator from Montana.

#### RECESS

Mr. SHEEHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the scheduled recess begin immediately.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 12:01 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. BRITT).

#### MORNING BUSINESS—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

#### SAVE AMERICA ACT

Mr. CASSIDY. Madam President, protecting the integrity of elections is a constitutional principle. That is why I am a proud cosponsor of the SAVE America Act requiring a photo ID when someone goes to vote.

Now, Americans have to show a photo ID or proof of citizenship on a weekly basis—sometimes on a daily basis. The Presiding Officer and I both fly regularly to Washington, DC, and then back home. You have got to show who you are. You open a bank account, you show a photo ID. You cash a check, you show a photo ID. We mentioned boarding a plane.

To require doing the same thing when you go to polls to vote in a Federal election is merely common sense. It is also not new. It is already a requirement in many States.

The SAVE America Act does not make it harder to vote; it ensures that only American citizens vote in American elections, and that is constitutional.

By the way, this is incredibly popular with the American people. Madam President, 71 percent of Democrats and 95 percent of Republicans agree you should have to show a photo ID when you go to vote, so why hasn't it passed? Why isn't it popular in Congress? Because Senate Democrats are dead set on pleasing, appeasing a small leftwing base of the 16 percent of the American people who oppose, so they come up with reasons not to pass the SAVE America Act, but these concerns have been addressed.

As an example, what about people who have lost their documents and cannot prove citizenship? Well, the legislation says that if you are a citizen and you have lost your documents, or never had them, you can go to a State election official, swear to the details of your birth date and location or naturalization details, and register to vote. We have that option in Louisiana. That alternative process is built into the SAVE America Act so lack of documentation is not an issue.

But rather than accepting that, Senate Democrats ignore the solution and get back to work finding another reason to oppose it, ignoring the fact that 70 percent of their party wants the SAVE America Act passed into law.

We should be here to serve the will of the American people, and folks are asking for the assurance of a secure election. The SAVE America Act helps get that done. We should pass it.

Now, some have said we need to go to a talking filibuster in order to get this done. I have supported the talking filibuster since my first day as a Senator in 2015, drawing inspiration from "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington"—watching that movie when I was a child and seeing just kind of that, wow, when somebody gets up here and talks for 36 hours and everybody else is inconvenienced, somehow you come to a solution faster. I support using it now to pass the SAVE America Act to restore trust in our elections and carry out the will of the people.

#### HEALTHCARE

MR. CASSIDY. Madam President, wherever I go in Louisiana, people are

asking about the affordability of groceries, gasoline, and healthcare.

So most families in my State don't have a thousand dollars in their bank account. And yet they have insurance plans with a multithousand-dollar deductible. So when a patient says: I am on this infusion for my arthritis and my deductible is \$6,000 and I have got to pay that much almost for my first dose, it resonates. And it resonates because we know, in many cases, there are middlemen—insurance companies—increasing the price of that drug so that families with 1,000 bucks and a big deductible cannot afford that medication.

Now, maybe it is more personal to me. I practiced medicine in a hospital for the uninsured and poorly insured for two decades. I saw middle-income families who couldn't afford insurance and came to the hospital for the uninsured.

Now, at the root of this problem is a healthcare system that treats the patient as an excuse for the bill and not as a reason for the care. And the status quo sends billions of taxpayer dollars to insurance companies, and those companies take 20 percent off for profit and overhead.

So has healthcare become more affordable for someone living in Acadia Parish, as an example? Has the quality of care improved in Natchitoches Parish? Well, Natchitoches Parish has pretty good quality of care at their local hospital, but for the family—if they can't afford it—it is as if that care is not there at all.

We need a system which supports the family directly, not channeling the dollars through the insurance company. And I said that because those insurance companies—they serve a purpose. They are not evil, but they are there to make a profit, and they are increasing their margins so they have a better return to their shareholder. Our shareholder is the American people. We should think of a plan that speaks to them.

Now, part of the problem is that there is no price transparency. Families can't say: The prescription is cheaper here or more expensive there. They don't have those tools yet. So they end up getting stuck with the more expensive option oftentimes with extra costs hidden in the pricetag.

Now, I will go back to when I practiced medicine. If the patient has the power—if the patient is the reason for the care and not an excuse for the bill, prices tend to come down. So we need a different approach: a healthcare system giving power to the patient—not to the shareholder, not to the CEO, not to the bureaucrat but to the patient.

Last week, I unveiled the Money and Value for Patients—or the MVP agenda—to put money directly into an account for the American family, directly into their pocket to pay for their out-of-pocket.

This is advance money in a health savings account so a family in Bossier

Parish with a \$6,000 deductible is not forced to choose between going to the doctor or pumping gas in their truck or putting food on the table. Under this system, a family of four may get \$2,000—\$2,000—to pay for those upfront costs.

Now, we also strengthen price transparency. So the mom whose child has an earache could pull out her phone—take their phone like I am—say: Urgent care centers near me and what is their pricing quality for a routine earache? And it would pop up on the map: Five choices: \$100 here. \$500 there. She, with the money going straight into her account, could then go and have her daughter seen and have that visit paid for by the money in the account.

The doctor writes a prescription: Pharmacies near me and what is the price for this particular drug? It pops up: Five pharmacies. This is the best price. She can go there and with that money in her account—the money in her pocket for her out-of-pocket—get the best value—the money and the value—for the patient, her daughter. The MVP agenda.

Finally, we need to empower patients to stay healthy. That begins with knowing what is in the food we eat. For example, a mother in Terrebonne Parish shouldn't be wondering whether her shrimp is from the gulf or whether it is radioactive, pumped with chemicals, imported from an East Asian seafood farm. I am not making that up. Some of the shrimp from elsewhere is radioactive.

Mothers in Livingston Parish shouldn't be wondering if there is added ingredients to the food in the grocery store which are unsafe for their children.

So let's summarize. People in Louisiana are concerned about affordability. The cost of living—the cost of healthcare as part of that—is too high. They are looking for folks here in Washington to do our part to better enable them to do their part.

We have a responsibility to deliver and make life better for our constituents. The Money and Value for Patients—or the MVP agenda—is a way to do that. Let's give power to the patient. Let's make healthcare affordable again.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BANKS). The Democratic leader.

#### RECONCILIATION

MR. SCHUMER. Mr. President, earlier today, we caught our first glimpse of the Senate Republicans' budget resolution. Forget being on the same page; Republicans aren't even on the same planet as the American people. They want to give \$140 billion for ICE and Border Patrol without any reforms but zero dollars to lower Americans' costs.

Let me say that again: \$140 billion for ICE and Border Patrol—no reforms, no accountability, no strings attached; zero dollars to lower Americans' costs.