

cochairing this committee with me; so it is a very bipartisan effort.

Now, after getting this report, I look forward to getting feedback on how Federal programs can encourage foster youth to achieve self-sufficiency. We have a responsibility to protect children and their well-being.

As we recognize the month of May as being National Foster Care Month, it is my hope that we can continue to find solutions to see that every child has the chance to build a bright future and an opportunity for permanent and loving homes.

I want to congratulate First Lady Trump for her efforts in this area and in her recently holding a hearing in the House of Representatives on this issue.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The majority leader is recognized.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, yesterday marked 500 days of the Republican majority here in the U.S. Senate, and what a busy 500 days it has been. We have taken close to 800 votes since last January, confirmed just under 500 nominees to posts across the Federal Government and judiciary, and we have passed bills out of the Senate and into law to make life better for the American people.

When Republicans took over last year, we set out to address cost-of-living issues and put more money in Americans' pockets. We lifted costly Biden-era regulations, from rules that would have driven up the cost of household appliances to rules that would have forced Americans into expensive electric vehicles.

At the start of this year, we took action to drive down the cost of prescription drugs at the pharmacy counter. In March, the Senate passed the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act—a bill that cuts redtape that has prevented the construction of new housing and kept too many Americans waiting to realize the American dream of home ownership. I am proud of the broad bipartisan support this bill received here in the Senate, and I hope these common-sense reforms will make it to the President's desk in short order.

Lifting costly regulations and taking action to lower the cost of prescriptions and housing are significant actions, but what I consider to be the most consequential action not just of this majority but of my entire time in the Senate is the Working Families Tax Cut. And I say "most consequential" because of the permanent tax relief Republicans delivered in this bill—tax relief that puts more money in

hard-working Americans' pockets. That was the centerpiece of this bill, and a whole lot of Americans saw that last month when they filed their tax returns and saw a significantly higher refund.

Hard-working Americans were able to take advantage of permanently lower tax rates, an increased standard deduction, and the 2,200 child tax credit. Six million workers deducted income from tips, 25 million workers took advantage of no tax on overtime, and 30 million seniors were able to reduce their tax burden with the \$6,000 senior deduction created by this bill.

The Working Families Tax Cut lets hard-working people keep more of their hard-earned money. It also strengthens America's small businesses and family farms and ranches. Lower tax rates and the 199A small business deduction free up money for them to invest in their operations and their employees. Investment incentives like 100 percent bonus depreciation and immediate research and development expensing help them upgrade and innovate. And a lot of family business owners, farmers, and ranchers breathe a sigh of relief when this bill passed because it protects them from a potentially devastating death tax bill, not to mention the costly estate planning expenses that come along with this tax.

These measures are part of Republicans' focus on strengthening America's economy. An important part of that is strengthening our agriculture economy. America's farms and ranches have faced some serious headwinds lately. Higher input costs, depressed commodity prices, higher interest rates, and natural disasters and disease are just some of the challenges ag producers have faced in recent years. So Republicans set out to deliver some much needed relief to the ag sector.

In the Working Families Tax Cut, we made lasting reforms to strengthen the farm safety net. Thanks to this bill, reference prices for commodity programs more closely reflect the actual market conditions farmers are dealing with. We bolstered crop insurance, and we improved the Livestock Indemnity Program and Livestock Forage Disaster Program to help ranchers and other livestock producers through challenging times. But we still have more to do to strengthen the agricultural economy. Senators BOOZMAN and HOEVEN are working on a farm relief package to address the challenges facing farmers right now.

Allowing the year-round sale of E15 fuel is another priority. Year-round E15 is something that helps not only the ag economy but the overall economy by reducing fuel costs and allowing for more homegrown energy. The House has passed a bill to allow year-round E15, and we will be having discussions on how to accomplish that goal in the Senate in the near future.

Republicans have also made it a priority to combat waste, fraud, and abuse in the Federal Government. The

Working Families Tax Cut included a number of reforms to focus Federal dollars on those most in need, guard against the abuse of taxpayer funds, and hold States accountable for the Federal funding they receive.

New measures in the law prevent noncitizens from receiving Federal healthcare and nutrition benefits and refocus those programs on serving American citizens. The law requires States to be good stewards of Federal programs like Medicaid and nutrition assistance, and it takes aim at duplicative enrollment in Federal healthcare programs, which CMS estimates costs taxpayers as much as \$14 billion per year.

Earlier this year, President Trump signed into law Senator KENNEDY's bill that helped prevent the payment of Federal benefits to deceased individuals. And after revelations of widespread fraud in the State of Minnesota at the end of last year, we confirmed the first-ever Assistant Attorney General for National Fraud Enforcement.

Then there are our actions to ensure Washington is a better steward of taxpayer dollars. The Working Families Tax Cut prevented Americans' tax dollars from funding big abortion providers for 1 year. Last summer, Republicans passed a rescissions package that targeted funding that had gone to some egregious misuses of taxpayer dollars, like a pride parade in Lesotho and promoting vegan food in Zambia. We continue to work to ensure that taxpayer dollars are not being wasted.

I said at the outset of this Congress that I wanted to restore regular-order consideration of appropriation bills, and we were largely able to accomplish that goal, even after Democrats tried to derail the process with the longest government shutdown in history this past fall.

This year, we were able to pass 11 of the 12 full appropriations bills into law, and many of those bills actually spent less money than if we had just put spending on autopilot through a continuing resolution.

The only reason we haven't passed 12 out of 12 full appropriations bills this year is that Democrat colleagues apparently don't believe in securing our Nation's borders. Their refusal to provide even a dollar for the Border Patrol in this year's DHS funding bill is ample evidence of that.

Republicans most certainly believe in border security. In fact, addressing the dangerous situation at our southern border was one of our top priorities when we took over last year. The first bill we passed was the Laken Riley Act to ensure that illegal immigrants who committed certain crimes are not allowed back on our streets. We passed the HALT Fentanyl Act to give law enforcement the tools it needs to go after this deadly poison, much of which flows across our southern border.

The Working Families Tax Cut made a generational investment in border security, and we are seeing the results of

that investment and the Trump administration's actions at the border. Encounters at our southern border have dropped dramatically. For the past 12 months, not a single illegal immigrant has been released into the United States.

Democrats are clearly trying to undo that progress, but Republicans won't let that happen. As soon as this week, we will take up a bill to fully fund Border Patrol and Immigration and Customs Enforcement for the remainder of the Trump administration and ensure the Democrats cannot put our Nation's security in jeopardy by defunding law enforcement.

I mentioned earlier that we have confirmed almost 500 civilian nominees since last January, and that has been in the face of a historic—historic—level of obstruction from Democrats. After months and months of unprecedented Democrat obstruction, last year, Republicans took action to restore the Senate's tradition of confirming largely noncontroversial nominees in batches. Last night, we confirmed the fourth package of Trump nominees and effectively eliminated the backlog of nominees awaiting confirmation.

Speaking of Democrat obstruction, Democrats have also blocked several pieces of commonsense legislation here in the Senate. They blocked Senator TUBERVILLE's Protection of Women and Girls in Sports Act, which would have simply prevented biological men from competing in women's sports. They blocked Senator LANKFORD's Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act, which would have required that babies who survive abortion are given the same level of care as babies born at the same gestational age. Democrats wouldn't even let us debate these bills—I have to imagine because their position is completely indefensible.

Then, just recently, Democrats blocked the SAVE America Act. We had a robust debate on this bill for several weeks. Republicans gave Democrats opportunities to support the whole bill, and we had stand-alone votes on some of the individual and very commonsense components of the bill: requiring proof of citizenship to register to vote, requiring a photo ID to vote, protecting children from gender transition surgeries, keeping biological men out of women's sports. Democrats are on the record against all of it, and we will be sure the American people know that Democrats are blocking commonsense policies that have broad support from the American people.

I have mentioned a number of accomplishments this morning, but there is more work to be done. Last week, the Banking Committee advanced the CLARITY Act—a market structure bill for cryptocurrencies that builds on the GENIUS Act that became law last year and which was the first-ever crypto bill passed into law.

I expect the Senate will also take action on an artificial intelligence bill

this year that builds on the AI framework the White House has put out. Legislation dealing with name, image, and likeness in college athletics is also on the agenda, as is legislation ensuring continued funding for our Nation's transportation infrastructure.

In the near term, we will also need to extend FISA and ensure that this critical national security program does not go dark. We will soon begin work on the fiscal year 2027 National Defense Authorization Act, which will continue Republicans' efforts to modernize America's military, and, of course, we will continue to prioritize efforts to make life easier for hard-working Americans.

Mr. President, 500 days ago, Republicans had a long to-do list. We have checked a lot of things off, but we still have more to do, and we are not about to take our foot off the gas.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, Donald Trump looks at the Federal Government and sees one thing: a cash register full of Americans' money—and he keeps trying to ring himself up.

Nearly \$2 billion for his MAGA slush fund, a billion more for his gilded ballroom, and not one serious plan to lower costs for families forced to pay the bill.

This week, Trump showed us again exactly what his Presidency is about: not helping Americans, not lowering costs, not making life easier for working families; but finding new ways to turn taxpayer dollars into political payouts, personal perks, and vanity projects.

Just look at this nearly \$2 billion slush fund. Just look at it. It is enough to make you cringe.

Trump settled with himself in his own lawsuit against his own government to funnel taxpayer money to his political allies, January 6 insurrectionists, and far-right loyalists.

Let me say that again: Donald Trump settled with himself in his own lawsuit—have you ever heard of something like this?—against his own government to take taxpayer dollars to his political allies, stuff it in their pockets, and, for all we know, his pocket.

Trump didn't bother making a deal with the Devil. He just made a deal with himself to set up this MAGA slush fund.

That is not justice. That is not law and order. That is corruption—corruption in broad daylight—no disguise, no shame, no attempt to hide it.

And this is the through line of the Trump Presidency: If there is taxpayer

money on the table, Donald Trump wants a big cut of it.

Trump wants to fill his coffers. That is why he created this MAGA slush fund. That is why he keeps demanding taxpayers bankroll his billion-dollar ballroom, and it is why his family business always seems to be lurking around the business of government.

Americans are working harder than ever just to make ends meet, while Donald Trump schemes to turn their tax dollars into personal payouts and vanity projects.

And where—where—are the Republicans, here in the Senate and elsewhere? Are they going to stand up for the taxpayer, or are they so afraid of Donald Trump that they will let him raid the Treasury in broad daylight?

The American people are watching, and they will remember who fought to lower their costs and who helped Donald Trump line his pockets.

RECONCILIATION

Mr. President, that brings me to the Republicans' reconciliation bill.

While Americans are getting crushed by the cost of rent, groceries, gas, healthcare, and childcare, Senate Republicans have spent their time trying to salvage a plan to force taxpayers to fund Donald Trump's gilded ballroom.

Democrats stopped Republicans' first attempt. Now, Republicans have a choice. Republicans can drop this ballroom boondoggle because Democrats exposed it and the public saw it for exactly what it was, or Republicans can keep this boondoggle in the bill.

Either way, Democrats will make sure they will have a chance to vote on it on the Senate floor. Republicans do not—do not—get to hide from this.

Americans can barely afford to keep a roof over their own heads. They should not be forced to pay for a golden roof over Trump's head.

And, to be very clear, I don't care if the Republicans ask for a billion dollars, a million dollars, or a single dollar. Every penny of taxpayer money for Donald Trump's vanity project is a penny too much, and Senate Democrats will fight to make sure not one penny of Americans' money is used for it.

The ballroom is the perfect symbol of this Republican budget bill: Republicans focused on all the wrong things.

This bill still pours tens of billions of dollars into Trump's masked agents, uncontrolled raids, and unaccountable police forces. The Republican bill still does nothing—nothing—to lower grocery costs, lower rent, lower gas prices, lower healthcare costs.

That is the contrast: Democrats fighting to lower costs, Republicans fighting to launder Trump's corruption through the Federal budget.

So let Republicans rewrite the text. Let them change the number. Let them try to hide the ballroom after they got caught. The truth will not change.

Donald Trump sees Americans' money as his money. He somehow thinks he is entitled to reach into the