

Republicans are fighting like hell to waste billions of dollars on things taxpayers do not want, do not need, and certainly should not be forced to pay for. That is true of the billion-dollar ballroom. That is true of the tens of billions of dollars the Republican bill would give to Trump's masked agents, who have gunned down Americans in the streets. It is true of the whole GOP entire agenda.

Republicans can change the pricetag of the ballroom. They tried to rewrite the text. They even attempted to hide this boondoggle in the bill, but we caught them. Republicans will not be able to distance themselves from this corruption. Democrats will make sure of that. No matter what happens, we will make sure the American people know where Republicans stand. We will make sure Republicans have to go on the record and show what they are really fighting for when we vote this week: Trump's gilded palace—not working families, not lower costs, not for the American people.

The American people want lower costs. They are giving money to the ballroom. They are giving money to the slush fund. How out of touch are they? How harmful are they to the average working family's interests?

Then, the third part of Trump's terrible, terrible, terrible week is the continuing increase in gas prices. As Americans pack up the car and fire up the grill ahead of Memorial Day, they are getting crushed by the skyrocketing costs of Trump's disastrous war in Iran.

With gas selling for over \$4.50 a gallon, up nearly 45 percent—45 percent—since this time last year, many Americans are canceling their Memorial Day plans because they simply can't afford to drive.

Americans can't afford a barbecue when the cost of the beef they put on the grill and the propane they use to fuel it are both going up too.

Republicans ought to take note that among the States that have seen the greatest increase in gas prices since the war are the battleground States of Ohio, Michigan, and Alaska. One report says those are the three highest. They are the battleground States.

What did Donald Trump have to say yesterday about these surging gas prices across the country? He said:

This is peanuts.

Can you believe this guy? Donald Trump thinks the hundreds of extra dollars Americans are shelling out at the gas station each month are peanuts, a pittance.

What does he know? Does he ever fill up his own tank with gas? No.

Trump should tell the American people that he thinks it is a pittance and tell that to America's small businesses, which suffered their biggest decline in 2 years, last month, because of the surge in costs.

Trump should tell that to American farmers, who are struggling to afford fuel for their tractors and agriculture

equipment, after facing rising costs from tariffs and now increased costs of fertilizer.

The GOP continues to stand by Donald Trump's handling of this war, but the cracks are starting to form.

Yesterday, Democrats convinced enough Republicans to break ranks and advance our War Powers Resolution to end Trump's war. Our vote on our War Powers Resolution yesterday was an important step toward ending Trump's war, but we won't stop pushing and pushing and pushing until Republicans finally join us in ending this reckless war. Democrats are going to keep the pressure up.

In conclusion, this has been a terrible week—a terrible, terrible week—for Donald Trump and Republicans, and it will get only worse for our Senate Republicans during vote-arama because Democrats are going to force Senate Republicans to vote on amendment after amendment about Trump's ballroom, Trump's slush fund, and the rising costs of Trump's war. They are not going to be able to hide.

The American people are going to see the clear difference between the parties. We are for working people. We are for getting costs down, going after corruption, ending the chaos. And yet they, by backing Donald Trump, make all three worse.

I encourage the American people to watch this debate, though they already know what they will see: Republicans fighting for Trump, Democrats fighting to lower costs.

And, finally, to make matters even worse for this terrible, terrible week for Republicans, I will utter one final word: Texas.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

SECURE AMERICA ACT

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I have a simple message for the dedicated men and women of ICE and Border Patrol: Help is on the way.

You spent the last 5 months guarding our borders and protecting our communities. You were defunded by the Democrats. You were demonized by members of the media. Your homes and your families were threatened by radicals.

Courageously, you carried out your mission. And you do it with patriotism, professionalism, and resolve. Your commitment makes America safer. Republicans are fighting to send you the support you need, as you continue to do your duty.

For the first time in 4 years, the United States now has a secure border.

Under Joe Biden and the Democrats, 10 million illegal immigrants flooded into our country. Democrats' catch-and-release policies turned every State into a border State.

Today, under Republicans, catch-and-release has been replaced with detain-and-deport. Zero illegal immigrants have entered our Nation in the past year. Hundreds of illegal immigrant criminals are being removed each and every week.

In just 2 weeks last month, officers in Houston arrested 277 illegal immigrant criminals—criminals who had been convicted of a total of 751 offenses. This isn't an innocent group of people. It is convicted murders. It is child abusers. It is drug dealers. It is violent gang members.

This is just in one city—Houston, TX.

Let me state the obvious: Illegal immigrant criminals do not make our communities or our country safer. They make our communities more dangerous.

Republicans want the law to be upheld. We want to continue to remove illegal immigrant criminals from our communities.

And President Trump has made significant progress making communities safer. Republicans will protect this progress and keep it going into the future.

That is what this week is all about here in the U.S. Senate. Senate Republicans have introduced legislation to fully fund the men and women of immigration enforcement. It is called the Secure America Act.

The Secure America Act fully funds Immigrations and Customs Enforcement. It fully funds U.S. Border Patrol. It funds them for not 1 year, not 2 years, but 3 full years. It guarantees full funding for ICE and Border Patrol for the entire Presidency of President Trump.

This is an urgent priority.

Since January, Democrats have blocked critical funding for ICE. They have blocked critical funding for Border Patrol. Democrats continue to try to defund law enforcement in America at this very moment. Democrats don't respect law enforcement. They will not honor their sacrifice, and Democrats refuse to fund them.

Today's Democratic Party is more interested in protecting illegal immigrant criminals than it is in protecting law-abiding American citizens. Today's Democratic Party belongs to the radicals who want to abolish ICE and return to open borders. Democrats are willing to sacrifice the safety and security of the American people to illegal immigrant criminals.

That is why Republicans will fully fund law enforcement without a single Democrat vote. Republicans will pass the Secure America Act. This is a choice between safe communities and open borders. This is about protecting America's law-abiding citizens.

SENATOR COLLINS' 10,000TH VOTE

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, on a separate note, in January of 1997, a determined daughter of northern Maine cast her first vote in the U.S. Senate. It was a humble start, and it has grown into one of the most remarkable records in Senate history—an unbroken streak of conservative votes that continues to this very day.

For nearly 30 years, nothing—and I mean nothing—has stopped Senator SUSAN COLLINS from coming to this floor and casting her vote on behalf of the good people of Maine. Senator COLLINS now stands on the threshold of a significant milestone: 10,000 consecutive votes in the U.S. Senate. She hasn't missed a single vote in her entire Senate career—not one. This is a remarkable accomplishment.

Of course, if you ask SUSAN, she will tell you that it wasn't about chasing a record; it was about reflecting the values of Maine.

SUSAN votes with confidence, with courage, and with conviction. This is her commitment to her constituents. She works as hard for them as they do for their families. Her dedication is incredible.

As the Senate majority whip, it is my job to count the votes. No matter the topic, I can count on this: SUSAN will be here. She will vote with intelligence and integrity, and she will be doing it for the people of Maine.

Congratulations to SUSAN COLLINS on this historic achievement.

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. MORAN. 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. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 5 minutes before the scheduled rollcall vote.

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

TRIBUTE TO REX PETTY

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Pastor Rex Petty for devoting decades of his life to serving the people of Liberal, KS, as pastor of Faith Tabernacle Church and to congratulate him upon his retirement.

He started there as an associate pastor in 1984. Rex soon stepped into the role of interim pastor, and the congregation voted to keep Rex on to continue leading the church.

Recently, Rex celebrated an incredible milestone with his congregation: 40 years of ministry at Faith Tabernacle Church.

Delvin Kinser, the news director for Great Plains Christian Radio, said of Rex:

He is more than a local minister devoted to his own congregation.

For decades, he has made the entirety of Liberal, Kansas, his mission field. Pastors have come and gone, but Rex has been a constant source of spiritual leadership [in] his hometown.

His retirement leaves a tremendous void, but those who know him have little doubt that he made the spiritual fabric of [this] community stronger than it otherwise would have been without him. Always cheerful, always positive, always about Jesus! That is Rex Petty!

Rex's passion for service extends far into the Liberal community. He has been an involved member of the Liberal Ministerial Alliance, an organization that brings local churches together to care for the needs of the community. He is eager to minister to others, and he has often brought former NFL players to Liberal to share inspirational messages with students in southwest Kansas and the Oklahoma Panhandle.

Rex also served as the coordinator for the local Liberal High School Baccalaureate.

An avid sports fan, he can regularly be seen cheering in the stands at many local youth sporting events.

In a recent interview with the local paper, the Leader and Times, Rex said—this is Rex saying:

Maybe we don't have the highest mountains or a lot of the lakes and streams and all that beauty other places have, but [what] we have [is] the people. And that's been the most wonderful thing about Liberal.

Rex is civic-minded. He takes pride in his community. He can often be found leading prayers before local government meetings. He was instrumental in creating the city's slogan: "From Generosity to Prosperity."

In this life of service of 40 years, he touched countless lives. Here are a couple of comments that others have made.

Rozelle Webb is the CEO of the Liberal Chamber of Commerce, and she says:

Rex Petty has been a very "Liberal" pastor. He has given his time and [his] heart, not only to his church and congregation, but to everyone in our town. We will miss his sincere love for Liberal.

Kansas State Representative Shannon Francis says:

Congratulations to my classmate—

Rex is a high school graduate of Liberal High School.

Congratulations to my classmate, Rex Petty, on his retirement. Rex is what makes rural America great.

Rex is a hometown boy who returned home after college and has spent 40 years ministering to his friends, family and community members. His quiet, moral leadership has always been a source of calm and comfort for our community. We will miss him.

I would like to recognize an additional person, a person besides Rex. It is the person who supported Rex, and like him, is a cherished member of the Liberal community, his wife Eydie. She is committed to serving and investing in the life of others, including serving as a teacher in the Liberal Public Schools.

This summer, Rex and Eydie will celebrate 42 years of marriage. Together, they are passionate about helping others, and they can always be found volunteering for Liberal's Pancake Day and all other good causes. They passed their desire to serve on to their family, and their son Reid works on my staff as a district representative serving the people of Kansas.

When I am in town, Rex will always meet me with a warm smile and a steady handshake. He has set a remarkable example of service and legacy that will not—will not—be forgotten.

Earl Watt, the publisher of the Leader & Times summed it up pretty well by saying:

Thank you, Rex Petty, for being Liberal's Pastor.

I congratulate him. In fact, I congratulate them, Rex and Eydie, for their service to Kansans, and I wish them the best as they enter this new chapter.

I believe the world is changed one soul at a time. Reverend Petty committed his life to serving Jesus Christ. In that service he touched many lives loving his neighbor as himself. Rex Petty, a role model for us all.

I yield the floor.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant executive clerk read the nomination of Evan Rikhye, of the Virgin Islands, to be Judge for the District Court of the Virgin Islands for a term of ten years.

VOTE ON RIKHYE NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Rikhye nomination?

Ms. SMITH. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Florida (Mrs. MOODY).

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 130 Ex.]

YEAS—52

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| Armstrong | Collins | Fischer |
| Banks | Cornyn | Graham |
| Barrasso | Cotton | Grassley |
| Blackburn | Cramer | Hagerty |
| Boozman | Crapo | Hawley |
| Britt | Cruz | Hoeben |
| Budd | Curtis | Husted |
| Capito | Daines | Hyde-Smith |
| Cassidy | Ernst | Johnson |