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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable ALAN ARMSTRONG, a Senator from the State of Oklahoma.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, this day our hearts rise up to meet You, and our lips extol Your wonderful works in the Earth. Great is Your faithfulness. Today, may Your peace go with our lawmakers wherever You lead them, enabling them to feel the wonder of Your sacred presence, power, and peace. Lord, give them the wisdom to find true life in serving others, becoming Your representatives to our Nation and world. Inspire the hearts of our Senators to obey Your precepts as they discover the delight of doing Your will. Help them to see that their well-being is inextricably bound to the well-being of their neighbors. Empower them to share compassion, patience, and courage.

We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, April 22, 2026.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable ALAN ARMSTRONG, a Senator from the State of Oklahoma, to perform the duties of the Chair.

CHUCK GRASSLEY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. ARMSTRONG thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

SETTING FORTH THE CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET FOR THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 AND SETTING FORTH THE APPROPRIATE BUDGETARY LEVELS FOR FISCAL YEARS 2027 THROUGH 2035—Resumed

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. Con. Res. 33, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 33) setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2026 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2027 through 2035.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

S. CON. RES. 33

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, yesterday, Republicans moved to begin con-

sideration of a budget resolution to fund law enforcement—Border Patrol and Immigration and Customs Enforcement—at the Department of Homeland Security.

We have a multistep process ahead of us, but at the end, Republicans will have helped ensure that America's borders are secure and prevented Democrats from defunding these important Agencies.

Bear in mind, that is exactly what Democrats are trying to do here. You remember the cry to "defund the police"? Well, it is back. Democrats want to defund law enforcement, defund border security, and effectively reopen America's borders to the flood of illegal immigration and criminal activity we saw under the Biden administration.

We have always seen what happens when Democrats embrace open borders. Almost exactly 5 years ago, I was at the southern border with a number of my Republican colleagues. And at the same time, just 2 months into the Biden administration, the signs of crisis were already present.

That March, Border Patrol apprehended more illegal immigrants than it had in a single month in 15 years. Nearly 19,000 unaccompanied children crossed the southern border that month.

And under the Biden administration, thousands of children were placed with unvetted sponsors or turned up missing or unaccounted for or worse.

As we saw on that visit, Border Patrol was overwhelmed. One facility that we visited was at 16 times its allotted capacity, and agents were being pulled off the border to deal with the influx of immigrants, leaving border security operations understaffed.

All of this, as I said, was just 2 months into the Biden administration.

Now, I wish I could say that that is as bad as it got, but unfortunately the situation continued to get worse. Over the next few years, we saw the number

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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of illegal crossings climb to hundreds of thousands per month, and the Biden administration's catch-and-release policies allowed millions of those individuals to take up residence in our country.

Numerous cities, including many blue cities far from the border like Denver, Chicago, Boston, were overwhelmed with the influx of migrants.

Amid the surge of illegal immigration, the United Nations named the United States-Mexico border the deadliest border crossing in the world as hundreds of immigrants died making the journey through the desert across the Rio Grande.

Meanwhile, the cartels got rich.

A New York Times headline in 2022 read: "Smuggling Migrants at the Border Now a Billion-Dollar Business."

And illegal drugs made their way across the border to every corner of America.

The sheriff where I live in Minnehaha, County, SD, said in 2022:

Whatever your thoughts are on immigration, I will tell you that the fact that our southern border is not secure is allowing this poison to come into our communities at a level that we've never seen before.

And we all remember the tragic instances of illegal immigrants murdering American citizens. The lives of young women like Laken Riley were taken by illegal immigrants who came into our country during the Biden administration.

We had a crisis on our hands at the border and in our communities from the earliest days of the Biden administration. And Democrats? Democrats just ignored it.

It wasn't until 2024—by no coincidence, an election year—that Democrats decided it might be a good idea to at least show some interest in border security.

Leader SCHUMER finally conceded that year:

Most people agree the status quo cannot continue. Our southern border is in desperate need of more resources.

That was the Democrat leader just 2 years ago.

Our southern border is in desperate need of more resources.

Well, no more. Democrats are back to their cry to defund law enforcement. That is right.

Two years ago, Leader SCHUMER said the southern border was in "desperate need of more resources." Now he refuses to give any—any—resources to the southern border.

I have to say, as bad as things got under President Biden, at least we had Border Patrol. Now Democrats seem to think we can do without them. They refuse to fund Border Patrol, the very Agency that is tasked with securing the southern border. They want to defund it.

They refuse to fund Immigration and Customs Enforcement. They are apparently willing to leave our law enforcement unfunded and our border unprotected. You would think Democrats

would have learned their lesson from embracing the "abolish ICE" and "defund the police" crowds.

These kinds of radical positions are exactly why Americans elected Republicans in 2024. But if Democrats want to continue to embrace being the party of "defund the police" and open borders, they can do that.

Republicans are going to do the job that the American people elected us to do, and one of the most basic parts of that job is funding the government—the entire government—and securing our borders.

And so as I said, Republicans are moving forward with a budget resolution that will allow us to fund critical functions that Democrats refuse to support: law enforcement, drug interdiction, border security, protecting children—both our own and the unaccompanied minors who suffer human trafficking and worse under Democrats' open border policies.

And to prevent Democrats from deciding that they want to defund law enforcement again in September, we are going to fund these critical functions for the next 3 years. I would love to think that at least some Democrats would rethink their defund law enforcement posture and join us to fund these priorities.

But the party of the Biden border crisis seems still determined to opt for open borders.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

S. CON. RES. 33

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, yesterday, Senate Republicans put forward their budget resolution for its first procedural vote. The contents of their budget resolution are astounding.

Mr. President, \$140 billion for ICE and Border Patrol, zero dollars to lower Americans' costs. This will be a reconciliation of contrasts: Republicans want to shell out billions of dollars to Donald Trump's private army without any commonsense reforms or restraints.

Democrats want to put money in Americans' pockets by lowering the costs of healthcare and gas and groceries, housing, and so much else.

Republicans are bending the knee to Donald Trump and Stephen Miller. Democrats are standing up for the American people. Republicans want to keep shutting down TSA, FEMA, CISA, Coast Guard, and other crucial DHS Agencies. Democrats want to reopen all the law-abiding Agencies in the Department of Homeland Security.

Republicans are at each other's throats, tying their party up in knots. Democrats stand united, and we stand firm. So this is a reconciliation of contrasts.

Senate Democrats will make these contrasts abundantly clear, vote after vote, amendment after amendment, during the upcoming vote-arama. We are also making the contrast apparent off the floor. This week, we Democrats are releasing another "Broken Promises" report on how Republicans have taken a trillion dollars out of the healthcare system and ripped healthcare away from 15 million Americans all to give tax breaks to the billionaires.

Republicans are about to learn the hard way that when they refuse to reduce costs, they lose. Republicans will find they cannot reconcile their deeply partisan, unpopular, and costly policies with the frustration Americans feel today.

This will be a reconciliation of reckoning for Senate Republicans—a reconciliation of reckoning.

IRAN

Mr. President, every day this disastrous war continues, Donald Trump digs himself deeper and deeper and deeper into a hole.

The longer Trump takes to extricate himself from Iran, the deeper the hole gets and the harder it will be for him to get out.

The Iranian regime that the United States is trying to negotiate with is even more hardline than when Trump began the war.

Iran's hold over Hormuz has gotten even stronger. Iran maintains its economic stranglehold on the world, firing on more merchant ships in the Strait of Hormuz earlier today.

So it is amazing. Before the war, the regime in Iran, bad as it was, was not as dug in as this one is, making it even harder to negotiate. Before the war, oil was flowing freely out of the Strait of Hormuz. Now it is all clogged up.

Everything Trump did with this war has made things worse, and he keeps digging himself into this hole—deeper and deeper. The American people are fed up, seeing this war as reckless, as harmful, and as costly a misadventure as there has ever been.

Trump's continued enthusiasm for the war makes me wonder: Has he somehow mixed up the graphs showing his crumbling approval ratings with those showing the soaring price of oil and gas? Let's sort it out for him.

Trump's approval rating is at an all-time low. Only 33 percent approve of him in the most recent polls. Trump's approval on the economy is even lower, at 30 percent, in part because the price of oil and gas has gone up and up and up. Trump's standing in the eyes of the American people craters every day that this war continues.

Meanwhile, gas has been over \$4 a gallon for weeks, the highest it has been in years. Americans are going to pay at least \$740 more this year to fill

up their tanks because of Trump's war. That is money that could have gone to other things: more groceries, furniture. Who knows? But it is now going into the hands of the oil merchants.

Every day, we hear new promises from the Trump administration that victory has been achieved. Victory is just around the corner, he keeps saying. But when you look around the corner, that hasn't happened. Trump says peace is at hand; costs are starting to come down—both lies. And every day, we see the opposite.

Trump can talk all he wants, but nothing will change—nothing—until he realizes his war has to end.

While I am relieved that the cease-fire deadline has been extended, Congress needs to seize this opportunity to stop this blunder before the fighting resumes.

I urge Senate Republicans to vote for our War Powers Resolution later today. That is their fifth opportunity to do so.

Republicans, if Trump won't dig himself out of the hole he has dug, you, Republicans, should pull him out by voting for our War Powers Resolution today. If not, you, Republicans in the Senate, are going to fall into the same hole. You are already falling into it. But if you don't dig him out of the hole, you are going to fall into this hole, deeper and deeper, alongside him.

I thank Senator BALDWIN for her work on this resolution. Democrats will continue to force votes on our resolution every week, until Republicans see reason and help us end this war.

They would be doing Donald Trump a favor. Republican Senators would be doing Donald Trump a favor by supporting this resolution. And every week Republicans wait to do so will cost their party politically and the American people financially.

SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER

Mr. President, on the Southern Poverty Law Center, I just want to say a quick word about the deeply disturbing charges the Justice Department has brought against the Southern Poverty Law Center.

These charges should send a chill down the spine of every American who cares about free expression and the rule of law in the Justice Department. It should send a chill down the spine of every American who cares about civil liberties and the fight against violence and extremism.

Let's be clear what this case is really about. It has nothing to do with alleged wire fraud or the Southern Poverty Law Center somehow working in coordination with the KKK. That is ridiculous on its face. It doesn't pass the laugh test. It is about Donald Trump turning the Department of Justice into the "Department of Vengeance," his own attack dog. He has done it time and time and time again. And when you think it can't get worse, it does: To attack the Southern Poverty Law Center of collaboration and accuse it of collaboration with their known enemy, the KKK?

Weaponizing the DOJ to indict civil rights groups is not law and order. It is a message. If you defend voting rights, if you fight White supremacy, you are next. Donald Trump will use the Federal Government to go after any group that dares to speak out against him.

This is amazing. In 1983, the Ku Klux Klan tried to burn down the Southern Poverty Law Center for daring to expose its hatred. More than four decades later, the Trump administration is trying to do the same thing in the courtroom. It is an absolute disgrace how far this administration goes down, turning what America is all about inside out.

KASH PATEL

Mr. President, on Patel, every day Kash Patel remains in this job is another day that undermines the FBI and its mission.

Take yesterday's press conference. The head of the FBI, the Nation's top law enforcement officer, spent the entire time getting into fights with reporters about his alleged drunken behavior, his partying, his overall fitness for the job. This has become a dangerous, unacceptable distraction for the FBI, which has so much important work to do.

Donald Trump has led us to war right now against Iran, a nation known for sophisticated cyber attacks. Why is Kash Patel not focused on that? Why is Kash Patel not focused on the serious threats facing this country?

Every day that these stories of misconduct persist, they undermine the mission of the FBI. Every day that these questions about Patel, his behavior, his character linger, they weaken confidence in the leadership of one of the most important law enforcement agencies in the world.

Kash Patel must resign immediately. He is not a serious person. He has not shown that he has the skills required for the job. And the last few days have shown he does not have the judgment to lead an Agency like the FBI.

This is what happens when Trump just chooses acolytes—people who suck up to him—for important jobs. That shouldn't be any criteria in choosing the head of the FBI. But, instead, it seems to be Trump's only criteria, and it puts him in trouble. It puts him in the hot seat, in the frying pan, over and over again, by choosing people whose only criteria is loyalty to him.

Americans deserve steady, sober leadership from their FBI Director, especially during a time of war. Kash Patel is not it. And if Kash Patel wants to keep partying, he can do it somewhere else, without putting the safety of the American people on the line.

I yield the floor.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

S. CON. RES. 33

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, let me begin with a message to the brave men and women of ICE and of Border Patrol. Republicans honor your unwavering service and sacrifice. You know that Democrats, through their words and actions here, do not.

Many of you are veterans and served in the military. Many of you have families at home. You are the professionals who secure our Nation's borders. You are the heroes who risk your lives to keep our communities safe.

Democrats have said you are the problem. You are not the problem. "Defund the police" Democrats are the problem.

Democrat Representative OCASIO-CORTEZ of New York said you are a "rogue Agency." Senator SCHUMER of New York has echoed those same words yesterday.

You are not a rogue Agency. Today's Democrats are a rogue and radical party.

You deserve better than reckless Democrat hostage-taking. That is what is going on here. You deserve the tools and the support from Congress necessary to carry out the vital mission that Congress has given you.

This Nation depends upon you, and Republicans are going to deliver for you. That is what this debate is about today.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement must be funded fully and immediately. The U.S. Border Patrol must be funded fully and immediately. It is just common sense. These Agencies keep America safe every single day.

If Congress doesn't act quickly, they are going to run out of money very soon, perhaps in a matter of weeks. That would make our country less safe.

Senate Republicans are united and committed to keeping America safe and secure. Republicans will use the budget reconciliation process to do that.

This means that we can fund American law enforcement without relying on a single Democrat vote. Democrats have turned into the party of "defund the police".

And let me tell you about the Republican plan to protect our communities. Our plan provides more than \$70 billion of funding for immigration enforcement and border security. It secures the funding not for 1 year, not for 2 years, but for the next 3 years.

The Republican plan means stronger law enforcement and safer communities. It also represents a commitment to the dedicated professionals of ICE and Border Patrol. And we are going to continue to support them, just as they continue to protect all of us.

This is funding Democrats once agreed to. Now, they have walked away from it. Democrats have blocked funding for the Department of Homeland Security not once, not twice—16 times

they have voted against it. Why? Because Democrats are playing to the most radical members of their party.

Through their actions, Democrats are putting the safety and security of our Nation behind the safety and security of their own political careers.

Democrats have blocked funding for Border Patrol. This is the Agency that stops the criminals, the drug traffickers, the human traffickers, and the terrorist suspects from entering our country illegally. Democrats would love to defund them permanently.

Democrats have also blocked funding for Immigration and Customs Enforcement. This is the Agency that removes illegal immigrant criminals from our communities and takes them off the streets.

The American people support removing illegal immigrant criminals. Clearly, Democrats do not. Democrats care more about protecting illegal immigrant criminals than they do about protecting law-abiding American citizens.

Democrats seem to want to take our country backward—backward to the bad days when they were in the majority and our southern border was wide open, backward to the days when illegal immigrant criminals roamed freely in our communities. This is an insult to the families of Laken Riley and Sheridan Gorman and to all of the innocent people who have been murdered by illegal immigrant criminals.

The budget resolution that we are debating today is part of a larger Republican effort to keep America safe. The last administration threw the border wide open. More than 10 million illegal immigrants flooded into our Nation. Under President Trump and Republicans, the border is now secure. Law enforcement is being restored.

Last year, Republicans passed the most comprehensive border security investment in American history—nearly \$165 billion. It was part of the Working Families Tax Cut law. The results speak for themselves: Zero—absolutely zero—illegal immigrants have been released into the country for nearly a year. The Republican budget resolution builds on that success.

To my Democrat colleagues who are calling for reforming ICE, let me just say directly to you on the floor of the U.S. Senate: You rejected every single opportunity for common sense, cooperation, and compromise. You said no to all of it.

Republicans offered body cameras for agents; Democrats voted no. Republicans offered more oversight; Democrats voted no. Republicans offered more training for agents; Democrats voted no.

Reform no matter how reasonable—no matter how much common sense—was never the point of the Democrats. The point has always been to abolish ICE, to abolish our Border Patrol, and to return to open borders. Today's Democrat Party owns that shameful record. They can run from it, but they

cannot hide from it. It is their record, and the Senate has a duty to protect the American people.

The choice is simple. The choice is clear: Fund law enforcement or block it. That is the vote today. Fund border security or try to block it. That is what we are voting on.

The American people are watching. They will know and remember who voted to protect law-abiding American citizens and who voted to protect illegal immigrant criminals. Republicans are ready to stand and vote for the safety and the security of the American people.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO GENERAL RANDY GEORGE

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a fellow Iowan, a friend, and an extraordinary leader GEN Randy A. George, upon his retirement from the U.S. Army after more than four decades of distinguished service to our Nation. General George has devoted his life to the defense of the United States of America and her people.

Born to Robert and Lorraine George and raised in Alden—a beautiful, rural community in north central Iowa—Randy's folks instilled in him solid Iowa values that would take him on an incredible journey from the rolling countryside of our heartland to the highest ranks of the U.S. Army.

Randy was raised humble, hard-working, courageous, and patriotic. Randy enlisted in the U.S. Army before his 18th birthday, and he focused his eyes on the future. Two years after his enlistment, Randy received a nomination for the U.S. Military Academy at West Point from my distinguished colleague Senator CHUCK GRASSLEY. Randy then received his appointment to West Point and joined the distinguished "Long Gray Line." He was commissioned from West Point as an infantry officer in 1988 and served as a lieutenant in the vaunted 101st Airborne Division and rose through the ranks in many illustrious units, including the 4th Infantry Division, 173rd Airborne Brigade, and I Corps.

Randy has served in multiple deployments through several eras of American warfare—from Operation Desert Shield-Desert Storm to the Global War on Terrorism. His boots tread soil and sand in many countries—Kuwait, Iraq, Afghanistan, and many more around the globe in his most senior positions with the United States Army. He literally commanded at every level of the Army, and our Army is so much stronger, agile, and lethal because of his leadership.

Randy advanced to the role of Vice Chief of Staff of the Army from 2022 to 2023 and most recently served as our 41st Chief of Staff of the Army. As Chief of Staff, Randy readied our Army for the future battlefield, capitalizing on the innovative spirit of our soldiers to transform the service from the ground up.

His determination yielded generational investments in the Army's Organic Industrial Base and a long overdue slashing of unnecessary waste and bureaucracy, equipping our soldiers with the training and the technology they need to survive and dominate on the battlefield.

Those who served with him describe him as a consistent leader, steady in even the most trying of times. He is a man who loves and respects his soldiers and built winning, capable teams. He is a soldier's soldier, which in the Army is the highest of compliments. He will be remembered for that. He is a man of character, who placed the Army's responsibility to our great Nation above all else.

Now, as a Senator, I am very privileged to travel to many communities across Iowa every single year. As I recently passed through the little, tiny communities in Hardin County, I asked the farmers and the small business owners if they knew Randy George, and, of course, they did. I received answers of "I played basketball in high school with Randy," or "My sister used to babysit Randy," and "Randy's dad inspired me to go into agriculture." They all had kind words, and they spoke those words with pride.

Most were proud that Randy was serving in the Army. They all knew that he had an important job, but their eyes would pop open when I explained that he was the highest ranking officer in the U.S. Army: Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army. Honestly, Randy's job title didn't matter to them because, in Alden, IA, he—simply known as Randy George—was doing great work to keep them all safe. Randy represents the very best of Iowa and of our Nation.

I would also like to express my thanks to Randy's wife and his West Point classmate Mrs. Patty George. She has served Army families for nearly 40 years and whose energy—endless energy—and dedication were reflected in every single formation that Randy led. The Georges raised two incredible kids Grant and Andrea, and they recently welcomed two grandchildren to their family as well.

We wish Randy and his entire family continued success and fulfillment.

GEN Randy George's legacy will endure through the thousands and thousands of soldiers that were shaped by his mentorship and example. I know he will continue to serve our Nation.

Sir, General George, I am honored to be your Senator.

So today, as I hold the floor of the Senate in the heart of the Nation's Capital, on behalf of an extremely grateful nation, I extend my deepest

thanks and appreciation to GEN Randy A. George for his extraordinary service, sacrifice, and leadership.

Randy and Patty, “No Task Too Great.” You have demonstrated this well to all of America. God bless you, and Godspeed.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). The Senator from Iowa.

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

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

The Senator from Texas.

S. CON. RES. 33

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, we are almost at the end of April, and the Department of Homeland Security has been shuttered since February. It is incredible to me that at a time when the geopolitics of the world make the likelihood of domestic terrorist attacks greater than usual, that our Democratic colleagues would simply reflexively oppose funding for the Department of Homeland Security because they don't believe immigration laws should be enforced.

It is absurd that they have taken this approach to voice their opposition to President Trump, which maybe explains everything because the first question, it seems like, in their mind is: If President Trump wants it, maybe we should oppose it, which has been consistent with their behavior. But it is time for this nonsense to end for a variety of reasons.

I just came from a Judiciary Committee hearing on intellectual property theft and espionage from the People's Republic of China, among other adversaries. And one of the things that I am not sure people recognize is that the chief civilian cyber security Agency of the Federal Government is housed within the Department of Homeland Security—CISA, it is called.

They have currently furloughed 60 percent of their staff because Democrats refuse to fund the Department of Homeland Security because they are mad that President Trump is keeping his commitment to enforce our immigration laws. So, again: collateral damage to many unintended targets, but this is what happens when mindless partisanship prevails.

The American people, of course, voted to elect President Trump, and one of the main reasons was because he was very clear about where he stood on open borders and on the failure of the Biden administration to enforce our immigration laws. So, now, the Democrats have shut down the Department to try to prevent him from carrying out his mandate.

At the end of our last session, the Senate finally came together on a plan

to reopen the Department of Homeland Security. I was proud to vote yes. It seemed like a no-brainer. But, unfortunately, the House did not agree. Unfortunately, I think they misunderstood what we had actually done because we had prefunded ICE and Customs and Border Protection in the Working Families Tax Cut bill because we anticipated that they might pull this kind of stunt. Well, unfortunately, that funding is now stalled in the House.

Speaker JOHNSON, of course, has his own constraints, given a one-seat majority and the fact that Democrats won't cooperate even on commonsense things like funding the Department of Homeland Security. But I hope that he will continue to try to pick up the torch and pass this bill so this shutdown can end—this mindless partisanship that has caused this shutdown.

President Trump, Leader THUNE, and Chairman GRAHAM have decided that we will keep the current budget resolution focused like a laser on funding Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Department of Homeland Security generally so we can do that by the deadline that President Trump set of June 1.

None of this would be necessary if Democrats would come to their senses and just simply—we can fight about the role that Immigration and Customs Enforcement plays. We can fight about the policies that guide them. But they are, in fact, enforcing laws that Congress has passed. Yet they want to make them the scapegoat for enforcing immigration laws.

And, again, this appears to me to be nothing more than a continuation of their efforts to maintain open borders and to deny enforcement of immigration laws.

But as we are considering a budget reconciliation bill, hopefully, once we get this accomplished here in the next few weeks, it will give us enough time before the end of this fiscal year to consider a third reconciliation vehicle to accomplish additional Republican priorities. And there are some important provisions I would like to see included in that next reconciliation bill—again, anticipating no cooperation at all from our Democratic colleagues.

One of those priorities for me is to permanently defund Planned Parenthood. Respect for life has always been and always will be a pillar of the conservative movement and the Republican Party platform. We are the pro-life party. Many great minds have said before that civilization should be measured by the way we treat our most vulnerable, and I believe that to be true. And it is hard to imagine anyone more vulnerable than an unborn, helpless child.

In fact, our founding document—the Declaration of Independence—states that the right to life is an inalienable right that all of us are granted by our Creator. I am proud to be a member of a party that acknowledges the right to

life as a God-given gift. Republicans can and should deliver a win for the unborn as part of our next reconciliation bill by defunding, on a permanent basis, the Nation's largest abortion provider.

When Republicans assembled the One Big Beautiful Bill, or the Working Families Tax Cut Act, last summer, we successfully included a 1-year ban on Medicaid funding for abortion providers like Planned Parenthood. Now, here we are approaching the end of that year, and this provision will soon expire. We have our work cut out for us again to ensure that this monstrous organization does not receive another dime of taxpayer money.

Of course, like any entity that receives government funding, Planned Parenthood has a team of lobbyists and public affairs officials whose job it is to convince lawmakers and the public that they are worthy recipients of public funding. Planned Parenthood would like all of us to believe they are primarily a healthcare organization, providing women's health services. But the truth is that is not the case; it is a pretext. Their own 2024–2025 annual report states that Planned Parenthood performed more than 400,000 abortions in the previous fiscal year—400,000 abortions.

We know that all the money that organizations like Planned Parenthood receive are fungible. In other words, they can trade one dollar for another dollar, depending on the source of that money. When Planned Parenthood receives Medicaid reimbursements for services other than abortions, that money ultimately finds its way into helping their bottom line and directly subsidizing a procedure that ends a human life.

If that were not enough, Planned Parenthood is not only an abortion provider, but they have recently become entwined with the business of providing gender transition treatments to minors. Planned Parenthood's own reporting brags that, in some States, their so-called gender-affirming care—what a euphemism that is—that their gender-affirming care visits increased by more than 500 percent between 2021 and 2022. Other organizations have also reported that Planned Parenthood exploits legal loopholes in order to provide gender transition medications to minors without their parents even knowing.

Nearly 60 percent—and I am surprised the number isn't higher—nearly 60 percent of Americans oppose gender transition procedures for minors. You know, when you are young and have not yet matured, your brain is not completely developed. These children are incapable of making these life-changing decisions for themselves, and the business of government and the business of organizations like Planned Parenthood shouldn't be to exploit the youth of these children, to change the trajectory of their life forever.

In recent years, the scientific community has also expressed its own concerns. The American Society of Plastic Surgeons released a statement earlier this year recommending against gender transition surgeries for minors. Their statement emphasized the lack of long-term research to support this medical intervention, as well as ethical concerns surrounding potential harms and the fact that adolescents don't have the capacity to fully consent to these harms.

Other Western countries, including the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, are also taking steps to restrict these operations. The least the U.S. Congress could do would be to halt government funding for providers of these controversial procedures and related treatments that rest on a dubious—if maybe even nonexistent—scientific backing.

Planned Parenthood, the largest abortion provider in the Nation and the leading provider of youth gender transition therapies, should not receive a dime—a dime—of taxpayer funding.

The second reconciliation bill, focused as it is on ICE and CBP and the Department of Homeland Security, cannot be our last bill this year. I urge my Republican colleagues to come together on a third reconciliation bill once we have completed this bill so we can notch another win for the pro-life and the pro-commonsense movement. Again, it is only common sense that our Republican majority should use the power we have to defund Planned Parenthood using the tools available to us, like reconciliation.

Defending the right to life has been a longstanding priority of our party, and Republicans ought to deliver another victory for the unborn.

I yield the floor.

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

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

The minority whip.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, last week, President Trump was asked to assess the state of the American economy. He said:

Very happy.

This is one of the rare moments where I can understand the President's thinking. In his eyes—and in the eyes of his billionaire friends—the economy has never been better.

In the first year of his second term, President Trump added \$1.4 billion to his personal wealth through cryptocurrency ventures and licensing deals with individuals tied to foreign governments. He has made more money in office than any other President in the history of the United States.

And for his billionaire friends, the returns from the past year have been equally impressive. Elon Musk helped gut the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau right before it began to supervise his new digital payment platform.

Oil billionaires like the Koch brothers have seen decades of climate regulation overturned after their multi-million-dollar donations to the 2024 Trump campaign.

According to the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, at least 88 of some of the largest corporations—including Tesla, Coinbase, and Palantir—made more than \$105 billion in 2025.

How much did they pay in Federal income tax? Nothing. Zero dollars because of the Republicans' "One Big Beautiful Budget Bill."

Collectively, billionaires added \$1.5 trillion to their wealth in 2025 alone, a 22-percent increase in 1 year. They really would be happy. It is no wonder the President is so bullish about the economy when everyone he golfs with is raking in record profits.

But if he asks any of the millions of working Americans what they think about the economy, I bet he will get a different answer. Most Americans don't feel like they are in the "golden age of economic opportunity," in the words of the President. Instead, they feel like no matter how many hours they put in to provide for their family, the odds are stacked against them.

Ask a young couple trying to buy their first home if they feel the President has delivered on a housing affordability agenda. Ask a small business owner struggling under the combined weight of Trump's tariff taxes and his cuts to healthcare if they feel like they are benefiting from this so-called pro-growth agenda. Ask anyone who isn't part of the wealthy elite that President Trump surrounds himself with, and they will tell you they feel abandoned by the President, who promised to lower prices for families "on day one."

His war with Iran, reckless tariffs against our trading partners, and cuts and chaos across the Federal Government have damaged the economy and pushed many families to the breaking point.

In March, the Consumer Price Index—the leading measure of inflation—rose to 3.3 percent after the President's Iran war, which spiked oil prices and increased uncertainty for business owners.

One in 10 people nationwide who were on the Affordable Care Act last year were forced to drop their health insurance altogether after the President and Republicans in Congress cut Medicaid and ACA by hundreds of billions of dollars.

The price of groceries, childcare, rent, utility bills, and many other basic necessities keep going up, and the President and Republicans in Congress have not done nearly enough to help Americans make ends meet.

What has the President proposed when 82 percent of Americans say hous-

ing affordability is a concern? He has proposed cuts—billions of dollars of cuts—in housing and homelessness assistance.

What have Trump and congressional Republicans done for 6 in 10 Americans who are worried about being able to afford groceries? They enacted the largest SNAP cuts in history—the food program for those in low-income categories.

When it comes to working families, the administration has little desire to help them. Instead, the President is distracted with election conspiracy theories and anti-immigrant hatred.

When discussing legislation that would tackle rising housing costs, President Trump reportedly told Speaker JOHNSON that "no one gives a [bleep] about housing" and pushed JOHNSON to focus on disenfranchising voters.

That is not to say Republicans in Congress are doing more than the President to address the cost of living. Sadly, they are equally distracted by President Trump's current and changing priorities. This week in the Senate, instead of voting on legislation to lower costs, Senate Republicans chose to focus their efforts on a party-line package, a package of legislation that would give ICE and CBP up to \$140 billion to continue the administration's reckless, cruel, and deadly mass deportation campaign.

They already provided a \$170 billion slush fund for border and interior enforcement last June. They insist it is not nearly enough.

Imagine the potential if they put their energy into making America more affordable instead of this agenda.

The American people consistently say the economy is one of the most important issues our country faces. What does it say about Congress—about our government—when we fail to pass any bill at all that meaningfully addresses these concerns?

America has lost faith in a President who is more focused on his own bottom line than enriching his country and Republican leadership that would rather deport hard-working families than help them afford the basics. Republicans control the House, the Senate, and the Presidency. They are responsible for the chaos we face, and Americans are increasingly wondering, What have Republicans done to help their families?

My colleagues will need to find a better answer to that question than the current agenda of the Republican Congress or Americans will make their dissatisfaction known in November and usher in the beginning of the end of President Trump's last term in office.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Florida.

S. CON. RES. 33

Mrs. MOODY. Mr. President, I also rise today to address the importance, in fact, the necessity that we expediently fund ICE and CBP and we take measures to ensure that in the future these Agencies are not held hostage by political games from the Democratic Party.

We are here again facing a situation where we have critical public safety Agencies at risk for not being funded at a time when we are in the middle of an armed conflict, at a time when we need our communities to have our officers and those that support them at the top of their game because the men and women of ICE and CBP are on the frontlines every single day.

They secure our borders, they enforce our laws, and they protect our communities. And yet we will debate again whether we are going to give them the resources they need to do their jobs. And this should not be controversial. I cannot believe in my first year at the U.S. Senate, I have had to come to the floor multiple times to merely fund critical public safety Agencies, Agencies that were created after 9/11.

We have to pass the reconciliation bill, and we have to fund ICE and CBP, not just for the short term, for the long term because this is not going to stop. The modern Democratic Party has no interest in being on Team America. Everything that they are espousing is subversive to the strength and security of this Nation, whether that is abolish ICE, whether that is defund the police, whether that is destroy our borders and roll out a welcome mat. It cannot happen.

And too often in this town, we see the same pattern play out when we face this obstructionist behavior. I would call it dangerous behavior. We kick the can down the road, and the American people are sick of it. Thousands of TSA agents who have worked more days unpaid than paid during this fiscal year are sick of it.

We aren't sent here to keep parts of our vital government Agencies shuttered at a time when our security is threatened. All of us here know we need DHS to keep us safe. So we should be coming here every day to give them the tools that they need, the resources they need, not tying their hands behind their back with short-term funding patches and political gridlock—not to mention the attack on morale that they must feel when their very jobs are threatened every time the Democrats throw a political tantrum.

It shouldn't take Executive orders or emergency measures to get these critical safety folks paid, but that is the hand that the Democrats keep dealing us.

And if we are serious about solving this, not just now as we move into passing reconciliation, but if we want

to prevent this from happening in the future, if we want to move the Senate's work forward, especially when we are dealing with funding critical public safety Agencies, we have to take a hard look at how this body—the Senate—operates.

Because what has happened when there have been lapses in funding, what has happened in my first year here at the Senate, when I have pushed to get this done, pled with all—everyone in this Chamber—to get this done, stayed here, what happens? Government workers go unpaid, our government shuts down, and often Senators are told to go home.

We are not just told to go home. Taxpayers fund Senators to go home. They reimburse them for travel in the middle of a government shutdown when we are not paying government workers, and the buck stops here. We have to commit to solving this problem, not just funding the Agencies, but solving the problem that how the Senate has done things historically is not working. It is not working in the face of a Democratic Party who is not on Team America. It is not working on the face of the modern-day Democrats in this Chamber that are not just voicing subversiveness, they are taking actions in this Chamber to undermine the security of this country.

The ways we have always done things as a Senate does not work anymore. It does not work for this country. It does not work for the American people, and we have got to be bold and do something about it.

And that is why I have introduced a resolution to forbid taxpayers dollars for reimbursement of Member travel home during a lapse in government funding because if we are asking Federal employees to deal with uncertainty, if we are asking our ICE officers and Border Patrol to continue doing their jobs without clarity, if we are asking TSA agents to continue showing up without clarity, we should be willing to stay here and do ours.

If Senators stayed in Washington and worked through the problem and focused on the discussions and delivering results and how do we do this—I mean, we are having to work around and go to a reconciliation as opposed to the normal budgeting process in order to fund DHS.

I dare say, I wonder if we would have gotten to this idea if we had been forced to stay here and deal with this a lot sooner. It shouldn't be complicated; funding the government is one of our most fundamental roles.

The stakes of not fully funding ICE and CBP are far too high. Americans are clearly at risk right now. We know why my Democratic colleagues are obstructing this process. They told you—they told you—where their priorities lie.

They want to go back to how things were under the previous administration, you know, when they broke down all security measures at the border,

when they made it open borders, when they demoralized and undermined law enforcement. They like that. They don't like it when they have Republican leadership and a President in the White House that are saying: That was backward. That put Americans in danger. We have to do things differently, and we have got to clean up the mess.

And what is this mess? I mean, I don't want to just broadly say it was dangerous. Let's talk about the mess. Let's talk about the catastrophic place we find ourselves in. We now have thousands of people that were on the Terrorist Watchlist that were ushered in by the Biden administration, and we know that they released them and pushed them into this country. They are here right now.

So in the middle of an armed conflict, we have people in this country right now that were on the Terrorist Watchlist that were released by the last administration, and the Democrats' response is to not fund the folks that were going to go out and find them.

Let's talk about the 22-year-old Laken Riley, who was killed by an illegal immigrant in Georgia, or the 18-year-old college freshman Sheridan Gorman, shot and killed in a random attack by an illegal immigrant in Chicago. Or in my home State of Florida, in Fort Myers, just recently, an illegal immigrant bludgeoned a mother to death outside of a gas station. These are just a few examples, but they are not—it is reality. It is not hypothetical. It is not what could happen. It is what is happening.

And so we have to take action today, and that means if we have to stay here and get this done during times of shutdown, let's do it. And anything that will incentivize that, we should promote, we should support, and we should pass.

And that means changing our own rules, changing the way that we are doing business here in the Senate, because in so many ways, business as usual in the Senate isn't cutting it.

And so I invite my colleagues, who are really on Team America, to show that they are on Team America and show they are willing to put in the hard work and roll up their sleeves and stay here, when we find ourselves in a funding lapse of critical safety Agencies, to support my resolution and support the reconciliation that will fund CBP and ICE.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. SLOTKIN. Mr. President, I just want to start with reviewing the bidding and why we are here.

We are having an American cultural conversation about the role of ICE and law enforcement—Federal law enforcement—in our streets and in our cities and particularly because two Americans were killed in Minnesota because of ICE, CBP: Alex Pretti, 37 years old, a nurse in a VA hospital, shot multiple

times, killed while exercising his right to assemble.

Video shows it. So that no matter where you are in the political spectrum, your eyes do not lie.

Renee Good—shot and killed by ICE agents in her car on January 7—and a third American citizen killed by Homeland Security agents, the first being Keith Porter, who was killed on New Year's Eve in L.A. That is not counting the 32 people who have been killed in ICE's custody in 2025, including one in Baldwin, MI—the most fatalities in 1 year than in more than two decades combined.

These three people should be alive, but their deaths are the culmination of something much bigger. The behavior of our Federal forces in our streets strikes at the heart of who we are as Americans. I am not going to list everything ICE is doing, but I want you to think about what would happen if these things happened to you, to your community, to your neighbors: being pulled over and asked for your papers as you shop at Target or drive on a highway off-ramp or stand in line for a flight; agents shooting tear gas at your kids' playground; being held at gunpoint inside your own home and taken to a police precinct, in your underwear, in subfreezing temperatures, and then being released, without apology, after being held for hours, even though you are an American citizen.

Imagine someone in a mask breaking your car window and pulling you and your 2-year-old daughter out of that car.

Imagine being shot with rubber bullets at a protest in America; masked men detaining your 5-year-old coming home from preschool; being pepper-sprayed while praying aloud; tear gas filling your car on your way home from a basketball game and then having to do CPR on your 6-month-old to help him breathe; then being beaten, shot repeatedly, and killed because you are exercising your Second Amendment right. Imagine being taken to a detention facility and not being able to communicate with your family.

All of these things happened in Minneapolis, and that is not my sense or, I think, the average American's sense of freedom. When people turned on the TV and saw these things happening with their own eyes, they understood it as something that ran completely contrary to who we are as a people, and it certainly spit in the face of how we became a nation in the first place—with the rebellion that our American forefathers launched not too far north of here because of an oppressive government—because of an oppressive regime—that was using brutal tactics in the streets and in people's homes.

So that is why we are here today—to have very commonsense reforms on Federal law enforcement because of what we all saw with our own eyes.

Now, these things that we are calling for are not radical, right? They are the things that we ask of our local police:

Be clear on who you are and what law enforcement unit you are from, have some way of identifying that you are part of official law enforcement, don't wear a mask so that we understand who you are, have a judicial warrant if you want to go inside someone's house—you have to prove that there is a reason to go inside an American citizen's home.

These are things our law enforcement does every single day in our cities and in our towns, but the other side of the aisle refuses to have that conversation. What they would rather do is ignore that conversation altogether even though Kristi Noem got fired over it and local ICE agent Bovino got fired for all of that behavior, even though they themselves, from the White House, were willing to consider some sort of reform because they know they are on their heels because they know they got on the wrong side of history. We are here today because the other side of the aisle is refusing to have an even basic conversation on those reforms and wants to fully fund ICE with no changes.

I will close with this: We are here talking about this issue when, in fact, what the average person wants to talk about when I am out in Michigan or anywhere else are the things that this President said he was going to cover, which were tackling the fundamental costs of living, tackling the fundamental things that are keeping people up at night and making them feel like they can't achieve the American dream in America. The lists of things this President said he was going to do could fill up a ream of paper.

Certainly, the President won his election by talking about what he was going to do domestically, but I think we have to accept now, as we continue to see the war drag on with Iran, that this President has become fundamentally a foreign policy President. He has taken military action in 9 locations around the world in his first 15 months—more than any single President in history, Democrat or Republican.

He is focusing his energy and his administration's resources on issues abroad while the average thing that hurts Americans isn't being tackled at all. Think about housing, healthcare, the price of food, and now, certainly, the prices of gas and utilities. In Michigan, we are now at \$4 a gallon, approximately, for gas and \$5 a gallon for diesel. Healthcare premiums have gone up. Housing has only gotten more expensive in the past year. By any objective measure, things are more expensive than the day this President took office.

He can pretend and say what he wants about how costs have actually come down and that it is "no big deal" that gas prices are up, but we know that, in the United States of America, we have a shrinking middle class. That is an objective fact. That is not a political statement. It has gotten harder to

stay in and be in the middle class, and it has gotten harder to save every month.

It is the issue that unites young people who are thinking about how they are going to afford college, whether they are ever going to be able to own a home the way their parents are, and the workers down at the GM plant who are wondering: Will I be able to have that fishing cabin up north? Will I be able to take a vacation the way my parents were able to do so with the same job?

On our economy, we know that we need, fundamentally, three big things in order to compete in the future as the future of work is changing. So, when we are distracted by things like wars and things like American cultural conversations on other issues, it means there is an opportunity cost for the things we are not talking about. What we need more than anything right now is a focus on three big things. For our economy, we need to focus on people, we need to focus on chips, and we need to focus on power.

On people, we know that, between artificial intelligence and a whole bunch of other things going on, we are going to have a changing economy. We need great public schools that are well-funded, and we need to get people comfortable with the fact that they are going to have to do more than just the K through 12. I call it K through 12 plus two. You have got to do something after high school to prepare yourself for this next new world that we are in. That can be an apprenticeship with a union. That can be an associate's degree. That can be a training program for one of our companies.

It means K through 12 plus two is upon us, and we need to start thinking about it that way. We need to centralize every single job training program. We have 17 job training programs in the Federal Government alone. They are all in different Departments and Agencies. We need a one-stop shop for our young people to be like: If I want a job for the future, how do I get trained or retrained for that?

On chips, every single one of you has chips in your pocket. You have a cell phone or you have some sort of piece of technology that depends on chips. They are in everything that we use and in everything we need to grow our economy.

Over the last decade or so, we have been, really, at the mercy of China when it comes to chips. I want to make chips here in America with American factories and American labor, and I want chips to put Americans to work. We made them and invented them in the first place, and I want to make them again so that we don't live under a veto from China.

On power, we can't do any of what we need to do unless we have the amount of power that we are going to need to power our economy; and without major changes to our electrical grid, we are in trouble on the issue of power. Our

grid is a national security asset. It powers our economy. We know we are going to have more and more companies trying to take more and more power out of the grid. It is old and outdated. Again, I think that is something this body could agree on and focus on, but we are not because we are busy fighting these kinds of cultural conversations that we are having.

So I wanted to put down, in front of everyone here, some of the opportunity costs and some of the things we are not doing here in the U.S. Senate because we are focusing on these terrible cultural conversations that are happening when things like Minneapolis erupt. We are not talking about the economy, and we are not attacking the problems that are plaguing most Americans. That is because we have a refusal to talk about just basic reforms, simple things we could do in an hour.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

NATIONAL DEBT

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, recently, our Nation has been hitting a lot of very unfortunate milestones. Data from the National Association of REALTORS shows that the average age of the first-time home buyer in America has reached an alltime high of 40 years old, while the number of first-time home buyers has also reached an alltime low.

We just experienced the highest monthly spike in gas prices in decades, thanks to the President's reckless war in Iran.

And perhaps most staggering, just last month, we reached a new and unthinkable milestone when the national debt eclipsed \$39 trillion, the highest it has been at any point in our Nation's history. For context, when I first came here to Congress in 2009, the national debt stood at \$10.6 trillion. That means more than \$28 trillion has been added to the debt in just 17 years.

This illustrates what economists have warned about for years: The national debt is growing at an exponential rate, and it is past time to stop the bleeding. Yet, for decades, this issue has not received the attention and demands that Congress needs to act.

That is why I am back on the Senate floor today to address my colleagues and the American people. The alarm bells cannot continue to fall on deaf ears. The fate of future generations of Americans depends on it.

But I am not the only one that has been issuing this warning. In recent months, various actors from across the Federal Government—from the Congressional Budget Office to the Department of Treasury—they have all said the same thing: Our current fiscal policy is simply not sustainable, and without changes, we are headed toward an economic catastrophe.

In its last financial report, the U.S. Treasury said our public debt-to-GDP ratio now sits at 99 percent. That

means the amount of debt we owe is nearly the same size as the entire U.S. economy. Our debt-to-GDP ratio is the highest it has been since World War II, and experts say that ratio is expected to exceed 200 percent by 2048.

This would mean serious economic harm for Americans in the form of higher interest rates, less money to support critical Federal services, and slowed economic growth.

The Government Accountability Office says that in order to close this fiscal gap, we need to increase our revenues by 25 percent, while reducing our spending by 20 percent. And we need to do that each and every year for the next 75 years.

Our Nation's leading economists are telling us point-blank: We simply do not have time to waste. Dealing with our national debt is no longer a down-the-road problem or something that future Congresses will be dealing with. We won't put our country on more stable financial footing by avoiding the facts or pretending this problem simply doesn't exist. We won't reduce our debt by continuing the President's war in Iran. Not only are we sending our sons and daughters into harm's way, we are spending a reported \$1 billion per day on a conflict that Congress has not approved and the American people simply did not ask for.

The time for bipartisan action to address our growing national debt is right now. And that is why, just last month, I joined my colleagues in introducing a resolution that says, by 2030, we must lower our deficit to only 3 percent of GDP. And I am also proud to lead bipartisan legislation in the Senate that would examine how our national debt impacts our national security.

These efforts alone won't solve the problem, but we have to start somewhere. We must put forward bipartisan responsible and achievable solutions that allow us to make headway in any way that we possibly can because I know one thing is absolutely for certain, to make it out of this national debt crisis is going to take a buy-in from everyone: Congress, the administration, and the American people.

We are all in this boat together, and it is past time to start rowing in the right direction before the boat sinks.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

S. CON. RES. 33

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, right now, Trump is waging a war in Iran. He is threatening war crimes. He is threatening an end to an entire civilization and mentally deteriorating in front of our eyes.

Meanwhile, costs for our families are going through the roof. Grocery costs and everyday expenses are going up because of inflation and fueled by Trump's tariffs. Estimates show Trump's trade war cost families well over 1,000 bucks last year.

Healthcare costs are skyrocketing for families as Republicans refuse to

extend the tax credits and prevent the mega-healthcare hike. People have seen their premiums double, triple, and even worse. We now know that millions of families were completely priced out of their health coverage, and millions more switched to a worse plan, often still at a higher price.

And, of course, energy costs, energy costs are going through the roof because Trump has also chosen, all on his own, to start a reckless war with Iran that is putting servicemembers at risk and jeopardizing our national security.

Gas is up to 4, 5, 6, even 7 bucks a gallon in some places. The challenges that we are facing right now are many, and they are major. But Republicans can't be bothered with any of them. Republicans aren't trying to rein in Trump's absurd tariffs, they are not trying to address soaring healthcare costs, and they are certainly not lifting a finger to stop Trump's war and bring down gas prices. Instead, Republicans' top priority right now is shoveling \$70 billion—billion—at ICE and Border Patrol, covering multiple years, and cutting another blank check for Stephen Miller's deranged mass deportation dreams without ensuring any sort of accountability—none whatsoever.

After providing over \$190 billion to DHS last year without any real strings attached, Republicans are now again pushing to give ICE and Border Patrol tens of billions of dollars more, and they plan to do it without any new accountability steps, like the ones Democrats have been demanding for months, without any of the accountability steps Republicans themselves agreed to during negotiations, and even without the same basic accountability steps we have long included in our annual funding bill.

I really want to underscore that. Not only have Republicans refused even the most basic accountability measures for DHS—things like displaying their IDs or taking off masks or requiring judicial warrants, basic use-of-force standards—in choosing to send these Agencies more money through this process, through reconciliation, Republicans are planning to proceed without the basic accountability requirements we put in place every year in our spending bills.

Republicans are making clear that their biggest priority is not lowering prices or helping families with the basics, not stopping Trump's warmongering—it is giving tens of billions of dollars more of your hard-earned tax dollars to ICE and Border Patrol.

Republicans want to supercharge Stephen Miller's budget to harass communities with no restraint, smash in car windows with no warrant, detain Americans with no reason, and mass-deport members of communities with no criminal record whatsoever. We are talking about firefighters and grandpas and grandmas and caregivers for our seniors and parents and spouses and veterans themselves.

To anyone thinking this sounds familiar, well, you are right, because

guess what Republicans were doing last summer: the exact same thing—ignoring the needs of working families while hurling billions at ICE.

Last year, Republicans moved heaven and earth to cut taxes for billionaires and hand tens of billions of dollars to ICE and Border Patrol. They passed that “Big Ugly Bill,” shoveling money at ICE and Border Patrol, shoveling money at billionaires, and cutting healthcare and SNAP to do it.

Now here we are a year later, after Republicans unleashed chaos on our streets by cutting a \$75 billion blank check to ICE, after the American people were outraged by ICE and Border Patrol tear-gassing and tackling peaceful protestors, and after Republicans themselves admitted DHS had gone way too far following the outrageous and horrifying shootings of Renee Good and Alex Pretti. After all of that, Republicans refused commonsense reforms that we put forward, and now they are choosing to deliver even more money for ICE and Border Patrol with exactly zero steps to rein them in.

So if you are watching this Republican farce and wondering why this feels pretty darn familiar, don't worry—you don't have *deja vu*. Republicans are just faking amnesia. Republicans are choosing—choosing—to ignore the violence we have seen unleashed on our streets by a rogue Federal Agency that they threw tens of billions of dollars at. They are choosing to ignore the shocking killings we saw this year and the parade of injustices we are seeing every single day.

Instead of lifting a finger to lower prices or to exercise their constitutional responsibility over the power to declare war, Republicans are spending this week working hard to send ICE more money—no strings attached.

Families across the country are struggling to make ends meet. Gas prices and grocery prices are squeezing out moms and dads. Childcare is hard to find. Housing is unaffordable. Healthcare costs are skyrocketing. But ICE and Border Patrol? Well, they are literally wasting billions of dollars from the “Big Ugly Bill” as we speak.

Just consider this: There was plenty of money for former Secretary Noem to blow hundreds of millions to cut ridiculous ads and plaster her face on TV. There is plenty to blow hundreds of millions on new private jets. ICE was able to waste millions on souped-up SUVs with flashy paint jobs, which they can't even use. Throughout this shutdown, ICE has continued to acquire new warehouses way above the asking price and even buy more planes.

So even after all of the waste, fraud, and abuse funded by Republicans, ICE and Border Patrol still have billions upon billions of dollars on hand right now. Not even a year ago, Republicans gave them more funding than most militaries. Meanwhile, Republicans are acting like they have no idea why Democrats have been demanding accountability and reform, so let me refresh your memory.

The reason we want actual judicial warrants? ICE dragged off a kid who was working at Target, only to release him when they realized he was a citizen. They dragged a woman out of her car on her way to a doctor's appointment. They dragged a man out of his house in the freezing cold, in his underwear, and didn't even check to see if they had the right guy. Another man who was a U.S. citizen got dragged off his worksite and wrongly detained—not once but twice.

That is not targeted law enforcement. It is unbelievable to me that any Republican can say that with a straight face. You want targeted law enforcement? That is what judicial warrants help ensure.

Look at the use-of-force standards. Pastors have been shot in the head with pepper balls. A family on the way home from a basketball game was tear-gassed. We have seen peaceful protestors tackled to the ground. We have seen people pinned down and pepper-sprayed in the face. And then, of course, we have seen several horrific, unjustifiable shootings.

I am not just talking about Alex Pretti and Renee Good, whose killings did send a shock through the Nation—at least until Republicans decided to move on and buy ICE more bullets. Last year in Chicago, a Federal agent rammed Marimar Martinez and shot her several times. They tried to blame her until the video came out and showed the truth. The agent sharply turned his wheel and rammed her car.

Just recently, new video footage showed ICE agents lied about another shooting in Minnesota. The agent said he fired when he was attacked with a shovel. It turns out that was a flatout lie. He actually fired blindly through a door.

ICE agents shot Ruben Martinez in March of last year. His own mother didn't know how he died until a year later. That video, by the way, also did not match the ICE version of events.

I am all for laws. I want to see our laws followed and enforced, and that is why I want ICE and Border Patrol held accountable. These rogue Agencies have been breaking our laws. They have been hurting our citizens. But what is the Republican response to this pattern of abuse? How are Republicans addressing this rogue Agency? Well, here we are choosing to give it even more money and less oversight. That is a perversion of justice and an utter rejection of responsibility. I don't know how you can pretend you are for law and order while shoveling money at a lawless Agency.

But the important thing for everyone to remember is that it did not have to be this way. Despite what some Republicans are saying, this is not something they are forced to do. This is a policy choice that Republicans are making, because there has been a straight-forward, bipartisan path available this entire time. Democrats have been ready, willing, and truly begging Re-

publicans to work with us to enact some very basic reforms as part of a bipartisan funding bill.

I have spent weeks working hard to land the plane on some commonsense steps, and we were having some productive conversations across the aisle and actually with the White House. The White House publicly agreed to enact a set of steps into law. But ultimately Republicans decided to walk away and end any talk of reform. Even when we offered a narrower set of basic reforms in exchange for some funding, Republicans said: No, won't do. They ultimately refused to enact even the basic reforms the White House itself agreed to.

So nobody's hand was forced here. Republicans just chose to walk away from the basic reforms the American people were demanding.

What is more, they have decided that instead of spending their time working on urgent issues, like oversight of Trump's war and addressing skyrocketing costs, instead of using taxpayer dollars to actually solve problems for families who see healthcare costs rising, childcare costs increasing, energy costs, housing costs, Republicans have chosen to waste their time and waste your money, writing Stephen Miller a \$70 billion check and turning a blind eye to the rights that he and ICE are trampling.

This is not what America wants. It is not what America stands for. You can bet Democrats will be pushing every single minute to stop this massive waste of time and money and focus on how we can help working families instead.

If Republicans decide that instead of cutting another enormous check for ICE, they would like to resume conversations about a bipartisan path forward to enact some basic reforms, I am right here where I have always been—at the table, ready to get it done.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I was out in the hallways a week ago, and a reporter asked me a reasonable question. She said: Do you think Democrats overplayed their hand in the negotiations over the DHS budget? Did you ask for too much, thus prompting the moment that we are in today as we do something unprecedented, debate using reconciliation to appropriate money for the ongoing expenses of the Federal Government?

My answer was a confident no, for a few reasons. First, our asks were pretty minimal. All we wanted was to make

sure that the money we were sending to the Department of Homeland Security wasn't used for illegal purposes, it wasn't being used to tear gas elementary schools or conduct "show me your papers" raids in our cities.

A lot of things around here are about politics, but this didn't really seem to be about politics. I just think that we all have an obligation to only appropriate money to the Federal Government when the Federal Government is acting lawfully.

But there is another element to this. We definitely didn't anticipate that Republicans were going to pull the plug on those negotiations when they did. I was part of those negotiations up until the last minute. We thought that we had a potential deal in place in order to bring Republicans and Democrats together around funding all or most of the Department of Homeland Security.

We didn't get that done because Republicans decided—the Republican leader decided—instead to fund the Federal Government through this process, reconciliation, whereby Republicans only need 50 votes.

Now, both sides have used reconciliation to get things done that they wanted to get done, but never before has reconciliation been used as just a straight substitute for the appropriations process. Traditionally, appropriations bills need 60 votes. That means that the budget that we write for the country every year needs to be one that Republicans and Democrats support. But we are here today because Republicans didn't want to negotiate with Democrats over the Department of Homeland Security budget because they knew they could pass that budget with only Republican votes.

Now, listen, I am actually somebody that believes it is probably time to change the rules of the Senate. So I am not going to sit here and tell you that I am defending or willing to defend all of the current rules of the Senate. But let's just be clear, once Republicans have taken the lid off this jar, there is no putting it back.

Republicans are now using reconciliation to fund the ongoing appropriations of the government in an area where it was hard to get agreement with Democrats. Democrats are going to do the same thing. Regardless of how the rules change, now Democrats are just going to say: You know what? When we have power, we don't need to negotiate with Republicans over the hard stuff. We don't need your votes because we will just go fund the government through reconciliation.

So you have changed the practice of the Senate here, and you are going to have to live with the changes that you have decided to make because there are a lot of folks here who have defended the 60-vote threshold for appropriations. Well, that is probably going away, even if the rules don't change now because of the actions that you have taken.

But I guess I come back to this sort of basic obligation that we have, which

is to just make sure that we don't fund illegality. A judge in Minnesota issued a ruling—this is at the height of the assault on Minneapolis—that ICE was in violation of almost 100 court orders.

That is stunning. Again, this isn't 100 instances where ICE was violating the law. This was 100 instances where ICE was violating the law, a court told them to stop, and ICE didn't stop. My Republican colleagues claim they are for law and order. How do you defend an Agency that was told to stop acting illegally and on 100 occasions, when reading the court order, just said: Forget it. We are not obeying what the court tells us to do?

When we say this is an Agency that was and is out of control, this is what we mean, an Agency that does not care about the law, does not care what courts say, thinks it is accountable to no one—except for the President of the United States.

We can't fund that kind of Agency. We would be violating our oath of office, all of us, to fund an Agency that just doesn't care about the law. To get 100 court orders telling you to obey the law, you have to be in violation of the law thousands of times.

In fact, Federal courts have ruled, just between October of 2025 and February of this year—that is October, November, December, January, February—over 5 months Federal courts ruled that ICE unlawfully detained not hundreds of people but thousands of people; 4,400 times in 5 months courts have ruled that Americans or legal residents of this country have been unlawfully detained.

That is illegal behavior at scale. And I don't care what your politics are, whether they are right or left, they are inclusionary or nativist, you should not be willing to fund an Agency that just doesn't care about the law at scale.

Mr. President, 48 people have died in ICE custody, 17 in just the last 4 months, right? The cameras aren't in Minneapolis like they were, but 17 people have died in custody in just the last month. Between 2017 and 2021, when Biden was President, there were a total in those 4 years of 52 people that had died. People are dying in ICE custody at a rate four times higher than during the Biden administration.

ICE has detained 6,200 children. We have put 6,000 children in jail. Seventy-three percent of the people that ICE has arrested have no criminal record; 95 percent of them have no violent criminal record. They say that they are locking up the worst of the worst; 5 percent, 1 in 20 have a violent criminal record.

Mr. President, 170 U.S. citizens have been detained. Almost all of them were Latino. You saw the videos of ICE and CBP officers going through the streets just detaining people based upon their accents.

Just this week, ICE detained the wife of SFC Jose Serrano. He is an Active-Duty United States Army soldier who

has served our military for 27 years, including service in Afghanistan.

His wife wasn't following the rules. She was obeying the rules. She was showing up to her court appointments, but they detained her anyway and now they are threatening to send her to Mexico, a country with which she has no ties. Sergeant First Class Serrano, because of his military service, is not allowed to travel to Mexico. Twenty-seven years he has been serving this country, and they are going to deport his wife who is following the law to Mexico and basically guaranteeing they will never see each other again.

Last month, a 5-year-old who was nonverbal with significant disabilities was put in jail at the Dilley Detention Center in Texas, a detention center that I tried to get into to inspect because of claims of horrific conditions, and I was not allowed to go into that facility.

Again, this should trouble Republicans and Democrats. I didn't show up unannounced. I gave them notice. They still didn't let me in. Even though the law explicitly states that any Member of Congress, Republican or Democrat, has the right—the statutory right—to inspect facilities.

This little 5-year-old, nonverbal 5-year-old was in jail for 3 weeks. This place is called the baby jail. The boy literally melted down while he was there. He struggled to eat. His stomach became visibly swollen because he was literally suffering from malnutrition, and he couldn't go to the bathroom. He was only released after a children's entertainer named Ms. Rachel highlighted his case in a video. Like, what are we doing? What are we doing? Like, intentionally abusing children? This wasn't before Minneapolis; this happened just a month ago.

Yesterday, it was reported that the Trump administration is in discussions to send more than 1,000 Afghans who were in the United States because they helped us during the Afghanistan war—they would be under the threat of death if they stayed in Afghanistan; we emergency evacuated them to the United States because they helped us, because they protected our troops. And the Trump administration said yesterday that they are going to take 1,000 of those Afghans, heroes, that helped protect our troops in Afghanistan and they are going to send them to the Congo, just for the point of being cruel, just because it is mean, just because it would be kind of funny to send a whole bunch of Afghans who helped us in the war to a country that is in a humanitarian meltdown right now.

So no, none of us should be signing on to fund an Agency that is this lawless and this inhumane. That is the bottom line.

But here is the second bottom line: People are suffering in this country right now. And they are not suffering because we let immigrants into America, they are suffering because gas prices in some parts of the country are

over \$6. On average, gasoline is over \$4. It was just \$3 a few months ago. And it is \$6 and \$5 and \$4 for one reason only: this insane, incompetent war that is being waged in Iran. That is the only reason that these gas prices are so high right now.

The national average, as I said, is over \$4. Americans have now paid more than \$16 billion more at the pump than they should have simply because of Trump's war. Sixteen billion dollars out of the pockets of American consumers, American families, American small businesses, sent to the oil companies who are, by the way, making a killing off these high prices, just because of Trump's incompetent war in Iran.

Americans, since Trump came into office, have spent \$2,300 more on goods and services because of inflation and tariffs. The average family has spent an extra \$2,000 in the last year and a half on the things that they buy every day because of Trump's inflation and because of his tariffs.

There are 15 million people in this country who are on the verge of losing their healthcare because of a law that Donald Trump and Republicans passed in this Congress ripping health insurance away from seniors, the poor, and the disabled.

The Consumer Price Index is up 3.3 percent over last year. That is closing in on double what the Federal Reserve's target is. Unemployment is up since Trump took office. Long-term unemployment is way up since Trump took office. Unemployment for Black workers is up since Trump took office.

The tariffs, which are part of the reason that Americans have spent more than \$2,000 extra because of Trump's policies, were supposed to be tough, hard medicine in order to bring factory jobs back to the United States. Biden had increased the number of manufacturing jobs in this country. We had more manufacturing jobs at the end of Joe Biden's term than we had at the beginning.

Well, do you know what has happened since Trump took office? He has reversed all of that progress. The tariffs aren't bringing more manufacturing jobs to the United States. We are losing manufacturing jobs. We have lost 100,000 manufacturing jobs since Donald Trump became President.

So we are paying higher tariffs, and we are losing manufacturing jobs. Like, it doesn't make any sense.

And so we are going to spend—this week on the floor—giving a blank check to an immigration enforcement Agency that is out of control, while ignoring the real problems that Americans are facing.

We could have spent this week—Republicans could have spent their reconciliation process on gas prices or the healthcare catastrophe that is about to hit Americans or reversing Trump's tariffs or trying to actually do things that will bring manufacturing jobs back to this country, but they are doing none of that.

There is no conversation on the Senate floor right now about gas prices. There is no conversation on the Senate floor being led by Republicans about inflation. There is nothing being done to bring our manufacturing jobs back. There is no second look at the last reconciliation bill they passed, which is going to end insurance for 15 million Americans.

Instead, Republicans are handing billions of dollars in a blank check to an immigration enforcement Agency that right now is hunting 5-year-old kids with severe disabilities and locking them up in baby prisons to the point that they have swollen bellies because of their sickness due to the inhumane conditions.

They are locking up the family members of 27-year military veterans fighting for this country, just because it is mean and cruel.

So we are going to have a chance to debate this over the next 24 hours and vote on it, but I think the American people are seeing where Republican priorities are: not on the stuff that matters to American families.

I am not saying that the people of this country don't want a secure border—they do—but that is not what we are debating here. We are debating funding an immigration enforcement operation that is going after legal citizens, that is not targeting people who are a threat to this country, that exists just to try to stoke fears of our neighbors, that tries to make people think that immigrants are the biggest threat to this country so that you are distracted from the fact that Donald Trump is stealing from you—the most corrupt President in the history of this country.

We could be spending this time—we could even try to come together, Republicans and Democrats—to do something about inflation or the cost of gas. We have been begging our Republican colleagues to vote with us on these resolutions to stop the war in Iran because that is probably the fastest way to get the gas prices to come down.

We could spend time working across the aisle to try to address the issues that are a real crisis for American citizens right now: costs, inflation, gas prices, health insurance.

But, instead, we are about to send another blank check to an Agency that is unconscionably out of control.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BANKS). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, as we gather here, prices and costs around the country are going up and up and up. The cost of gas is going up. Electric bills are going up. The price of gro-

ceries is going up. The costs of rent and mortgages are up. Childcare costs are up, and the list goes on and on. So rising costs and prices are clearly on the minds of the American people as they try to make ends meet.

Dealing with those costs should be a priority for this Congress, but in this bill, Senate Republicans are telling the country—telling our fellow Americans—that rising costs and affordability are not their problem, are not their priority.

Budgets always tell us a lot about what the President and the Congress think is important, and the budget reconciliation process that Republicans are using right now specifically tells us a lot about what the Senate majority's priorities are. It tells us what, in this moment, Senate Republicans are focused on.

That is because it is a special procedure that allows the majority party—in this case, the Republican Party—to pass something without a single vote from the minority party. The Senate Republicans are preparing to pass this without any Democratic vote. You can only do this once per fiscal year. So it is reserved for the biggest goals, the top priorities, the things that the majority party—the Senate Republicans—thinks are the most important, the things it wants to become law.

When the Democrats were last in the majority, we used the budget reconciliation process as well. We used it to pass the Inflation Reduction Act. That allowed us to require Medicare to negotiate lower prescription drug prices. We used it to cap the price of insulin for seniors. We used it to accelerate the deployment of clean energy to create good-paying jobs and to expand Affordable Care Act tax credits to make healthcare more affordable for millions and millions of our fellow Americans. That is what we used it for. In fact, it was those Affordable Care Act tax credits that Republicans allowed to expire at the end of last year.

So, last year, Republicans passed a reconciliation bill as well. They called it their Big Beautiful Bill. Well, it was beautiful if you were a billionaire, but it was pretty much a big betrayal for everyone else. It provided permanent tax cuts for the wealthy, and it was in that bill that Senate Republicans and the President allowed the Affordable Care Act tax credits to expire, causing premiums to go up for 22 million of our fellow Americans. In fact, they went up so high that 4 million Americans lost their coverage altogether. But in that bill, wherein tax credits for working Americans to better afford healthcare were not extended, Republicans and President Trump provided big, permanent tax cuts for the rich.

I want colleagues to focus on this chart for a moment because it tells you exactly what the tax priorities were in the Republicans' reconciliation bill from last year.

As I said, it was a Big Beautiful Bill if you were a billionaire. As you can

see, 72 percent of the tax benefits went to the richest 20 percent of the American people—72 percent of the tax benefits went to the top 20 percent. In fact, it gets even more skewed than that. If you zero in more closely with a magnifying glass, 22 percent of the total tax benefits went to the top 1 percent—the richest Americans. That is what Republicans did in their so-called Big Beautiful Bill. That is why I say it was beautiful if you were a billionaire. We know that it was skewed in that direction not only by the numbers but because Republicans chose to make the tax cuts for billionaires and the very rich permanent. Those go on forever.

I asked the Director of the President's Office of Management and Budget, Russ Vought, about this phenomenon in a hearing just last week. He conceded that the bill last year, the reconciliation bill, provided permanent tax cuts for the very rich, and he conceded that the tax cuts and benefits for everybody else, which are much smaller as a proportion of the whole, were made temporary. For example, the "no tax on tips" provision will expire at the end of 2028. Smaller tax cuts for working people—temporary. Big tax cuts for wealthy Americans—permanent. They have admitted to it. That was a choice that was made by Republicans as part of that bill.

That is why I introduced an alternative, the Working Americans' Tax Cut Act, which provides 100 percent of its tax benefits not to the richest 20 percent but to the 80 percent of American taxpayers who are working hard—paycheck to paycheck—to make ends meet for themselves and their families.

Now, the Trump tax plan that he worked on and passed with Republicans not only provided very wealthy individuals with these big tax cuts but also big profitable corporations. In fact, the changes that were made by President Trump and Republicans have enabled 88 of the largest corporations in America to pay no—zero—Federal income taxes, despite having more than \$100 billion in total profits among them. At the same time that these huge tax cuts were given to big corporations and the very wealthy, Republicans cut by \$1 trillion our investments in health and nutrition programs for our fellow Americans. By the way, all told, it adds \$4 trillion to our national debt.

There was another major part of that bill that Republicans passed last year with the President, and it was a massive slush fund for their mass deportation agenda. They put in that bill \$140 billion for ICE and CBP. So, just for comparison's sake, for ICE, that was seven times their previous annual appropriation. They stuffed that into that one so-called Big Beautiful Bill. You know, that is as much money as many countries spend on their militaries in a year.

The results have been predictable—a bloated, unaccountable Agency that is not focused on deporting the "worst of the worst," as the President said he

would do, but that goes into communities and indiscriminately abducts people, ships them around the country, and then tries to deport them. Overwhelmingly—overwhelmingly—they are people with no criminal records who, according to DHS' own data, pose no risk to our communities: small business owners, pastors, veterans, parents taking their kids to school, even children.

When the American people rose up against these brutal policies and exercised their right to protest, when they took to the streets to exercise their First Amendment rights and to take pictures of what ICE agents were doing, we saw in Minneapolis two American citizens shot and killed—a mom, Renee Good, who was killed as she tried to drive away from ICE agents who were aggressively approaching her car, and a VA nurse Alex Pretti, who was killed when he stopped to help a fellow observer. He was shot in the back by CBP agents.

And the Trump administration—what was their response? They called the victims—they called Renee Good and Alex Pretti—domestic terrorists.

That is the mindset of this out-of-control, lawless ICE operation.

Well, my constituents in Maryland and Americans across the country have been horrified by these actions. They said it has to stop, and it needs to stop. These Agencies need to be held accountable. They need to be reined in. We need independent investigations.

So Democrats put forward some pretty straightforward proposed reforms: require Federal agents to show identification, take off the masks that allow them to evade accountability. Our local police officers don't wear masks. Our local police officers provide identification.

We also said: You have got to cooperate with State and local law enforcement investigating these incidents. When you have an administration calling the victims domestic terrorists, it is hard to trust the outcome of an administration that is doing the investigation. We want the local and State law enforcement authorities involved.

And our list of reforms went on, but they were rejected by Republicans and rejected by the White House. They didn't want meaningful reforms. They wanted to keep the blank check going.

And so then Democrats proposed that: OK, let's set aside ICE and CBP, and let's negotiate those, but let's immediately fund other parts of the Department of Homeland Security, like TSA, FEMA, and the Coast Guard. We were resisted for a very long time, and then finally Senate Republicans agreed. There was no reason to hold TSA, for example, hostage to an out-of-control ICE operation. So we passed that out of the U.S. Senate, allowing those other entities to get funding.

But what happened in the Republican-controlled House? Speaker JOHN-SON refused to even let it come to a vote.

And so here we are, and Republicans are putting forward their reconciliation bill for this fiscal year. Their top priority? At this moment, when Americans are seeing their bills go up, their costs rise, when American families have had to absorb the huge increases as a result of Trump's illegal, unconstitutional tariff taxes—which is estimated, on average, to cost American families \$1,700 a year. By the way, the President should give those families their money back, and do it now.

But as all of these costs are rising, Republicans here in Congress have decided to focus, instead, not on affordability but on using this special, rare process to do something else: to add to the slush fund for ICE and Customs and Border Patrol. And they are doing it in a way that doesn't require any Democratic votes. So this is Republicans only, so that is how we know that this is their top priority.

And, by the way, they are wasting a ton of taxpayer money in the process—a lot of taxpayer money—on these warehouses that they are buying up around the country to retrofit for detention centers, often paying way over market value. In my State of Maryland, they have spent \$102 million to buy a warehouse in Western Maryland to turn into a detention center. They did so without adequate notice, without consultation with the community, and it is going to put strains on local water supplies and sewage capacity.

That warehouse project has been halted by a judge and is now being reconsidered by DHS, but \$100 million of taxpayer money, already wasted.

I don't think any of us are surprised by the priorities that have been put forward by the Trump administration and now with Republicans in Congress because it was right down the hall here that Donald Trump was sworn in, and he promised a golden age for America, for Americans. Well, he has been delivering a golden age—a Gilded Age—for his billionaire buddies.

And despite what he said during his campaign when he said he was going to stop wars and bring down prices, he has started wars. Prices are going up. He is focused on building a gold-plated ballroom in the White House and new monuments to himself. He is focused on hiding portions of the Epstein files from survivors and the American people. He has been busy lying to the American people time and time again, telling them that prices are going down and the world is more peaceful and everybody is doing just great.

He wants everybody to believe the dear leader; and, unfortunately, if you look at a Cabinet meeting these days, you can see all the Cabinet officials—the most billionaire-filled Cabinet in history—nodding along.

But we can do better than that, and we should do better than that. We should listen to the concerns being expressed by people all over the country, and we should focus on bringing costs down and letting people have and keep

a little bit more of their hard-earned money—working people, not mostly the billionaires.

Instead, we see this effort by Republicans simply to fatten an Agency that is out of control, engaged in lawless activity, instead of what is important to the American people.

So I urge all of my colleagues to oppose—to strongly oppose—this reconciliation bill, which is simply an effort to stuff an illegal Agency like ICE at the expense of the American people. I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, there is a lot going on in the country and the world. Gas is at 4 bucks a gallon nationwide, and it is 5.65 at my corner Shell station in Honolulu. Groceries are expensive. Electricity bills are rising at double the rate of inflation, and millions of Americans have lost their health insurance this year. People really are struggling just to get by, and we, in the U.S. Congress, have got to be focused on helping them.

We have this very limited tool called reconciliation, and it is a way to circumvent the filibuster. It is a way to do things on just a purely partisan basis, and both parties have used this tool. It is really only available once every fiscal year. And without getting into the terribly boring details, it is basically spending or tax cuts. And that is the tool that we can use without having to compromise with the other side.

Now, when we had the House and the Senate and the Presidency, we used that tool for the American Rescue Plan. In the middle of COVID, mass unemployment, we decided to stabilize everybody's salary so they wouldn't be unable to make their rent or their mortgage or put food on the table.

And then we did the Inflation Reduction Act, which focused on reducing the cost of prescription medicine and attacking the climate crisis and providing tax credits for those who are working but not wealthy but not poor enough to qualify for an array of government programs.

And so the most important thing to understand about what is happening today and tomorrow is not that Republicans are about to spend \$70 billion to fund an Agency that already has 7 years of prefunding, not that they are trying to make ICE—and will make ICE—more well-funded than the U.S. Marine Corps; it is not that Republicans refuse to make even the most reasonable reforms to hold ICE to the same standard that every local police department is held to—that you have to get a warrant before you conduct a search, that you have to introduce yourself, that you have to have a name and badge number, that there are very, very rare circumstances under which an officer should be permitted to wear a mask and conceal their face, and that there should be training in excess of 47 days.

I want everybody to understand the reason ICE trainees were given 47 days of training is to match up with the fact that this is the 47th President of the United States. It used to be many months of training. There used to be use-of-force training. They used to be treated like a normal law enforcement agency.

Now, we can have a disagreement about the degree and extent of immigration policy and who should be in this country and who shouldn't, but I think what happened was they mistook people's dissatisfaction with the Biden border policy for license to go and terrorize communities.

Everybody now agrees: Get the bad guys who don't belong here out of the country. Deport people who are committing violent crimes or dangerous crimes. Get them out of here. But everybody also understands that what ICE has done over the last year has been inhumane and made all of us less safe.

And so we were at a negotiation about—again, these are not like some progressive wish list full of reforms; these are literally the things that the Honolulu Police Department, that the New York City Police Department, that any police department in a rural State or an urban State or anywhere across the country has to adhere to. And most law enforcement officers—Federal, State, county—are perfectly fine being well-trained, are perfectly fine having to get a warrant, are perfectly fine when there is an officer-involved shooting to have an independent investigation. All of that is normal, and most law enforcement officers say: Yeah, these guys are unusually poorly trained.

And so we were in a negotiation to provide funding with reforms, but the Republicans ran out of patience. And so what we said was: Why don't we just go ahead and fund the Agencies that we all agree on—FEMA, the Cybersecurity function, the Coast Guard. So we passed this over on a bipartisan—not just a bipartisan basis, a unanimous basis out of this Chamber, and then the House killed it.

And so they are stuck now trying to figure out how they are going to fund this Agency. So they are using their one legislative opportunity that comes only once every fiscal year to fund ICE and CBP for 3 years going forward.

Why does that matter so much? First, it is a failure of just, like, basic legislating to solve a problem that everybody saw with their own eyes. When Alex Pretti and Renee Good were killed by Federal employees, it transcended politics; it transcended immigration policy. That is for sure. Nobody wanted to see that. But they didn't have the appetite to enact the most basic reforms, and so here we are. But that is not the most important part.

The most important part is this: People are paying more for gas, for utilities, for food, for lumber, for housing, for healthcare, for every single aspect

of their lives. And you would think even if—I am not accusing anybody of anything—but even if you didn't care about the actual material condition of your constituents, you would care that they were mad at you that everything was up. You would care that everything has gotten more expensive during Donald Trump's second term, especially since, by most accounts, he was elected because everything was too expensive.

And so you would think these guys—they have the trifecta: They have the House; they have the Senate; they have the Presidency. And so they are going to go charging up the mountain and try to reduce the cost of living. That is what you should do with this reconciliation opportunity. That is what you should do. And, instead, they are spending \$70 billion on this rogue Agency.

So over the next couple of days, we are going to give them opportunities to enact good policy that would reduce the cost of living. There are a number of ways we could do that: We could restore the tax credits for the Affordable Care Act. We could reverse the tariffs that are attacks on every consumer across the United States of America. We could end this preposterous war, which is costing about \$2 billion a day and raising the price, by the way, not just of gasoline but of diesel, and not just of diesel but of fertilizer, which is an input for our agricultural industry. So everything is getting more expensive at the same time that we are spending \$2 billion a day.

Just to give you context, last year when the government was shut down over a healthcare fight, the amount in question was \$23 billion for a year's worth of the Affordable Care Act tax credits. That is about 11 days' worth of this war. And so don't let anybody tell you that there is not enough money. There is enough money. They are spending \$2 billion a day on this war that nobody asked for, nobody expected. It is not even working out—\$2 billion a day. No end in sight. And then \$70 billion prefunding a Federal Agency that has already been prefunded.

And so don't let anybody tell you there is not enough money. What there is not enough of is moral clarity. People are going broke, and we are, in fact, lighting money on fire in the government. It is just for all the wrong things.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

S. CON. RES. 33

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise today to oppose a budget resolution my Republican colleagues have put before the U.S. Senate.

The American people are worried because of the pure chaos let loose on them by President Trump and the Republican majority—whether it is tariffs, billionaire tax cuts, or a war of choice with Iran.

Today, in addition, Republicans have put before the Senate not a bill to help

average Americans cope with the higher prices for energy, food, and healthcare caused by their policies but instead a budget resolution that will dump another \$140 billion into Border Patrol and Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

This unpopular and excessive spending comes mere months after Republicans already gave these Agencies a first-of-its-kind slush fund of \$140 billion—an amount that is around four to seven times their annual regular appropriations and dwarfs annual funding for programs like SNAP food assistance and housing choice vouchers that actually lower costs for Americans.

The good news is that we will be giving our Republican colleagues a chance to correct this issue—to vote for funding and policies that actually help the American people. This includes a measure I intend to offer to rescind the Medicaid cuts Republicans and Donald Trump enacted last summer, which are depriving millions of Americans of health coverage.

Since President Trump returned to the White House, billionaires have gotten richer and working-class Americans and middle-class Americans have been overrun with higher prices, overrun with an affordability crisis.

The President's signature policy is his broad tariffs. As Americans struggled under the weight of ever-increasing costs, the President imposed new, illegal tariff taxes that added an extra \$1,000 in additional costs to the average household budget last year, according to the nonpartisan Tax Foundation. And even though the bulk of Trump's tariffs were declared illegal by the Supreme Court, the Trump administration has fought to prevent Americans from getting their money back. Instead, with the help of this Republican Congress, the President is delivering financial relief to his real constituents—his billionaire and multimillionaire friends—giving the top one-tenth of 1 percent—that is the top one-tenth of 1 percent—of households a huge \$250,000 tax cut—\$250,000 this year and every year going forward, unless we take action.

To partially hide the cost of this huge giveaway which is adding \$3.4 trillion to the national deficit, Republicans cut Medicaid by nearly \$1 trillion and made health insurance, as a result, unaffordable for millions of working-class Americans. Roughly 15 million people in this country are projected to lose their health insurance over the next decade because of these trillion-dollar Republican cuts. In an act of cynicism, Republicans phased in these cuts to hit Americans just after the election this year. It is all part and parcel of the longstanding approach of "say one thing but do another."

As you might recall, the President pledged to reduce inflation the first day he was in office. Actually, inflation has gone up. The first day in office, it was 3 percent; now it is 3.3 percent and likely to climb higher because of the

situation in the Persian Gulf and the stress on oil production and distribution throughout the world.

Some of these cuts to Medicaid have already taken place, and about 1.5 million people were forced to drop their Affordable Care Act coverage during open enrollment this winter because of increased costs and the loss of tax credits for their premiums.

In my home State of Rhode Island, 10,000 people lost their health insurance. That is a 20-percent drop in coverage from that population. Before President Trump came into office and began decimating our healthcare system, Rhode Island was on track to have one of the lowest rates of uninsured individuals in the country: 2.2 percent.

There was still much work to be done—lowering costs further, requiring even more drug companies to negotiate lower prices, cutting out-of-pocket costs, increasing the healthcare workforce to make it easier to find a doctor, finding more cures and treatment by funding biomedical research, and more than that—but the Trump administration is not doing any of that. Instead, people are losing their healthcare, and it is just costing everyone more money in the long run.

When people get sick and don't have health insurance, they will end up eventually in the emergency room with a much more serious case and a much more costly case, which is more expensive than these premiums that we were helping people afford. And those costs—the cost of the uninsured going to emergency rooms, the cost of the problems contemplated by the failure to have health insurance—will be passed on to everyone. They will drive up health costs for businesses, families, States, and the Federal Government.

We are seeing that already not just in Rhode Island but across the country. Because of the anticipated loss of Medicaid funds, Blue Cross and the other insurance companies are already raising their premiums for private healthcare insurance. And that will go up and up and up, so that no one is escaping these cuts. It is not just a few of the poor people; it is everyone.

We have to do much, much more. These healthcare cuts are not making people healthier. They are not cost-effective. They are just a way to pay for tax cuts, in summary.

With households reeling from his tariff cuts—or shocks, I should say; they are not really cuts, they are raises—and healthcare cuts, President Trump upped the ante by unilaterally choosing to attack Iran and close a huge portion of the global oil industry. Any economist could have predicted what came next when you shut down 20 percent of the world's oil. Gas prices spiked from an average of \$2.98 per gallon to a recent high of \$4.17 per gallon. Diesel shot up above \$5.60 a gallon and hit record highs in at least six States. Heating oil has gone above \$5 per gallon, putting even greater pressure on household budgets. We are seeing costs

overwhelm working families in Rhode Island. Their healthcare has gone up. Gasoline prices are going up. Heating oil is going up. Groceries are going up.

Our farmers are being impacted because the Strait of Hormuz is the passage point for a huge amount of fertilizer or fertilizer components, and it is hitting farmers all over this country and all over the world.

What we are seeing, though, is that the President is not only not getting it, but he is also asking Congress to eliminate existing aid that lowers home energy costs, provides affordable housing, and helps families pay for groceries. All of this was in his recent budget proposal. In each of these instances, the President chose to take policy actions that any rational person knows would make it harder for families to afford the cost of living.

Under his watch, food staples like ground beef and coffee have hit record highs. So have new car and home prices, which now sit at almost \$50,000 and over \$400,000 respectively. Health insurers in the Affordable Care Act Marketplace increased prices 26 percent in 2026, and business plans, as I said, are also going up—the private insurance that company owners have to pay for.

Right now, the Senate should be considering bread-and-butter issues like these. We should invest in the American people by ensuring every family can access programs like SNAP, Housing Choice vouchers, and the Affordable Care Act Marketplace so that no one has to worry about food, housing, or health insurance.

Unfortunately, this budget does not do a single thing to lower prices. Instead, it unlocks reconciliation, a process that will allow Republicans to ram through another partisan bill that funds two rogue Federal Agencies—ICE and Customs and Border Protection—without any accountability for their operations.

These Agencies spent the bulk of last year intimidating Americans throughout our Nation instead of conducting themselves like true law enforcement professionals. They were not seeking hardened criminals who were threats to the community. They were not stationed at the border, keeping a watchful eye for smugglers and those types. They were sent en masse to cities like Minneapolis and elsewhere to conduct seemingly random roundups. That is not real law enforcement. That is not the way to reform our broken immigration system. And that is certainly not the kind of activity that merits \$140 billion more in taxpayer money.

Indeed, ICE officers tragically killed two Americans in the past year, and 48 immigrants have died in custody since the start of 2025. Together with Customs and Border Protection, ICE deployments have forced States and cities to shoulder tens of millions of dollars in new costs. Businesses in municipalities that weathered ICE surges lost customers and revenue as Federal

agents took over streets and intimidated local residents.

This is all bad enough, but House Republicans have taken it one step further and are holding funding for the Coast Guard, FEMA, and the rest of DHS hostage until they can grab another \$140 billion for ICE and Customs and Border Protection.

Again, neither ICE nor Customs and Border Protection needs more money. Republicans used the reconciliation process last summer to provide \$140 billion to these two Agencies, which usually receive less than \$30 billion a year in total annual funding.

What these Agencies need is not more money but more accountability—commonsense measures like requiring that all agents wear body-worn cameras and visible identification, while prohibiting the use of masks. You will not find a professional police force in this country that goes about their community in masks with no identification. We are just asking ICE to be professionals, to do what every other police force in this country—State, local—does and does each day.

We want to require agents to obtain a judicial warrant, signed by a neutral judge, before entering private property rather than relying on administrative warrants. We have seen incidents where ICE crashed into a house, grabbed an individual out, half-clothed, took him to their detention facility, and it turns out the individual was an American citizen, not an illegal alien. Why? Well, one reason was they didn't have the scrutiny of a real judge pledged to enforce the law; rather, they just asked their boss—"Sign this, please"—and they were off to create harm in a community.

We also want to prohibit agents from targeting hospitals, schools, daycare centers, churches, places of worship, holy places, and courthouses for immigration enforcement raids. This is something that we must do. These are places of community. These are places of religious observation, not a place to trap people and haul them away.

Now, to avoid confronting the malfeasance of ICE and Customs and Border Protection and to avoid addressing the damage their economic policies are causing, Senate Republicans are pushing partisan legislation to double down on their mistakes, giving more money to out-of-control Federal Agencies and failing to do a thing to help average Americans in this economy. We all—all Americans—deserve better.

In amendment after amendment during this debate, Senate Democrats will be giving our Republican colleagues the chance to stand up and do the right thing, to fix President Trump's mistakes, reverse the blunder of their Medicaid cuts, and start solving our affordability crisis. And I hope we will all join together and make those wise choices to help the American people.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MORENO). The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. SCHMITT. Mr. President, I rise again on this pressing matter of funding law enforcement, and the stakes couldn't be higher. Just weeks ago, I stood on this floor and warned that we would be back. Democrats blocked full funding for border security and deportations. They chose a radical ideology over the safety of the American people, yet again.

Now, we return with reconciliation as our vehicle, and we will not fail. This time, we will finish what the American people elected us to do—enforce our immigration laws and deport those who defy them, because this is not just another spending debate. This is a test of whether or not we are still a sovereign nation.

For decades, Washington has operated under a dangerous lie that America is an economic zone, not a nation; merely an economy, not a people; merely a labor market, and not a home. Under that lie, borders became suggestions, citizenship became paperwork, and enforcement became optional.

Then came the 4-year invasion, 15 million illegal immigrants flooding across our border—criminals, rapists, murderers. And the American people were told to accept the consequences in their wages, their schools, their hospitals, their neighborhoods, and sometimes at the grave sites of their children.

The American people were told to accept the affordability crisis caused by the massive influx of millions of aliens who suppressed Americans' wages, and Democrats nodded along as Joe Biden let it happen. The American people were told to accept higher rent. They were told to accept higher housing prices as millions of new neighbors flooded their communities, driving up costs. We saw that surge account for up to 100 percent of rental price growth in our most populous States—in two-thirds nationwide. That is the root cause of today's affordability crisis.

And on national security, the threat is very real. We have seen individuals from over 100 countries cross our borders—cartels, traffickers, and foreign adversaries ready to exploit weakness. Without enforcement, our southern border becomes a superhighway for cartels, crime, drugs, and terror.

But beyond economics and security, there is something deeper at stake. Our Nation isn't a marketplace. It is a people, a shared history, a culture, a way of life. Our Nation is woven together by our faith, our families, our freedoms. Our Nation has language, a memory, a border, and a people with the sovereign right to decide who gets to join them.

American citizenship is not a property interest to be conferred upon anyone who flies under the radar long enough. American citizenship is a covenant. It confers extraordinary rights but also demands obligations, loyalty, gratitude, humility, and the fidelity to the Nation and its people.

And when millions enter illegally—without assimilation, without limits,

without enforcement—you don't get unity. You get division. You get a country that no longer knows who it is, and that is what we are here to stop.

This package funds the machinery of enforcement Democrats spent years trying to dismantle. It funds ICE. It funds CBP. It funds detention capacity, transportation, officers, agents, removal operations, and the hard infrastructure required to carry out deportations at scale.

The point is simple: A deportation order means nothing without a detention bed. A detention bed means nothing without agents. Agents mean nothing without transportation. And immigration law means nothing if Congress refuses to fund the men and women charged with enforcing it.

We have seen the costs of that failure. We have seen what this chaos looks like up close. It runs like a river of sin cutting through our land—murder, rape, arson, torture. Innocent Americans—daughters, sons, families—lost because the law was not enforced before the crime; lost because the Democrats have chosen illegal aliens over their fellow citizens, a choice made time and time again by the Democrats.

When given the choice between funding deportations and protecting sanctuary jurisdictions, Democrats chose sanctuary jurisdictions. When given the choice between detention beds and catch-and-release, Democrats chose release. When given the choice between American citizens and illegal aliens, Democrats chose illegal aliens, and the human cost of that decision is staggering.

The destiny of the American Nation is not to manifest death and destruction upon its own people through lawlessness and subversion of law enforcement. The destiny of this Nation—our Nation—is to be great, to be sovereign, and to be free.

We will not accept a system where action only comes after an American's blood is spilled on American soil. We will not defund law enforcement as Democrats argue for. We will not force our agents to do more with less while anarchy spreads like a plague. And we will not accept the lie that enforcement must always be delayed, diluted, or denied.

We are going to restore order. That means ending sanctuary policies that shield criminal illegal aliens. It means cutting off the incentives that fuel illegal immigration. It means giving our agents every tool they need to do their jobs.

To my Democrat colleagues, the American people rejected your open borders agenda. They voted for law and order. They voted for sovereignty. They voted for the deportations law enforcement will deliver.

And we are going to deliver.

To my Republican colleagues, this is our moment. For too long, we talked about these problems without solving them. That era is over. We have a real

opportunity right now to change the trajectory of this country; to restore the rule of law; to restore sovereignty; to restore our trajectory, our destiny; to restore the American Nation. And we cannot afford to fail because this is more than just about policy. It is about whether or not our kids inherit a country that has the guts to enforce its laws and protect its own citizens.

We will not let America become a place where citizenship means nothing, where borders mean nothing, where the good and the heroic people who built this country are treated as enemies, while politicians refuse to notify law enforcement when a criminal illegal alien is being released from prison and into our communities.

I reject that future and so do the American people.

Citizenship is not merely paperwork. It is a covenant among our people. The first duty of the Federal Government is not to the world, not to an NGO, not to foreign nations or nationalists. It is not to the cheap labor lobby either. Its first duty is to its citizens.

The American people are watching. They will remember who stood with them and who stood in the way. The safety of our citizens isn't optional. The rule of law isn't optional. And our duty to defend both is not optional.

We will fund ICE. We will fund CBP. We will fund law enforcement. We will enforce our laws, and we will protect the American people, no matter how many times and for how long we have to return to this floor.

We will finish the job.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, well here we are. And for more than 2 months, our colleagues and friends across the aisle have decided that they were going to hold the Department of Homeland Security shut down, kind of hold them hostage.

And for that same 2 months, Republicans have been trying every single day to negotiate with them in good faith to find a resolution to this.

Well, they claimed, if they could just reform ICE, they would be happy. And, where reasonable, the White House offered to implement updated guidelines for ICE agents, including expanding the use of body-worn cameras, limiting civil immigration enforcement at certain sensitive locations, and enforcing the use of visible officer ID during enforcement actions.

Well, that sounds reasonable. Those were all things they wanted. But do you know what? All of a sudden, that wasn't enough. They rejected every offer to reopen the Department of Homeland Security.

Since February, they have taken 16 votes—not 1 or 2, but 16 votes—against reopening the Department of Homeland Security.

One thing has become very clear, and it is this: For the Democrats, shutting down DHS is not a means to accom-

plish other policy goals. It is not a negotiating tactic. Keeping Homeland Security shut down is the goal. That is what they want.

Now, you come to that realization because when everything you put on the table—things they have said they are for, things they have said they wanted to see done—and they reject it all. They reject it all. Nothing suits them because they have wanted to keep DHS shut down.

And their goal is to abolish ICE. Their goal is to defund law enforcement.

So they found out that that was really not that popular with the American people because the American people want safe communities.

They think we should have public safety as a goal and they have watched what the Democrats have done and they have decided they don't like this. They like the fact that Republicans, that President Trump, has been focused on public safety.

You know, that is one of the reasons that the American people sent President Trump back to the Oval Office. It was to make certain that we were focused on our Nation's security, that we were focused on safe communities, that we were apprehending people that were in the country illegally, that individuals that were in the country illegally who had committed crimes were being apprehended and were being deported.

And I will say this: Since Inauguration Day, President Trump has delivered on his promise that he would restore law and order and he would bring law and order to the southern border after 4 years of solid chaos down there and, what we know, at least 10 million illegal aliens coming into this country.

For 11 consecutive months, CBP has released zero—zero—illegal aliens into our country, think about that, 11 months in a row. Now, under Joe Biden, border apprehensions were soaring, and what we saw last month was the stat that border apprehensions were down 97 percent from the same time in Joe Biden's term.

For most Americans, they like this, and they like the fact that the border is secure. They like the fact that drug dealers and sex traffickers are not coming into the country. They like the fact that people have to go to a port of entry, and they have to show their documents if they want to come into our precious country.

But you know what? That isn't what the Democrats want. They want to end President Trump's success at the southern border. They want to abolish ICE. They want to bring back the Biden years of rising crime, crime in your community's streets. They want to bring back drug trafficking. They want to bring back human trafficking and sex trafficking and lawlessness.

If you look at where their priorities are and where they spend their time and the votes they cast, that is what you see. Open the border, abolish ICE, defund the police, bring back the Biden

years of rising crime, chaos, drug trafficking, human smuggling, sex trafficking, and lawlessness.

Now, as Republicans, we have said we are not going to stand for this, which is why we are moving to fully fund ICE and CBP for years to come through this reconciliation.

Our budget committee is chaired by Senator GRAHAM, and he has introduced the budget resolution that is going to unlock a pathway for a public safety reconciliation bill.

Now, I don't see who can be against public safety. This is a targeted, focused bill, focused on public safety, something everybody should want not only for our Nation but for their cities and States.

Now, by doing this public safety reconciliation bill, we can fund these vital Agencies, and we can do it with a simple majority vote. This is how we were able to pass the Big Beautiful Bill with the working families tax cuts, and, indeed, I think many people have taken advantage of those extra tax cuts that were in that bill as they filed their taxes this year.

Now, every single Democrat who votes against funding for border enforcement is going to have to explain to their constituents why they put the concerns of illegal aliens before the concerns of the citizens who voted for them.

Tennesseans are really sick and tired of the games that are being played up here, primarily these games by the Democrats where they are not funding DHS. And they are frustrated when they see that Congress isn't getting things done.

This week, I did a telephone town-hall. I love doing these. We have thousands of Tennesseans on the line with us, and some of the questions that I got were: Why can't we fund border enforcement? We should want to keep the border closed so we know who is coming in here. Who could be opposed to that?

Why can't we pass the SAVE America Act? You know, 83 percent of the American people, not just Republicans or Independents or Democrats, but 83 percent of the American people want us to pass the SAVE America Act.

It is very simple. If you are going to register to vote in our country, you have got to prove that you are a U.S. citizen—common sense. Most every country does that. You have got to be a citizen if you are going to vote in their elections.

And next, they want to make certain that when you go to vote, you show an ID. Thirty-six of our States require already that you show an ID.

We have got 14 States, primarily blue States, that do not require that you show an ID. To the American people, it is common sense. So they ask: Why can't we pass the SAVE America Act? Why can't we prioritize our national security amid a conflict that is going on with Iran, who is the world's largest state sponsor of terrorism?

We should be prioritizing our Nation's security. And time and again, as I answered these questions, I would tell Tennesseans the Democrat agenda is completely at odds with the interests of the American people. They are going to do anything and everything they can to undermine President Donald Trump because they don't like him. And they have TDS.

And so to them what they are trying to do is stall and not fund the Agencies that are here to support what the American people want to see done.

Now, despite all these efforts, Democrats can't stop us from putting the American people first, addressing the concerns, meeting the needs of the American people.

So we will move forward with our reconciliation bill. We will move forward with fully reopening the Department of Homeland Security as soon as we possibly can, and we will move forward with making certain the American people know that the Democrats have used them as a pawn. They didn't want to negotiate. Nothing was ever good enough. Their goal was to abolish ICE and to defund the police.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Wisconsin.

IRAN

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I rise today to end President Trump's war in Iran. This vote could not come at a more crucial time.

Today was supposed to be end of the cease-fire that is hanging on by a thread. While the President said that it will be extended, we have no idea until when. We have no idea if the President will, as he has many times, change his position and go through with his threat to commit war crimes and bomb civilian infrastructure.

So now is the time to act. We simply do not have any time to waste and see if an entire civilization will die because the President gets impatient.

This entire war has been unnecessary, illegal, and unwise. We need to put a check on this President before it gets even worse.

Unfortunately, the President has shown us that he did not have a plan after day one. The President said that the war would be over in a matter of days. We are coming up on the 2-month mark with no real end in sight. And over the course of 50-plus days, we have seen nothing short of a disaster. This war has caused irreparable damage to families, to the American people, to our standing in the world, and to our economy.

We have lost 13 American servicemembers, with hundreds of others in-

jured, many seriously. Thousands of civilians have been killed including many dozens of schoolgirls by an errant U.S. bomb.

President Trump's war has delivered higher costs for Americans at the pump with families paying more than \$1 more per gallon since the war started. And I would be remiss if I didn't say that even the Trump administration is now admitting that those costs are going to be here to stay, given the mess they created in the Strait of Hormuz.

It has jacked up the cost of fertilizer and fuel for Wisconsin farmers. Soon enough, this will also mean higher costs at the checkout counter at the grocery store for families as my farmers simply can't eat those costs.

The cost of the war—which the administration won't even tell us outside of classified settings—is in the tens of billions of dollars, and the American taxpayers are footing the bill.

Iran's resolve is hardened and, arguably, so is its regime. And they are still in control of its enriched uranium.

This war has taken us backward and created more problems for the people that I work for. The American people have been crystal clear that they do not want this war. They want what they were promised from this President: lower costs and no foreign wars. They were sold a bad bill of goods and now are left cleaning it up.

It is time for Congress to do its job and end this war now. I encourage my colleagues to vote yes on this resolution.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. President, today the Iranians claimed to have seized two ships in the Strait of Hormuz, while firing on a third. The President has ordered the blockade of Iranian ports to continue, even as he announced a cease-fire, even as he backed off yet another apocalyptic threat.

In short, we are approaching the end of the second month of Trump's Iran war, and there is no end to the conflict or the confusion in sight.

Sadly, there is little sense that a deal is in the offing or what that deal would look like and whether our security will be any better if and when the President declares some kind of Pyrrhic victory. But this much we know already: This war has come at a terrible cost.

First and foremost, there has been the tragic loss of human lives. Mr. President, 13 of our servicemembers have been killed, including CW3 Robert Marzan of California. Over 200 U.S. servicemembers have been injured, some seriously. Our hearts go out to all of the families and communities from which they come.

Scores of Iranian civilians have also been killed including over a hundred at a girl's school that appears to have been mistakenly bombed by the United States. There have also been casualties in Israel and the Gulf States, the total number of which is still unknown.

Second, there is the economic cost to the American taxpayer to the tune of tens of billions of dollars—maybe when this conflict is over, hundreds of billions of dollars. Every American family will already be asked to pay over \$1,000 as their contribution to a war they did not want, which their Representatives in Congress did not vote to approve.

Just imagine what that means. For that price, America could have paid for universal pre-K for all of our kids. Think about that. Every American child could have had pre-K for the likely cost of this war. In a very real sense, the early childhood education of our kids will suffer because this President chose to invest in bombing Iran instead of educating our kids.

A hospital costs around \$100 million. That means there could have been 200 hospitals in 200 communities around the country for the cost of this war. One of those communities just might have been yours. Those hospitals will never be built because this President, who promised no more foreign wars, no more regime change wars, no more stupid wars, broke his promise. Diminished healthcare for you and your family is a cost of the war.

Third, you are paying much higher prices for gas, electricity, groceries, and more as a result of this war. Why? Because of the eminently predictable action Iran has taken to close a vital shipping lane—the Strait of Hormuz.

General Caine reportedly warned President Trump that Iran was very likely to take this action. Frankly, it didn't require a military genius to reach that conclusion.

But drunk on his own power, convinced of his own infallibility, this is a President, after all, who just said that he would have won the Vietnam war very quickly. Donald Trump could not conceive of anything other than a quick Iranian capitulation. Sadly, though, this has not been the case, and there is still no end to the conflict or the higher prices Americans are paying.

An average family—your family—can expect to pay at least \$1,000 more a year in costs like those at the pump as a result of Trump's Iran war; and that is on top of another \$1,000 in taxes to pay for all the bombs that we are dropping on that country.

And, finally, we are paying an additional cost for this war from the fact that the case for this war was never made to the country or to the Congress, from the fact that our Republican colleagues in the majority have refused thus far to hold a single hearing on the war. I am told maybe there will be one at the end of next week.

And the American people are not informed about the purpose, the goals, the duration, the price tag, and more of this conflict because we have had no open hearings on it.

And that cost is this: more wars by this President or future Presidents because Congress has refused to exercise its constitutional authority over war.

And that cost could be the most substantial of all because the establishment of a precedent in which the President can initiate a war of enormous consequence, a war in which we pay a tremendous cost in life and treasure—without any input, without any approval—that precedent may lead to additional wars, needless wars, dangerous and damaging wars, which brings us to this moment and to this War Powers Resolution and the need to use our constitutional power to bring an end to this war.

I urge an aye vote.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I want to thank my colleague Senator BALDWIN and others for continuing to bring this debate before the Senate again. It is just extraordinary that this is the most significant military action that the United States has taken in decades. And there has yet to be one single hearing, one single debate, one single vote on an authorization of military force.

I want to target my remarks today on just what has happened over the past 2 weeks because we tend to bounce from one news cycle to the next without being able to really connect together the growing incompetence that has defined the management of this war.

We shouldn't sugar-coat or normalize this degree of gross, unacceptable incompetence being exercised here. We essentially have a talk show host and a couple of real estate developers who are in charge of our war strategy, and we are getting essentially what you would expect if you put a talk show host and a handful of real estate developers in charge of a major Middle East war.

If millions of lives weren't at stake—and that is really what is at stake as the global economy threatens to melt down because of rising gas prices and the fact that one-third of all fertilizer supply is right now stuck in the Strait of Hormuz. I mean, if this wasn't really about millions of lives being at stake, this would be the stuff of farce, one mistake just compounded by another.

So many of us believe this war has to end right now because as each mistake gets bigger than the next, the hole for the United States, for American families, for our national security gets deeper and deeper.

So I am literally just going to very quickly run you through what has happened in the last 2 weeks.

So we all remember on April 7, when Trump posts on social media that he is going to destroy Iran's entire civilization. He says:

A whole civilization will die tonight, never to be brought back again.

Later that day, he announces that there has been a cease-fire. But within hours, there is essentially diametrically opposed interpretations from Trump and the Iranians as to the terms

of that cease-fire. The next day, he puts out a series of posts saying:

A big day for World Peace! Iran wants it to happen, they've had enough! Likewise, so has [everybody] else. The United States of America will be helping with the traffic buildup in the Strait of Hormuz. There will be lots of positive action!

By the end of day on April 8, the cease-fire has fallen apart. Iran says that a cease-fire in Lebanon is also necessary in order to get the Strait of Hormuz opened. Trump is unable to secure that. So by the end of the day, the day after the cease-fire is announced, the cease-fire no longer exists.

Two days later on April 10, Trump sends his Vice President JD VANCE to Pakistan for negotiations.

On April 11, those negotiations are concluded after what appears to be an hour or two of face-to-face negotiations. VANCE gets right back on a plane after—having spent an entire day—1 day—negotiating the end of this war to come back to the United States.

That day, Trump says:

Their Leadership is DEAD!

Not true.

The Strait of Hormuz will soon be open

Not true. The U.S. delegation, led by VANCE, comes back to the United States without an agreement.

On April 12, Trump announces—this is the day after the negotiations fall apart—that he is setting up a blockade. So the Iranians have a blockade on the strait. Now Trump announces a layered second blockade. But he is still saying that negotiations are going great. He says:

[T]he meeting the day before went well, most points were agreed to, but the only point that really mattered, NUCLEAR, was not.

Of course, that is not true. Virtually nothing was agreed to in that meeting.

He says the next day that his negotiators, who were talking about a 20-year moratorium on enrichment of uranium, do not have his support. He says:

I have been saying they can't have nuclear weapons . . . so I don't like the 20 years.

I mean, we have never seen this before—literally a President in public contradicting his negotiators who were negotiating the terms of an agreement just 2 days ago.

Three days later, on April 17, Trump says that Iran again has agreed to everything, including removing enriched uranium. Trump says our people are just going to go get the uranium and bring it back to the United States.

Within hours, Iran says this is not true. They say: We have the right—a sacred right—to enrich uranium on our soil.

Trump says his negotiators are not considering releasing sanctions. Two of his negotiators go to the press and say they were talking about releasing sanctions.

Again, this is just diplomatic malpractice. The President of the United States and his negotiators are arguing

with each other in public through the media.

Then, on April 19, Trump says he is sending Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner to Pakistan for new talks. The top negotiator, JD VANCE, apparently has been sidelined. The administration then says VANCE is indeed going to Pakistan. Trump goes back to the press and says VANCE is not going to Pakistan. The White House scrambles again and confirms that VANCE will be going. The problem is that the Iranians have not agreed to the negotiations.

So a day later, the President says VANCE and his delegation are on their way. Come to find out they are not leaving for Pakistan because the Iranians are not agreeing to negotiate.

I mean, I get it that we have come to kind of normalize this kind of incompetence, this kind of planned, executed chaos, but we are on the floor week after week asking our colleagues to end this war because this is an embarrassment to the United States of America. The President and his negotiators are arguing in public with each other. The President is literally deciding by the hour whether his son-in-law is in charge of the negotiations or whether the Vice President is in charge of the negotiations. The President is lying consistently about the nature of the negotiations, saying things have been agreed to that clearly have not been agreed to—helping the Iranians blockade the strait.

We have never seen a foreign conflict mismanaged in public like this before. I understand many of my Republican colleagues want to support their President, but we are becoming a laughing-stock in the world while at the same time, we are hurting Americans who are now paying billions more in gas prices. We are risking a global famine as fertilizer is unavailable to poor farmers all over the world, and economies are shutting down because of the high price and shortage of fuel.

The costs of keeping this war going 1 more day are just too high both in reputational costs to the United States but also in the cost to lives and the pocketbooks of millions of Americans.

I know my Republican colleagues have a hard time breaking with their President. I will say that many of us—in closing—on the Democratic side certainly had a hard time breaking with our President as well, whether it was Barack Obama or Joe Biden, but on multiple occasions, we did. Many of us stood on this floor and argued against President Obama's intervention in the Yemen war. Many of us stood on this floor and argued against Biden's policy in Gaza. That wasn't easy, but we thought it was important for us to separate ourselves from our party loyalty when we thought our President had gotten it wrong for America's national security.

It is time for our Republican colleagues to join us in one of these resolutions because it is just so clear to the entire world that if this war continues

even for another day, the reputational cost to the United States is potentially unrecoverable.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I rise to support my colleague Senator BALDWIN's War Powers Resolution. I have spoken on all of these resolutions now going back to the very beginning of the war. I will not be long. I thank my colleague for bringing this forward.

In just the news of today, one aspect of the war is the increasing fuel costs and its effect on the global economy. There have been three news items just in the last 3 hours.

First, Lufthansa Airlines is canceling thousands of flights because of increased fuel costs.

Second, the American airline Spirit Airlines is on the verge of bankruptcy, with the U.S. Government considering the need to bail out Spirit Airlines.

Finally, there has been an announcement within the last couple of hours by United Airlines—one of our largest carriers—that they believe they may have to increase airfares by up to 20 percent for some significant time into the future to recoup the costs of additional aviation fuel.

If you just think back to February 27, it seems like a long time ago now because so much has happened. Less than 2 months ago, oil prices were normal, the Strait of Hormuz was open, and commerce was happening. Then President Trump made the decision—without a rationale, without a plan, without consulting with allies, without consulting or seeking a vote of Congress—to enter the Nation into yet another war in the Middle East.

The entire world is suffering, but the suffering that matters the most to me is the suffering of Americans—the 13 families who have lost loved ones in an unnecessary war and the hundreds of our military members who have been injured and their lives forever altered going forward.

I want to say this to my colleagues: You made a really good point. This is a critical moment. We are in a cease-fire. It is actually easier to stop something when you are in a cease-fire.

If we could vote yes on this resolution and get it to the House, it could have the effect of extending the cease-fire so that we don't start bombing again.

We know the President has been going back and forth. He came within a few hours last night of ending the cease-fire, of calling for a renewing of the bombing that has killed civilians and that has dramatically damaged civilian infrastructure in Iran. Yet, at the very last minute, as he is prone to do, he changed his mind and said the cease-fire should be extended. I salute that.

For whatever the reason or however he is going to describe it, extending the cease-fire is the right thing to do because all of this gets harder when

bombs start falling again. The regime's backbone gets stiffer and stiffer. Their desire to retaliate grows stronger and stronger. The chaos in the region escalates the threat to American troops. It escalates. This all gets harder if bombs start falling again.

So while we are in the moment of a cease-fire that is fragile and that may not be counted upon to last for very long, if we could pass Senator BALDWIN's resolution, we would send the strong message that Congress wants the pause. We want the pause. We don't want this war to pick up again unless or until we have the debate and the vote that the Constitution requires. That would be the right thing to have happen. That would be respecting our troops.

I will conclude and just say this: After nearly 14 years on the Armed Services Committee representing one of the most military States in the country and thinking as a military dad "What is it that we owe our troops?" we owe our troops the resources that they need.

My colleagues and I on both sides of the aisle every year pass the Defense authorizing bill. It is the only bill that we have passed every year for 63, 64 years in a row. This is something for which, in a bipartisan way, we join together to make sure that our troops have the resources they need. That is the first thing we owe them.

The second thing we owe our troops is respect, and that is why so many of us on both sides of the aisle go out of our way, as we are traveling around our States, to spend time with our military families and to thank those who serve. When we have the opportunity during recess, we travel around the world to see our troops in harm's way. We look them in the eye and thank them for the sacrifices they make.

But I would argue that an even more important way to respect our troops—even more than the resources we provide and the thanks we offer—is to not use them for missions that are not worth their risking their lives for. Let's not use them for stupid reasons. Let's use them for good reasons—when war is the last resort that must occur in order to protect America. At that point, our troops who have signed up have volunteered for a mission that they know might be dangerous, and yes, we should deploy them in those circumstances. But when we use troops foolishly, as we often have during my lifetime—in Vietnam and in Iraq, where they served bravely, but in a way, they were betrayed by poor civilian decisionmaking—that is the cardinal form of disrespect to our troops.

The way we use them in the right way is by having this kind of a debate about whether a mission is in the national interest before we send them in to risk their lives.

Senator BALDWIN's motion at this moment when we are at a cease-fire gives us a chance to step back, have

that debate, and have that vote. In full view of the American people, those who want to make the case that this war is worth it should be able to make that case, and those of us who don't believe it is worth it should make that case. Then we would have a vote, and the answer would be in accord with the process set out by the Framers of our Constitution.

If the will of Congress is that we should go to war, I might disagree with it, but I would argue that it was done lawfully, just as our Framers demanded, but if, as I imagine, the full debate and vote in these bodies does not provide sufficient votes to authorize the war, how dare we keep asking our troops to risk their lives for something we are unwilling to vote for.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHMITT). The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I want to thank my colleague TAMMY BALDWIN for bringing this War Powers Resolution to the floor and for forcing it onto the Senate. By its own prerogative, the leadership on the Republican side did not want to have a debate or a discussion about a war that is affecting every single American.

Remember, the problem we have right now, which I will talk about, is not just the actions of a President; it is the inaction of this body.

Today, what my colleague is doing is saying: No, we will not have business as usual. We will not just go about as if there is not a cataclysmic war going on. We will not go about as if we are not spending billions of dollars a week overseas that are desperately needed resources here at home.

My colleague is saying: No, we are not going to let the Senate operate as business as usual. We are going to force a debate and a discussion and a vote because the Senate is abdicating its responsibility—its constitutional responsibility—in that matters of war should be decided here and not unilaterally by one person, by the President of the United States. Explicitly stated in the Constitution is that those powers lie with us.

What we have seen in the U.S. Senate is one of the worst examples in the history of our country of a surrendering of our constitutional responsibility, a surrendering of our power to a President who is abusing it.

Now, those abuses are obvious. Those abuses are now seen forever for the historical record in that this President told us we were going to war because of multiple different reasons.

Regime change. That hasn't been accomplished. We now have a more extreme regime.

Because of nuclear concerns. Well, the ultra-enriched fissile material is still there in that country.

He said that we are going to war to protect civilians. He threatened them: If you continue to kill your civilians who are protesting for democracy, the

USA will jump in. Well, we now are seeing more civilian deaths, including a school full of children, and a more secure regime.

He said his goals and his end in this—he stated them clearly: We will attain unconditional surrender. Well, that is clearly not the case when you are rushing off to Pakistan to try to negotiate an end.

This is a President who has failed in everything he has said about this war that he wanted to achieve. If anything, he has shown the Iranians that they have more power, that this regime has more leverage against Americans.

First and foremost, they found out that—as we send multimillion-dollar weapons into that country to bomb and to achieve an erosion of their navy and their army, they have actually shown now that their low-cost, inexpensive drones can still inflict maximum damage; that when the President bragged about having control of the air, our planes were still being shot down.

This is a President who now has seen Iran realize: Wait a minute, we have tremendous leverage here; we can choke the Strait of Hormuz and cause a global economic shock—the likes of which we have never seen and an oil shock here at home that we have never had.

There is no way to look at this war as if there is any modicum of success, when you have the Iranians holding more cards than they did at the beginning of the war, still have their highly enriched uranium, have a more extreme, entrenched regime, and have us rushing to try to negotiate to get something out of this horrible “excursion,” as the President has called it.

And not only has this cost tens of billions of dollars, but it has cost American lives. We are seeing it already as, recently, a brave U.S. servicemember, who survived a deadly attack by Iran in Kuwait, spoke up. This attack killed 6 servicemembers and injured 20.

One of the injured soldiers stated that the story Secretary Hegseth was telling the public that the building was “fortified,” and that one of the drones just “squeaked through” is a falsehood, our military servicemember said.

The servicemember said:

I want people to know the unit was unprepared to provide any defense for itself. It was not a fortified position.

Now, you would think, if a U.S. member of our armed services is shedding factual light on our unpreparedness for a war that our President rushed us into—unprepared, no plan, no strategy—that the one body that was responsible for providing check, balance, oversight, and accountability, the U.S. Senate, wouldn't just sit back and do nothing. But that is exactly what this body has done.

Republican leadership has done nothing to call for open hearings where we could ask questions, which we can show those U.S. servicemembers on the frontline that, while you are upholding your oath to the Constitution, we will

uphold ours. But we are not. They are showing the ultimate fealty and loyalty to the Constitution, but we are not. They are brave enough to confront the enemy, but we are not brave enough to call questions to the President of the United States that must be called.

Were you prepared? Under what grounds did you go? How much is this costing the American taxpayer? And more.

We are not doing our job. We have abdicated our responsibility. We have betrayed the Constitution, and yet we do nothing.

So what my colleague is doing today is forcing this debate, forcing this vote. But dear God, this is a sad day, because the only thing that we need to do to check the power of the Presidency when it is being abused, when it is reckless, when the consequences of that recklessness are higher prices for every American, when the consequences of that recklessness is giving a dangerous Iran more power and more leverage, when the consequences of that recklessness is the death of our soldiers—what is this body doing? Nothing.

Republican leadership has called no open hearings, no sufficient accountability, no substantive oversight. They are kowtowing to a President and allowing him into a reckless war with grave consequences and a shredding of our constitutional intent by our Founders.

Woe be to us at this 250th anniversary, where people will rush out with flags, waving to celebrate our Constitution and our country. But here, they are betraying it.

We have a job to do. It is clear in the Constitution. We have three equal branches of government that function when they check each other. They function when there is oversight. They function when there is accountability. But when one branch fails to rise to the historic urgency of this moment, that is when our Constitution and the people on the frontlines—the people like this brave servicemember—are not only being ill-served, but they are at graver danger.

Our Nation is in crisis right now. Our precious, scant resources are not spent on healthcare, our children's education, science research, but on this President's war. We have servicemembers in danger. The least we should ask from this body is to do its job, uphold the Constitution, and provide a real check and balance, real accountability, and oversight to this President.

I thank my colleague for forcing this debate and forcing this vote. This is yet, unfortunately, another sad day in history for this body. This is the least we could do, but we should be—we must be—doing so much more.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, we are here at this moment to defend the

Constitution, and the constitution of any nation is incredibly important in creating the vision of the checks and balances between the judiciary and the executive and the Congress.

But what really matters is whether the elected representatives actually honor the Constitution. Do they follow the words and the vision laid out?

You know, it is article I, section 8 that delineates powers, and in the course of it, there are three megapowers assigned to Congress. And one of those is the power of the purse: design programs, authorize them, fund them.

It is a President's job to execute.

The second is the power of taxation, including the power of tariffs. In fact, the first bill ever debated by the Senate was a tariff bill—3 weeks spent figuring out how they could reach agreement on what the tariff would be on a keg of nails or a barrel of molasses.

And the third, perhaps the most consequential, is the power of war. You know, it is just three words delineated—“The Congress shall have [the] power,” and it lays out these responsibilities, and then it says: “To declare War.” Three words: “To declare War.”

Now, if anyone thinks those were just some kind of bureaucratic phrase, you are mistaken. Madison summed it up and pointed out that, in the history of all governments, it is the executive, as the branch of government, “most interested in war, and most prone to it.” And then he summarized it this way: The Constitution “has accordingly with studied care, vested the question of war in the Legislature.”

So this is the moment we decide today: Are we going to actually follow the document we took an oath to?

Now, some of my colleagues have said: Well, the President also has the power, when there is an imminent threat to our national security, to act.

And I don't dispute that. Think about planes on the way to bomb the United States, or forces—a raid across the border on the verge of coming across.

But that was not the situation 2 months ago. There was no imminent threat of any kind, of any sort, anywhere near that exception.

Perhaps this war really is a poster child for why the wisdom of the Founders was so important, because wars go off in directions you never anticipate, because wars result in carnage—the death of Americans, the injuries of Americans, the death of the combatants we oppose, the death of civilians, and treasure vastly expended.

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan—those misbegotten foreign adventures so poorly thought through—cost \$8 trillion, the lives of 7,000 of our servicemembers, and 50,000 injured. That shows the consequences of war. But in those two cases, Afghanistan and Iraq, at least the President followed the Constitution, and this body, the Senate of the United States of America, insisted that the President follow the Constitution.

Where is that insistence right now? Where is the leadership of this Chamber defending the constitutional role of the Senate? Why are they not on the floor at this moment saying: We took an oath to the Constitution, and, damn it, we are going to follow it.

This war is another misbegotten adventure. It did not benefit in any way from a President's effort to persuade this Chamber or the Nation or the House of Representatives that this strategy had merit.

Every expert said you can count on the Strait of Hormuz to be shut down. Every expert said extracting the highly enriched uranium from deep underground during the middle of war is a near impossibility. "So what is your mission?" they asked.

But we didn't have those debates here in the Senate.

What has this war actually done? It has strengthened the Iranian hardliners; that is not a win. It weakened the reformers; that is certainly not in our interest. It failed to secure the stockpile of highly enriched uranium; so that is a failure. It shredded our moral leadership as champions of human rights; that is certainly a loss. It enriched and emboldened Russia. We actually took off the sanctions, allowing Russia to make even more money on the sale of its oil, at the very time that they continue to attack Ukraine.

It raised the prices at the pump. Oregon is at over \$5 a gallon of gas. Maybe some of you are complaining about \$4 a gallon. Well, it is \$5 in Oregon. And diesel is \$6.

And the agricultural community is suffering from vastly higher prices on fertilizer, and everyone is suffering from increased inflation on everything that energy goes into.

And this battle has already cost us in blood and treasure. We already have American servicemembers who have died. We already have more than 100 seriously injured. And it is already costing us directly a billion to \$2 billion a day.

Now, four times we have come to the floor and said the debate should be now, because the Constitution is clear: There is no 60-day clause when there is no imminent threat, in the law. And four times, it has been a partisan vote.

There is nothing partisan about the Constitution. There is nothing partisan about the oath we took to the Constitution. There is nothing partisan at all about ensuring that the high risk of war is duly debated in this Chamber and following the advice of our Founders, including Jefferson and Madison.

But the President launched this war in violation of the Constitution, and so now is the time we have to respond. And it is in the War Powers Act that we can put up a resolution that says: Stop. You have violated the law. Come and get the authorization the Constitution demands. Come and do that.

That is what this vote is on today.

Not only did the President violate the Constitution, but he threatened a

bombing campaign that would have resulted in massive civilian deaths. He threatened to bomb Iran "back to the Stone Ages," and he said: "A whole civilization will die tonight." He threatened massive war crimes as part of his unregulated campaign, unauthorized by this body.

So, to my colleagues, let's join together—united, Democrats and Republicans. We should have done so when Trump launched this illegal, unconstitutional war. We should have done so when 13 members died. We should have done so when we bombed a school and at least 175 people died—other reports have it much higher—and a whole lot of them schoolgirls. We should have done it when the President threatened to slaughter civilians and conduct war crimes overseas. We should have done it because it is costing us billions of dollars a day. We should have done it when the price at the pump shot through the roof. But most of all, we should have done it because the Constitution says it is our responsibility.

I recognize it is an uncomfortable vote because we are perhaps afraid to take this consequential decision and get it wrong, so it is easier to duck the responsibility we have under the Constitution, but duck we must not because it is our responsibility; it is on our desk; it is what the Constitution requires.

So let's honor that Constitution and vote yes and put up the stop sign and say: Mr. President, if you wish to pursue a war against Iran, then do what previous Presidents did in Afghanistan and Iraq and come and make your case and try to persuade us that it is in the Nation's interest. I think it is a very, very tough sell, which tells you a lot about what is wrong with this effort and why the Constitution requires that we weigh in.

I urge my colleagues: Do your job under the Constitution and vote aye on the War Powers Resolution.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I will speak against the War Powers Resolution, but first I have a unanimous consent request to make, and so I ask that I be recognized for that purpose.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized for that purpose.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations en bloc: Calendar No. 645, with the exception of Brigadier General Eric S. Strong; Calendar No. 669; Calendar No. 702 through Calendar No. 705; Calendar No. 706, with the exception of Lieutenant General Calvert L. Worth, Jr.; Calendar No. 707 through Calendar No. 710;

and all nominations on the Secretary's desk in the Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, and Navy, with the exception of PN681, Vincent J. Noble, and PN835, Thomas P. MacNeil; that the nominations be confirmed en bloc; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate, all en bloc; that no further motions be in order to any of the nominations; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered. The nominations considered and confirmed are as follows:

IN THE ARMY

The following named officers for appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be major general

Brig. Gen. Kirk E. Gibbs

IN THE MARINE CORPS

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Marine Corps to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be brigadier general

Col. Thomas M. Siverts

IN THE ARMY

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be brigadier general

Col. John F. Popiak

IN THE AIR FORCE

The following named Air National Guard of the United States officer for appointment in the Reserve of the Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 12203 and 12212:

To be brigadier general

Col. Bryan W. Preece

IN THE ARMY

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be brigadier general

Col. Tracy Michael

IN THE NAVY

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Navy to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be rear admiral (lower half)

Capt. Milton W. Troy, III

IN THE MARINE CORPS

The following named officers for appointment in the United States Marine Corps to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Lt. Gen. Robert C. Fulford

Lt. Gen. Benjamin T. Watson

The following named officers for appointment in the United States Marine Corps to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be major general

Brig. Gen. Robert B. Brodie

Brig. Gen. Michael A. Brooks, Jr.

Brig. Gen. Simon M. Doran

Brig. Gen. Fridrik Fridriksson

Brig. Gen. Garrett R. Hoffman

Brig. Gen. Stephen J. Lightfoot