

But nowhere on the list of ways to lower costs for American families is rubberstamping Donald Trump's lavish ballroom. Remember, Trump's ballroom has already become a tool for what looks like corruption in plain sight.

Since day one, giant corporations have lined up to dump millions of dollars into Trump's ballroom, and that includes Meta, Apple, Amazon, Google, Microsoft, Comcast, Coinbase, and Palantir.

And those are just the people and the entities that we know of. Others are being kept secret from the American people because Donald Trump has let them stay anonymous.

So what do they have to hide? And what are all these donors expecting in return? And by the way, if Congress bankrolls this ballroom for Trump's corporate donors like other Republicans are proposing, what happens to all those private donations?

So, by the way, I want to make that point again: If Congress bankrolls this ballroom for Trump's corporate donors like the other Republicans are proposing, what happens to all those private donations? If Trump is using his ballroom to facilitate a giant pay-to-play scheme, then the American people deserve to know.

Instead of dumping even more money into Trump's golden ballroom, we need to put an end to this corruption and focus on lowering costs for American families. That is what Democrats are laser-focused on. Republicans should join us and get it done.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Kentucky.

#### TRANSFERRING ADMINISTRATIVE JURISDICTION OVER CERTAIN PARCELS OF FEDERAL LAND IN HARPERS FERRY, WEST VIRGINIA

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S. 2280, and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2280) to transfer administrative jurisdiction over certain parcels of Federal land in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. PAUL. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (S. 2280) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 2280

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. TRANSFERS OF ADMINISTRATIVE JURISDICTION OVER CERTAIN PARCELS OF FEDERAL LAND IN HARPERS FERRY, WEST VIRGINIA.

(a) TRANSFERS.—

(1) TRANSFER TO THE COMMISSIONER OF U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Administrative jurisdiction over approximately 25 acres of Federal land in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, as generally depicted on the map entitled “Harpers Ferry National Historical Park Proposed Land Transfers”, numbered 385/176,677, and dated May 2021 (referred to in this section as the “Map”) is transferred from the Secretary of the Interior (referred to in this section as the “Secretary”) to the Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, to be administered as part of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's Advanced Training Center in accordance with applicable law.

(B) EXCLUSION FROM BOUNDARY.—The Federal land transferred by subparagraph (A) is excluded from the boundary of Harpers Ferry National Historical Park.

(2) TRANSFER TO THE SECRETARY.—Administrative jurisdiction over 3 parcels of Federal land totaling approximately 71.51 acres in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, as generally depicted on the Map, is transferred from the Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection to the Secretary, to be administered by the Secretary—

(A) as part of Harpers Ferry National Historical Park; and

(B) in accordance with applicable law.

(3) NO REIMBURSEMENT OR CONSIDERATION.—A transfer of administrative jurisdiction over Federal land under paragraph (1)(A) or (2) shall be without monetary reimbursement or additional consideration.

(b) LAND SURVEYS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection—

(A) shall obtain a survey to finalize the exact acreage and legal description of the parcel of Federal land described in subsection (a)(1)(A); and

(B) may, in consultation with the Secretary, modify any clerical and typographical errors in the Map.

(2) COST OF SURVEY.—The cost of the survey under paragraph (1)(A) shall be charged to an appropriation of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

(3) INFORMATION SHARING.—On completion of the survey under paragraph (1)(A), the Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection shall provide to the Secretary a copy of the survey.

(4) REVERSION AND RESTORATION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—If the Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection determines that the Federal land transferred by subparagraph (A) of subsection (a)(1) is no longer required for the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's Advanced Training Center, the Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection shall transfer administrative jurisdiction over the Federal land described in that subparagraph to the Secretary in a manner and condition acceptable to the Secretary, to be included within the boundary of, and to be administered as part of, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park.

(B) ACREAGE LIMITATION.—The acreage limitation under section 1(d) of the Act of June 30, 1944 (58 Stat. 645, chapter 328; 16 U.S.C. 450bb(d)) shall not apply to the inclusion within the boundary of Harpers Ferry National Historical Park of the Federal land under subparagraph (A).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

#### EXPANDING WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTIONS FOR CONTRACTORS ACT OF 2025

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 289, S. 874.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 874) to ensure that whistleblowers, including contractors, are protected from retaliation when a Federal employee orders a reprisal, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in italic, as follows:

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

*This Act may be cited as the “Expanding Whistleblower Protections for Contractors Act of 2025”.*

#### SEC. 2. DEFENSE CONTRACTOR EMPLOYEES: PROTECTION FROM REPRISAL FOR DISCLOSURE OF CERTAIN INFORMATION.

*Section 4701 of title 10, United States Code, is amended—*

*(1) in subsection (a)—*

*(A) in paragraph (1)—*

*(i) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A)—*

*(I) by striking “An employee” and all that follows through “services contractor” and inserting “A protected individual”;* and

*(II) by striking “disclosing” and all that follows through “evidence of”;* and

*(ii) by striking subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C) and inserting the following subparagraphs:*

*“(A) Refusing to obey an order that would require the protected individual to violate a law, rule, or regulation related to any contract, subcontract, grant, or subgrant.*

*“(B) Disclosing to a person or body described in paragraph (2) information that the protected individual reasonably believes is evidence of the following:*

*“(i) Gross mismanagement of any Department of Defense contract or grant, any gross waste of Department funds, any abuse of authority relating to any Department contract, subcontract, grant, or subgrant, or any violation of law, rule, or regulation related to any Department contract or subcontract (including the competition for or negotiation of a contract or subcontract) or grant or subgrant.*

*“(ii) Gross mismanagement of any National Aeronautics and Space Administration contract or grant, any gross waste of Administration funds, any abuse of authority relating to an Administration contract, subcontract, grant, or subgrant, or any violation of law, rule, or regulation related to any Administration contract or subcontract (including the competition for or negotiation of a contract or subcontract) or grant or subgrant.*

*“(iii) A substantial and specific danger to public health or safety.”;* and

*(B) in paragraph (3)—*

*(i) in subparagraph (A), by striking “an employee” and inserting “a protected individual”;* and

*(ii) by striking subparagraph (B) and inserting the following subparagraph:*

*“(B) it shall not be within the authority of an executive branch official to request that a contractor, subcontractor, grantee, or subgrantee engage in a reprisal prohibited by paragraph (1).”;*

*(2) in subsection (c)—*

(A) in paragraph (1), by adding at the end the following subparagraph:

“(E) Propose appropriate disciplinary action against any executive branch official for any request made of a contractor, subcontractor, grantee, or subgrantee that subjected the complainant to a reprisal prohibited by subsection (a).”; and

(B) by striking paragraph (7) and inserting the following paragraph:

“(7) CLARIFICATION FOR SCOPE OF WAIVER RESTRICTIONS.—The rights, forum, and remedies provided for in this section may not be waived by any public or private agreement, policy, form, or condition of employment, including by any predispute arbitration agreement.”;

(3) by striking subsection (e) and redesignating subsections (f) and (g) as subsections (e) and (f), respectively;

(4) in subsection (e), as so redesignated—

(A) by striking “an employee” and inserting “a protected individual”; and

(B) by striking “the employee” and inserting “the protected individual”; and

(5) in subsection (f), as so redesignated, by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(B) The term ‘protected individual’ means—

“(A) a contractor, subcontractor, grantee, or subgrantee of the Department of Defense or the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, including—

“(i) the government of each of the several States, the District of Columbia, an Indian tribe or authorized tribal organization, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, or any other territory or possession of the United States;

“(ii) the government of any political subdivision of, agency of, or instrumentality of, a government listed in clause (i); and

“(iii) an element of the intelligence community (as defined in section 3 of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3003)) within the Department of Defense;

“(B) an employee of a contractor, subcontractor, grantee, or subgrantee of the Department of Defense or the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, or a former employee of such contractor, subcontractor, grantee, or subgrantee whose protected disclosure or engagement in any activity protected against reprisal under this section occurred prior to termination, including an employee of—

“(i) the government of each of the several States, the District of Columbia, an Indian tribe or authorized tribal organization, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, or any other territory or possession of the United States;

“(ii) the government of any political subdivision of, agency of, or instrumentality of, a government listed in clause (i); and

“(iii) an element of the intelligence community (as defined in section 3 of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3003)) within the Department of Defense; or

“(C) a person performing personal services for the Department of Defense or the National Aeronautics and Space Administration pursuant to a contractual agreement for the performance of personal services, including a personal services contract or personal services agreement, and who engages in an activity for which any reprisal is prohibited under subsection (a), including a person performing personal services pursuant such a contractual agreement for—

“(i) the government of each of the several States, the District of Columbia, an Indian tribe or authorized tribal organization, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, or any other territory or possession of the United States;

“(ii) the government of any political subdivision of, agency of, or instrumentality of, a government listed in clause (i); and

“(iii) an element of the intelligence community (as defined in section 3 of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3003)) within the Department of Defense.”.

**SEC. 3. ENHANCEMENT OF NON-DEFENSE CONTRACTOR PROTECTION FROM REPRISAL FOR DISCLOSURE OF CERTAIN INFORMATION.**

Section 4712 of title 41, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by striking paragraph (1) and inserting the following paragraph:

“(1) IN GENERAL.—A protected individual may not be discharged, demoted, or otherwise discriminated against as a reprisal for the following:

“(A) Refusing to obey an order that would require the protected individual to violate a law, rule, or regulation related to any contract, subcontract, grant, or subgrant.

“(B) Disclosing to a person or body described in paragraph (2) information that the protected individual reasonably believes is evidence of the following:

“(i) Gross mismanagement of any Federal contract or grant, any gross waste of Federal funds, any abuse of authority relating to any Federal contract, subcontract, grant, or subgrant, or any violation of law, rule, or regulation related to any Federal contract or subcontract (including the competition for or negotiation of a contract or subcontract) or grant or subgrant.

“(ii) A substantial and specific danger to public health or safety.”; and

(B) in paragraph (3)—

(i) in subparagraph (A), by striking “an employee” and inserting “a protected individual”; and

(ii) by striking subparagraph (B) and inserting the following subparagraph:

“(B) it shall not be within the authority of an executive branch official to request that a contractor, subcontractor, grantee, or subgrantee engage in a reprisal prohibited by paragraph (1).”;

(2) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(E) Propose appropriate disciplinary action against any executive branch official for any request made of a contractor, subcontractor, grantee, or subgrantee that subjected the complainant to a reprisal prohibited by subsection (a).”; and

(B) by striking paragraph (7) and inserting the following paragraph:

“(7) RIGHTS, FORUM, AND REMEDIES NOT WAIVABLE.—The rights, forum, and remedies provided for in this section may not be waived by any public or private agreement, policy, form, or condition of employment, including by any predispute arbitration agreement.”;

(3) in subsection (e)—

(A) by striking “an employee” and inserting “a protected individual”; and

(B) by striking “the employee” and inserting “the protected individual”; and

(4) by striking subsection (f) and redesignating subsections (g) and (h) as subsections (f) and (g), respectively; and

(5) in subsection (f), as so redesignated, by inserting after paragraph (2) the following new paragraph:

“(3) The term ‘protected individual’ means—

“(A) a contractor, subcontractor, grantee, or subgrantee of the Federal Government, including—

“(i) the government of each of the several States, the District of Columbia, an Indian tribe or authorized tribal organization, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, or any other territory or possession of the United States;

“(ii) the government of any political subdivision of, agency of, or instrumentality of, a government listed in clause (i); and

“(iii) an element of the intelligence community (as defined in section 3 of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3003));

“(B) an employee of a contractor, subcontractor, grantee, or subgrantee of the Federal Government or a former employee of such contractor, subcontractor, grantee, or subgrantee whose protected disclosure or engagement in any activity protected against reprisal under this section occurred prior to termination, including an employee of—

“(i) the government of each of the several States, the District of Columbia, an Indian tribe or authorized tribal organization, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, or any other territory or possession of the United States;

“(ii) the government of any political subdivision of, agency of, or instrumentality of, a government listed in clause (i); and

“(iii) an element of the intelligence community (as defined in section 3 of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3003)); or

“(C) a person performing personal services for the Federal Government pursuant to a contractual agreement for the performance of personal services, including a personal services contract or personal services agreement, including a person performing personal services pursuant to such a contractual agreement for—

“(i) the government of each of the several States, the District of Columbia, an Indian tribe or authorized tribal organization, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, or any other territory or possession of the United States;

“(ii) the government of any political subdivision of, agency of, or instrumentality of, a government listed in clause (i); and

“(iii) an element of the intelligence community (as defined in section 3 of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3003)).”.

Mr. PETERS. I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported substitute amendment be agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The committee-reported amendment, in the nature of a substitute, was agreed to.

The bill (S. 874), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, my bipartisan Expanding Whistleblower Protections for Contractors Act, which just passed in the Senate, basically closes loopholes in the law to ensure that Federal contractors are protected when they disclose information about fraud, waste, and abuse of taxpayer money.

Each year, whistleblowers help the government save money and fight fraud when they make disclosures to Congress, inspectors general, and other oversight bodies.

Currently, the law that protects contractor whistleblowers is weaker than the laws that protect both Federal and private sector employees. In some instances, loopholes have allowed Federal officials to retaliate against whistleblowers with absolutely no accountability.

My bill would make it perfectly clear that Federal officials cannot direct retaliation against contractors any more than they can direct retaliation against Federal employees.

If they violate the law, the bill will allow Agencies to take disciplinary action. The bill would also clarify that employers cannot evade whistleblower laws through nondisclosure agreements and other employment contracts and ensure that contractor employees are not retaliated against for refusing to perform an action that they believe is illegal.

I would like to thank Senator GRASSLEY for joining me in introducing this legislation and Representatives GARCIA and COMER for introducing the House companion, which was unanimously approved by the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

I urge my colleagues to continue to join me in passing this bill through the House and certainly appreciate the support that I received on the floor here today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

#### FLOODING IN HAWAII

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, Hawaii experienced its worst flooding in more than 20 years last month. Two storms, less than 2 weeks apart, whipped up hurricane force winds of up to 135 miles per hour and dumped more than 62 inches of rain in parts of the State.

All told, nearly 2 trillion gallons of water fell from the sky statewide, enough to fill 3 million Olympic-sized swimming pools, and the resulting damage was widespread and it was severe.

It all started on March 10 when the first storm known as a Kona low brought close to 10 inches of rain over 4 days and broke daily rainfall records on Oahu, Maui, Hawaii Island, and Kauai. The powerful winds and heavy rain flooded homes, toppled power lines, and shuttered schools and businesses.

Over 100,000 people lost power, but before people could even begin to recover, a second storm quickly followed just days later delivering more than a foot of rain. But the ground was still saturated from the previous storm and drainage capacity was overwhelmed, and so flooding got worse across the State.

More than 5,000 residents were forced to evacuate and seek cover in shelters and schools. Homes were lifted off of their foundations, cars floated out of driveways, roads and highways became inaccessible, crops washed away on farms and fields.

But amid the devastation, rocked by relentless rain, Hawaii's aloha spirit prevailed. We saw it in the heroic emergency responders who rescued hundreds of people who were stuck in danger with no way to get out. We saw it in all the people rushing to check in on their neighbors, sharing informa-

tion on social media in realtime, and helping to clean up the debris and the mud once the rain passed.

Farmers who lost their own fields instead went to help their neighbors to rebuild.

Businesses spring into action to hand out supplies and hot meals, despite losing sales and incurring damages of their own. That is Hawaii. No one is a stranger, especially in time of need. And everybody pitches in.

Recovering from a disaster of this magnitude will take months and years. Homes, roads, schools, and hospitals were flooded and badly damaged and will need to be rebuilt. And doing so requires resources, which is why the Trump administration's approval of Governor Josh Green's disaster declaration request was so important.

As with disasters in the past, these Federal dollars will support cleanup and repairs, as well as help residents to get back on their feet through individual assistance.

The State and county governments are doing everything that they can to help people recover fully and quickly, but they cannot do it alone. They need help.

The Federal Government has a responsibility to share the burden of rebuilding. And while the approval of a disaster declaration is a very important and good first step, it is just that. It is a first step.

In the months and the years ahead, we will need to be there to provide support and resources in any way we can, until the affected people and communities are made whole once again.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

#### S.J. RES. 139

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am speaking in advance of my colleague from Colorado Senator BENNET's effort to seek redress in this body for a wave of pollution that is being unleashed in his State and neighboring States as well.

One of the things about our failed Environmental Protection Agency right now is that one State can't regulate pollution that comes to it from another State. And yet the good neighbor policy that somebody has to be able to say "Hey, wait a minute; you can't pollute my State from another State" is one that EPA has just walked away from.

In this case, the problem is a coal facility in Colorado. And just start with coal. It is really indisputable that coal is America's dirtiest, deadliest, and most expensive energy source. It is a dying industry for market reasons. It can't compete because it is dirty, deadly, and expensive.

And yet, since taking office, President Trump has worked desperately to keep coal on life support, perhaps because the coal industry paid \$3.5 billion in 2024 to help him get elected, and

Trump is a man who understands a *quid pro quo*.

The Trump administration has taken every possible action to benefit the coal industry; never mind our health. Remember, it is the deadliest of energy sources. And never mind our bank accounts. Remember, it is the most expensive of energy sources.

He even rolled back health-protecting standards for mercury and toxic emissions from coal plants. Mercury is pretty seriously, deadly stuff; and he rolled back those standards.

He exempted one-third of all coal plants nationwide from toxic pollution standards. Who loses? Anybody exposed to the toxic pollution they emit. Who wins? Trump's big donors.

He even directed the Secretary of Energy to issue orders under the Federal Power Act to force coal plants to stay online, driving up consumer costs against the wishes of the utilities and even the plants' owners. But they still had to buy and burn coal. So there is somebody out there who is going to make money off that.

And now Trump has perverted the Clean Air Act to trample on States' rights to protect their own citizens.

Coal plants are the Nation's most significant source of haze. The same coal pollutants that drive health issues and deaths nationwide drive haze formations. Under the Clean Air Act's Regional Haze Program, States establish plans to reduce haze-causing pollution. States may choose to include coal plant retirements in their plans. Often, that is consistent with the utility and the plant owner's wishes, as an old plant ends its useful life. When the EPA approves these plans, the retirements then become enforceable.

In 2022, Colorado submitted a regional haze plan to the EPA that included coal plant retirements that Colorado utilities had independently and voluntarily planned for. "They do better with cheaper, cleaner renewable energy" is the simple answer.

In January of this year, the EPA turned around and disapproved Colorado's plan, making the argument that Colorado's plan, voluntarily entered into with these utilities, could represent a "taking" under the Constitution.

So we have here a really flagrant abuse of Federal authority: Make it more difficult for Colorado to protect its own citizens from toxic pollution and to provide affordable energy. And the resulting pollution won't just endanger Coloradans. This is a national issue because the haze blows, with prevailing winds, toward eastern States.

My State of Rhode Island, for instance, has occasions when we have bad air days. And if you are driving into work in the morning and you are listening to the talk radio, they will say: Today is a bad air day. Children should stay home. Elderly people and people with breathing difficulties should not go out.

It looks like a beautiful summer day. Kids will want to be in the yard, but it