

billion dollars. One billion dollars to protect themselves, but they vote against protecting our communities. It is wrong. Democrats are much more supportive of protecting themselves and illegal immigrant criminals than they are of protecting the citizens of this great Nation.

The message from the Democrats is this: Our Nation's safety and security doesn't matter.

My message is this: The safety and security of our citizens and our communities should be the No. 1 priority of everyone serving in the U.S. Senate.

Republicans are going to stand up to protect American citizens. We will pass the SECURE America Act, and we will continue to keep American communities safe.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). The minority whip.

#### RECONCILIATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, if you follow the U.S. Senate priority agenda, you are realizing at this moment in time, we are in the midst of a national emergency—a national emergency. What would you guess that would be? The war in Iran? Well, certainly, when it cost America 14 lives at least at this point and when you have billions of dollars being spent. I believe the figures—the latest one reported was \$29 billion. Is that the national emergency? No.

Is the national emergency in the Senate the pending invasion of Cuba? No.

How about the President's tariff taxes—tariff taxes that have raised the cost of living across the United States? No, that is not the national emergency.

Gasoline prices—would that be a national emergency to the Senate leaders? It was \$5.49 a gallon in Chicago last weekend. But that is not it.

How about grocery prices, utility prices, rent prices, daycare prices? No, that is not on the Republican agenda as a national emergency.

What is on the agenda as far as the Senate is concerned is the billionaire boondoggle ballroom—ballroom. America desperately needs a new ballroom, and they are asking for \$1 billion—\$1 billion—to build it.

I thought the President promised that his golfing friends and business leaders were going to pay for this, not the taxpayers. Well, that has all changed.

This weekend, the Senate Parliamentarian ruled that funding President Trump's personal pet project, his gold-plated ballroom, as currently written cannot be included in the Republicans' partisan budget reconciliation bill before the Senate. To that, I say thank heavens.

I distinctly recall the President's promise that the American people were not going to pay for this ballroom. How quickly he retreated on his word and asked taxpayers to cough up \$1 billion—another broken promise.

This ruling by the Parliamentarian in response to a challenge brought by

Senate Democrats is a win for the American people across the country, but don't kid yourself—Senate Republicans are already back to the drawing board for this ballroom emergency which we face, attempting to revise the provision so it can be included in the reconciliation bill.

Americans continue to struggle with high prices at the grocery store and at the gas station. Republicans have shown where their priorities lie: appeasing the President and writing him a blank check for a new ballroom and a mass deportation campaign.

This much we know: When President Trump has his way with his billion-dollar ballroom emergency project, there will continue to be no room on the Trump dance card for America's working families.

President Trump's war of choice in Iran, as well as his continued tariffs, is squeezing American families hard—in housing, groceries, and fuel costs and utility bills; inflation that surged to 3.8 percent—the highest level since the pandemic and is outpacing wage growth.

In Illinois, drivers are paying more than \$5 a gallon for gas—as I mentioned, last week, \$5.49 a gallon in Chicago. Illinois electricity bills are up by more than 15 percent on President Trump's watch, and grocery prices had the biggest 1-month jump in nearly 4 years. Fresh vegetables are 44 percent more expensive than they were just 3 months ago. Ask the shoppers at your local stores; they know this personally.

I recently heard from a constituent of mine from Southern Illinois: Reverend Dr. Anthony Paulson. He wrote about the cost-of-living issues. Reverend Paulson told me that, as a pastor, he witnesses the impact of rising costs on his family, friends, and neighbors. Residents come to his church seeking help with the cost of food, housing, and gas to meet their basic needs. The reverend said he offers the church's compassion and support to anyone in need, but the church and the people he serves have been stretched thin, thanks to the across-the-board price hikes we have under the Trump administration.

I think about Reverend Paulson and the countless other constituents who have called my office to sound the alarm whenever I cast a vote in regard to this issue.

But President Trump said he doesn't think about Americans' financial hardships "even a little bit." He continued:

I don't think about Americans' financial situation. I don't think about anybody.

President Trump.

Tell that to Reverend Paulson, tell him you don't care about his concerns or the concerns of the people he serves.

I will also note that just yesterday the President's politicized Department of Justice settled a \$10 billion lawsuit against the Internal Revenue Service. What did the President get because of this settlement? A so-called Anti-Weaponization Fund of nearly \$1.8 bil-

lion. And what will this money from the taxpayers be used for? The administration says it is for, "victims of lawfare and weaponization."

Hold on to your hats and let me tell you the whole story. The whole story starts here on January 6. I was seated in my chair. The other Senators were seated. We were counting the electoral votes.

The Vice President of the United States Vice President Pence was presiding. It was about 2 p.m., at which point the Secret Service came through that door, grabbed the Vice President from where he was sitting in that chair, and removed him from this room.

We sat here and waited, and a minute later, a member of the Capitol Police came before us in uniform and said: Stay in this room, there is a mob outside, but we will make this a protected safe room.

Not 10 minutes later that same officer came before us and said: Cancel everything I said. Evacuate as quickly as possible.

And the Senators of both political parties filed through that door to escape the mob that was invading the U.S. Capitol building where we meet today. It was the most amazing thing to happen in this building since the invasion of the British in the War of 1812. Those of you who have any questions as to whether it actually occurred, look at the video, look at the proof, look at the evidence. The net result was a melee that almost cost more than two or three human lives.

They had over 140 members of the Capitol Hill Police protecting Members of Congress, protecting the Vice President of the United States, and protecting visitors to the Capitol from the mob that President Trump sent to make an impression on the Capitol and the people who were working here. Over 140 instances where these mobsters and insurrectionists beat up the local police who had their lives on the line. You can see the videos. Don't believe a word I said, take a look at the videos and judge for yourself.

The net result was, when it was all over, some 1,500 to 1,600 individuals were arrested and prosecuted for crimes committed that day. Many of them ended up in jail as they should have.

What was the result when President Trump was reelected for a second term? On his first day in office, he gave full and unconditional pardons to all of those mobsters and insurrectionists who invaded the Capitol and attacked our police force. Attacked our police force. Members on the other side come to the floor and talk about who has respect for the police, not one word was said in opposition to the President's full and unconditional pardon to these people who attacked our local police doing their job. Two people as a result of that, two of our officers, died in subsequent days from the trauma that they endured. That is the reality.

Now, what does the President want to do? What has been the promise from the start? We are not only going to release full and unconditionally all of those arrested as an insurrectionist mob on the Capitol. We are going to give them compensation.

How much is it worth to be on the good side of the President with this new MAGA slush fund of \$1.8 billion? That money is headed to the pockets of the individuals who crashed this Capitol. Can you think of anything worse, any incentive to attack police worse than that? I can't think of it.

Lawyers for those January 6 insurrectionists who Trump pardoned have already said they are going to apply for compensation. They are going to ask for money to be paid to them for committing a crime. Forget that working people are paying more for gas and they still haven't seen a dime in refunds in Trump's illegal tariffs that pushed up the prices of groceries and clothes and appliances. The President is making sure that those who fought to undermine a free and fair election and those who attacked this Capitol building cashed in, not the hard-working families of America who are struggling mightily to get by.

That should tell you all you need to know about what the President's priorities are. Democrats will fight this unprecedented and unacceptable slush fund, and this week, we will continue to push back on Republicans' partisan reconciliation bill and billionaire ballroom emergency bill every step of the way.

We will work to halt the flow of taxpayers' dollars to Trump's ballroom, his arches, God only knows what he will dream up next, and his mass deportation campaign. And when this bill comes to the floor later this week, the Republicans get to go on record on exactly what their priorities are going to be moving forward. Will our Republican colleagues support our efforts to drive down these family costs, or will they side with President Trump?

The last point I would like to make is from a statement made by a previous speaker on the Republican side. He said that we don't have any respect for law and order and the policemen and law enforcement officials who enforce it. This MAGA slush fund of \$1.8 billion for those who came into the Capitol and sacked this building and did their darndest to hurt our law enforcement agents speaks for itself.

What we feel on the Democratic side is that the men and women of law enforcement deserve our respect, and they should be held to the same standards in the Capitol and in the Federal Government as they are held in every State. I don't know of any masked State troopers in my State or in Wyoming. They don't wear masks because they are proud of what they do for a living. Whereas, the ICE agents are just the opposite; they are hiding their identity. And the Republicans want to protect them. I don't understand why.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

HONORING HAROLD DOSSETT

Mr. YOUNG. Mr. President, in May of 1944, before the Allied forces landed on the beaches of Normandy, Dwight Eisenhower signaled out one American service branch for their loyalty, courage, and fortitude. When Operation Overlord was complete and victory won, he predicted:

[T]here is no organization—

No organization

—that will share its credit more deservedly than the Merchant Marine.

The Supreme Allied Commander was correct, but the credit he spoke of was never given to this service branch in proportion to the sacrifices made. After all, no branch suffered losses at a greater rate during the war—not the Marines, not the Army, or Coast Guard, not the Navy. Of the 243,000 merchant mariners who joined the fight, nearly 9,500 paid the ultimate price.

As we prepare to observe Memorial Day this coming weekend, we remember the fallen sailors of the forgotten service, and we honor a young Hoosier who gave his life aboard one of its ships. Without the sacrifices of the Merchant Marine, America's military would be unable to win its war or to defend its people.

In war, our civilian mariners and commercial vessels transport and supply our soldiers, sailors, and airmen. They are the critical link between the homeland in the front, the one that has made the difference between victory and defeat for 250 years.

During the Revolution, they delivered the gun powder the Continentals used to beat the British. In the War Of 1812, they armed their clippers and sloops with cannons. They ran the enemy's blockades, and they brought clothes and guns to our troops. Throughout the Civil War, they carried coal, horses, and food to the Union soldiers along the Atlantic Coast and on the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers.

Wherever our men and women in uniform have gone in the world to defend liberty, the Merchant Marine has followed in support. Whenever America's soldiers have raised our flag in victory, its mariners helped to make the triumph possible. And they have always done this in the face of grave danger and at great cost.

Commercial sailors were among the casualties in America's first naval battle at Machias off the coast of Maine. They were killed by the enemies' fire on the oceans and the Great Lakes. From the Republic's beginning, merchant mariners have died in every major conflict, including Vietnam and Korea, as well as Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom.

These civilians transport their cargo into war zones with minimal defense. Because of their vital mission, they are the target of and often sunk by warships and aircraft.

In no conflict was the peril greater than World War II. They left from America's coasts. They headed for the front carrying the Sherman tanks and Mustang fighter planes, steel and lumber, bandages and antibiotics, mail from home, rations, and even chocolate.

On board those ships were what was required to defeat the Axis and to make a soldier's life just a little bit less miserable while doing it. That is, if they made it to their destination; 733 of America's merchant ships were sunk during the war. The *Samuel Q. Brown* was one of them.

The tanker was on its way from New Orleans to Honolulu carrying 80,000 barrels of fuel when it was struck by a torpedo from a German submarine 100 miles south of Cuba. The ship erupted into fire. Its crew jumped overboard and swam to the lifeboats and the rafts that they had cut loose after the explosion. Two men were lost. The rest watched as the U-boat launched another torpedo and sank the *Samuel Q. Brown*.

After 13 hours afloat, a Navy patrol plane spotted the survivors who were eventually rescued. The five injured among them were transported to a hospital in Key West, FL. All survived but one, a messman named Harold Dossett. He died on June 1, 1942.

Harold was 27 years old. He was from Princeton, IN. He came from a line of heroes. Members of the Dossett family fought in the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, and the Civil War. No surprise then that he was active in the history club at Princeton High School before his graduation in 1932.

He was well-known and well-liked in Princeton, a fixture of the downtown square, where the local newspaper noted he was often seen at the front table in the local restaurant the Alco. At the end of the 1930s, Harold relocated to Texas where he found work in the oil industry and ended up as a messman on the *Samuel Q. Brown*, which was owned by the Tide Water Associated Oil Company.

He had served aboard two other ships before the *Samuel Brown*; both were sunk after his transfer. "The third one was fatal," his mother later said.

It was during that ship's mission that he joined the list of Americans who have laid down their lives so that their countrymen could live in freedom.

After his body was brought back to Indiana from Florida, Harold's mother was presented with the Mariner's Medal. This is the Merchant Marine's highest honor, and its equivalent to the Purple Heart. Another honor arrived later to address the incredible losses of commercial vessels during the war, American industry mass produced Liberty ships to speed supplies to the front.

In 1945, one of these Liberty ships, the SS HAROLD DOSSETT was completed. Ultimately, it was the men aboard those Liberty ships who helped win the war.