

Americans the value Federal workers bring to our everyday lives.

And in his final days, Gerry continued to center Federal employees in his work. Two days before he died, he introduced H.R. 3490, which will direct the Government Accountability Office to report on esophageal cancer in Federal employees.

The bill directs GAO to help us understand the landscape of esophageal cancer among Federal employees and retirees, particularly access to early screening and early treatment.

For some folks, they have a precancerous condition that if treated early, can help prevent esophageal cancer completely. This bill is simple. It would ask GAO to study if Federal employees who are at high risk are getting screened as early as possible to help them make sure they get the care they need as early as possible.

The bill was passed unanimously, 42 to nothing in the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee and then passed by a voice vote on the floor.

In a moment, I am going to ask unanimous consent that we pass this bill here on the Senate floor, but before I make that request, I want to defer and yield my time to the Senator—fellow Senator from Virginia Senator KAINE.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I am so pleased to be with my colleague Senator WARNER to talk about Gerry Connolly prior to offering a unanimous consent motion on this bill.

If you met Gerry once, you would remember a very, very fun and colorful guy. He studied for the priesthood to be a Maryknoll priest and then left the priesthood to marry his wife “Smitty” who studied to be a nun and then left her order.

His first job after he left the seminary was a staffer on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and then he went onto this wonderful career, as Mark described, on the Fairfax Board of Supervisors before eventually becoming chairman of that board and then coming to Congress.

Gerry personified a pride in Irish Catholicism. As Mark said, his St. Patrick’s Day parties were absolutely legendary in Virginia, and he was a tireless advocate for so many.

The point that Mark made about esophageal cancer and its effect and its growing effect in this country is important to underline. This was the condition that claimed Gerry’s life, but how powerful not even 2 days before died, he was trying to advance our understanding of this.

Esophageal cancer is the fastest growing cancer among men in the United States. We are not exactly sure why, but we can get more data and do more analysis of this and then provide options for care should this resolution pass.

That is why I am so glad to stand with my friend Senator WARNER to

honor a great public servant, a great American Gerry Connolly.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, as if in legislation session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 3490 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3490) to require the Government Accountability Office to produce a report on esophageal cancer, and for other purposes.

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

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill 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 bill (H.R. 3490) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

Mr. WARNER. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

#### TERMINATING RESTRICTIVE ENFORCEMENT OF YOUTH SETTLEMENTS LAW

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I rise today to share the story of a young man who didn’t have the opportunity to share his own story.

His name was Trey Carlock, and for years, he struggled in silence with the trauma and the wounds inflicted by someone he once trusted at a summer camp he attended for many years. So let me share Trey’s story.

Trey was a young man who loved the Lord. He loved his family. He loved his friends. And he proudly resided in my home State of Texas. As a young boy, Trey attended summer camp in Branson, MO, where he and dozens of other campers were sexually assaulted by the camp director.

And as an adult, Trey sought accountability. He filed a lawsuit against the camp he attended in an effort to hold the camp responsible and to seek justice, not only for himself but for others.

But instead of justice, Trey was offered a settlement, and that settlement came with a nondisclosure agreement which mandated Trey’s silence. After years of fighting to recover from abuse, Trey’s settlement reminded him that his voice could be bought, that his story could be buried, that the price of compensation was silence.

Trey once told his therapist “They will always control me, and I’ll never be free.” Not long after, Trey died by

suicide. He was only 28 years old. No child who has endured sexual abuse should be forced to carry that horror in silence. No child should be forced to walk alone in that pain. And no child should be forced to accept agreements that protect the abuser.

In Trey’s case, and, tragically many others, nondisclosure agreements are used to shield the abuser. Children are the most vulnerable and most precious members of our society. As legislators, as parents, as human beings, we have a moral obligation to stand between children and those who would harm them. That is why I have introduced TREY’S Law.

TREY’S Law will protect, defend, and support children who are the victims of sexual assault. It ensures that nondisclosure agreements cannot be used to silence minors who have endured abuse. At the same time, the bill preserves the confidentiality of settlement amounts and allows victims themselves to insist on privacy if they so choose. What it does not allow is the forced silencing of victims in order to protect abusers.

TREY’S Law establishes a clear national baseline: no NDA may be used to silence the disclosure of child sexual abuse. And importantly, this legislation does not prevent the States from going further. Versions of TREY’S Law have already passed in Texas, in Alabama, in Missouri, Tennessee, California, and other States have also taken steps to prohibit the use of NDAs in cases of child sexual abuse. These are meaningful steps in the right direction, but we owe it to Trey and every victim to ensure that they have the right to speak about their experiences, they have the right to rely on those around them, that they know their stories will not be silenced, and, most importantly, that they are not alone.

In just a moment, I will propound a unanimous consent request to take up and pass TREY’S Law to make sure that no other children feel controlled or defeated by the system that is supposed to deliver them justice.

TREY’S Law has already passed the Judiciary Committee unanimously, and I want to thank Senators GILLIBRAND and BRITT and my colleagues on the entire Judiciary Committee for working on this legislation and helping us push this across the finish line.

And with that, I yield the floor to Senator BRITT.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mrs. BRITT. Mr. President, I rise today to stand with Senator CRUZ. Senator CRUZ’s leadership on this important issue has led us to today where I am hopeful that the Senate will provide a unanimous vote for TREY’S Law.

You heard Senator CRUZ tell the story that tugs at your heartstrings; it is unimaginable. As a parent, I cannot imagine my child enduring that and then that child being forced into silence. It should never happen again.

Victims should be in control of when and where and if they tell their story. They should never be silenced or sidelined.

TREY'S Law has built momentum across the country. That is because, as Senator CRUZ will tell you, Elizabeth Carlock, Trey's sister, has fought tirelessly to ensure that this never happens to another individual and another family ever has to endure this pain.

When we are looking at this, I am very proud that Alabama has led the way. Alabama passed TREY'S Law, along with a number of other States. And in our State, Representative David Faulkner and State Senator Matt Woods ensured that TREY'S Law was signed by Governor Ivey into law.

Today, we ask our colleagues to join us in this commonsense and bipartisan piece of legislation that will ensure that no victim of child sexual abuse will ever be silenced.

I urge the House to pass this bill and to send it to President Trump's desk.

Look, there are a lot of times that we are out and talking to people in our States. We hear from constituents. We hear stories that tug at our heartstrings. I commend Senator CRUZ and the Senate Judiciary Committee—and I am certainly proud to be a part of that—for actually doing something about the tragedies that are facing everyday Americans.

Today, let's honor Trey's memory. Let's ensure that abusers are not protected. Let's ensure that victims have a voice, and let's prevent tragedies like this from ever happening again.

I yield back to my distinguished colleague from Texas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I thank Senator BRITT for her kind remarks and for her passionate leadership fighting alongside me to get this passed.

If and when the Senate passes this, it will be a victory for Trey, a victory for his sister Elizabeth, who has been tirelessly fighting to honor the memory and legacy of her brother, a victory for the entire Carlock family, and a victory for kids who tragically have been the victims of sexual assault across the country.

After the Senate passes this, I hope the House takes this legislation up quickly, passes it, and puts it on the President's desk to be signed into law.

Mr. President, therefore, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 413, S. 3966.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 3966) to prohibit the enforcement of certain contractual clauses that restrict disclosure of sexual abuse of minors, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which was reported from the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. CRUZ. 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. 3966) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 3966

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

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Terminating Restrictive Enforcement of Youth Settlements Law" or "TREY'S Law".

#### SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.

##### (a) FINDINGS.—

(1) INSTRUMENTALITIES OF INTERSTATE COMMERCE.—Congress finds the following:

(A) Sexual abuse of minors, including abuse facilitated through instrumentalities of interstate commerce, is a matter of national concern.

(B) Agreements containing nondisclosure and confidentiality provisions, frequently concluded through the instrumentalities of interstate commerce, have been used to silence survivors of sexual abuse and conceal ongoing or repeated abuse.

(C) The enforcement of such provisions interferes with reporting to law enforcement agencies, child protection authorities, Federal regulators, Members of Congress, and the courts, and frustrates the enforcement of Federal criminal and civil law.

(2) NECESSARY AND PROPER CLAUSE AND ENFORCEMENT OF FEDERAL CRIMINAL LAW.—Congress further finds the following:

(A) Sexual abuse and trafficking of minors are prohibited under Federal criminal law, including chapter 110 of title 18, United States Code, and section 1591 of title 18, United States Code.

(B) Nondisclosure and confidentiality agreements that prohibit or restrict disclosure of sexual abuse of a minor interfere with reporting to law enforcement, child protection authorities, courts, Federal regulators, and Members of Congress.

(C) Such agreements frustrate the investigation and prosecution of Federal crimes, chill cooperation with law enforcement, and function as private mechanisms to obstruct justice.

(D) Congress has authority under clause 18 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution of the United States (commonly known as the "Necessary and Proper Clause") to ensure that private agreements are not used to impede the enforcement of Federal criminal and civil law protecting minors from sexual exploitation and abuse.

(3) STATE ACTION AND SECTION 5 OF THE 14TH AMENDMENT.—Congress further finds the following:

(A) Survivors of child sexual abuse possess fundamental constitutional interests, secured by provisions of the Bill of Rights as incorporated against the States through the 14th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, in reporting crimes, seeking redress through the courts, cooperating with law enforcement, and petitioning the government for protection and enforcement.

(B) When State courts or other governmental authorities enforce nondisclosure or confidentiality provisions that prohibit or restrict disclosure of sexual abuse of a minor, such enforcement constitutes State action for purposes of the 14th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

(C) Judicial enforcement of such provisions may deprive survivors of due process of law,

equal protection of the laws, and meaningful access to courts, including rights derived from the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States and incorporated against the States, in violation of the 14th Amendment.

(D) Agreements that obstruct justice, suppress the reporting of crimes, or conceal criminal conduct have long been regarded as common law, including at the time of the founding of the United States, as void and unenforceable as against public policy, and fall outside the traditional scope of protected contractual liberty.

(E) At the time of the founding of the United States, private agreements purporting to suppress prosecution, conceal felonies, or restrain the reporting of crimes were not recognized as valid or enforceable contracts, and no party possessed a vested right in their judicial enforcement.

(F) Congress has authority under section 5 of the 14th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States to enact appropriate remedial and preventive legislation to prevent and remedy constitutional violations arising from State judicial enforcement of private agreements that suppress disclosure of criminal conduct involving minors.

(b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is—

(1) to enforce the guarantees of the 14th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, including the right to petition the government for redress of grievances and the right of access to courts, by preventing State courts and other governmental authorities from enforcing nondisclosure or confidentiality provisions that suppress disclosure of sexual abuse of minors;

(2) to ensure, pursuant to the authority of Congress under article I of the Constitution of the United States, including the Necessary and Proper Clause, that private agreements are not used to obstruct the investigation or prosecution of Federal crimes involving the sexual abuse or trafficking of minors;

(3) to preserve access to courts and the right to petition the government for redress of grievances; and

(4) to ensure that survivors of sexual abuse of minors, and persons with knowledge of such abuse, may disclose such abuse freely and without fear of civil liability.

#### SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) MINOR PERSON.—The term "minor person" means an individual who has not attained 18 years of age.

(2) NONDISCLOSURE CLAUSE.—The term "nondisclosure clause" means a provision in a contract or agreement that prohibits 1 or more parties to the contract or agreement from disclosing conduct or information covered by the terms and conditions of the contract or agreement.

(3) SEXUAL ABUSE AGAINST A MINOR PERSON.—The term "sexual abuse against a minor person" means—

(A) conduct that constitutes or allegedly constitutes—

(i) an offense under chapter 110 of title 18, United States Code; or

(ii) sex trafficking of a minor person under section 1591 of title 18, United States Code; or

(B) any sexual act or sexual contact involving a minor person that constitutes a criminal offense under Federal law or the law of the State in which the act or contact occurs.

#### SEC. 4. NONDISCLOSURE AGREEMENTS VOID AND UNENFORCEABLE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—A nondisclosure clause shall be void and unenforceable as against public policy only to the extent that the nondisclosure clause prohibits—

(1) a victim or alleged victim of sexual abuse against a minor person from disclosing—

(A) that act of sexual abuse against a minor person; or

(B) facts related to that act of sexual abuse against a minor person; or

(2) any other person from disclosing facts related to sexual abuse against a minor person described in paragraph (1) in support of, in furtherance of, or consistent with the right of a victim or alleged victim to disclose under that paragraph.

(b) **PERMISSIBLE CONFIDENTIALITY.**—Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit a person, including a victim or alleged victim of sexual abuse against a minor person, from entering into a contract or agreement that restricts the disclosure of information, including the amount or payment terms of a settlement, by another party to the contract or agreement, including an alleged perpetrator, so long as such restriction does not prevent disclosure protected under subsection (a).

#### SEC. 5. RETROACTIVE APPLICATION.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—This Act shall apply to any nondisclosure clause in a contract or agreement entered into before, on, or after the date of enactment of this Act.

(b) **NO ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS.**—No person may enforce or attempt to enforce a nondisclosure clause described in section 4(a), regardless of the date on which the contract or agreement containing the nondisclosure clause was entered into.

(c) **PREEMPTION.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—This Act supersedes any State law to the extent that such law permits enforcement of a provision, the enforcement of which is prohibited under this Act.

(2) **RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.**—Nothing in this Act shall be construed to prohibit a State or locality from enacting legislation that—

(A) is consistent with this Act; or

(B) provides greater protection to a victim of sexual abuse against a minor person than is provided under this Act.

Mr. CRUZ. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

#### DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, when Lisa Smith was just 3 years old, she was trafficked—just a sweet little toddler, blond hair, the cutest little thing, not much younger than my daughter is now. When she should have been outside, kicking a soccer ball, playing with dummies, on a playground, with little friends, she was, instead, being abused—and in the most brutal, brutal fashion.

Her predator abused her and mutilated her and took pictures of it and videos and posted them to the internet, to the dark corners of the web, for the sick adulation of other predators.

This went on for months and then for years. And that is where Federal investigators first found Lisa, first noticed her, first saw the images. They could see this beautiful little girl. They could see the sick torture that she was being forced to endure. They could see the pain in her face. But they had no idea where she was.

They had all of the images. They saw all of what she was suffering through. They knew that she was out there. They knew that somebody was posting this over and over and over again. She knew that other predators were look-

ing at it, and they were responding to it, but they didn't know where to find her. They didn't know how to rescue her.

I wish I could say that Lisa's case is unique. I wish I could say that there were no other children like her in America. But the sad fact of the matter is that Lisa's case is increasingly common in the United States of America today.

I want you to take a look at this poster. This is the United States, and these red dots represent the IP addresses of individuals who have shared child rape images in just the last 6 months. There are 338,000 dots on that map. Let me say that again: 338,000 dots of known instances where a predator has shared, posted to the internet, images of child rape, child abuse, child sexual exploitation.

The number of child exploitation reports last year increased to 20.5 million in this country—20 million reports of child exploitation, the vast majority of those tied to online child exploitation.

Interpol estimates that there are 90,000 images that the government has of child rape, child exploitation, child sexual abuse. But what we don't know is who the child is or where she is—90,000 of these images but we don't know where they are. We don't know how to rescue them.

This is the crisis that is increasingly confronting every American family. Every family with children faces the risk that their child—when they log on, when they post something on the web, when they get a phone—that they will be solicited by a predator, that they will be lured into a dangerous situation by a predator, that they will themselves be trafficked—children taken from their homes, children lured away and kidnapped, children forced into sex slavery all across this country.

We know they are out there. We can see the images, but we don't know how to find them. And the internet has made this a crisis all across the country. It has made it a pressing crisis for every family in America.

The truth is, while child abuse is, sadly, a longstanding phenomenon, child predation and child trafficking now are fed and nourished and nurtured by social media, by companies that know that these images are being posted and don't do anything about it, by the purveyors of online platforms that allow their entire platform to be taken over and essentially run as a child trafficking ring.

The internet has made it much, much worse. It has made it a crisis. It has brought this problem to the doorstep of every family in this country.

And the question that I want to ask today is: What are we going to do about it? What are we going to do for the tens of thousands of children, like Lisa, who are out there, who are in need, who are being abused, who are being brutalized? Even as we stand here on this floor, for those children who need rescue, what will we do for them today?

Because the time has come to do something. The time for merely standing by and sitting back and hoping for the best has passed. There are too many children whose lives are being destroyed, even as we speak.

We have terrific Federal investigators whose job is, whose work is to identify and find these children. At the Department of Homeland Security, there is an entire unit called the cyber crimes unit that contains and includes forensic investigators who analyze the sorts of images that were posted here, that you see reflected on this map, who analyze them and try to find where the children are.

Here is the only problem with that. There are only seven of them. That is right. There are seven forensic analysts, seven experts who can analyze these images—90,000 images, at least, that the Government knows of, with these lost children; 20 million reports of sexual exploitation; and yet only seven analysts who are able to identify and rescue these children.

If you look at this map again, there is a sea of red dots. If you look closely, there are also blue dots, but you would be hard-pressed to find them. The blue dots represent the number of active investigations of child sexual abuse, of child online predation. They are completely lost in the sea of red.

Our children are increasingly lost to predators, to traffickers, to abusers. And, yet, our government is not doing nearly enough about it.

The investigators are there. They are capable. They are ready. They need help.

What can they do? What could the Department of Homeland Security, what could law enforcement do if they had the resources, if they had the support that they needed?

Well, I will give you a sense of it. They could do what they did for Lisa. What happened was Lisa's predator posted images of her online, and an investigator in the cyber crimes unit at Homeland saw the pictures and started drilling down on them.

He started analyzing every frame, every second of the videos, every little detail of the photos, everything he could get his hands on. And he started noticing a few telling signs, a few clues that maybe Lisa was somewhere in the southern part of the United States.

And then, one day, he was able to make out a playground and able to drill down, to zoom in on the playground equipment with enough specificity that he could begin to run it across other images of playgrounds in cities across the South. And, sure enough, in time, he was able to isolate which playground this was in the particular city in the South.

And after that, Homeland sent a team of investigators to start walking blocks—that is right; get out on the streets and walk them—to start walking up and down to see where exactly is that playground. Would Lisa come back to it? Where else might she be?

Are there other children in the region who might know, to interview, to talk, to see?

And here is what happened. They found her. They found her. As it turns out, she had never left home. You see, her predator—her abuser—was her father, who from the time that she was an infant serially raped and brutalized her and posted all those images.

And, you know, he thought he was really clever about it. He took a lot of careful steps to keep his identity a secret. But these investigators, these great law enforcement, these cops—that is really what they are at Homeland Security—they were better. Oh, they are good. They are very good. They found her. They got him. They rescued her.

There are tens of thousands of other children just like Lisa. It is time to rescue them. We can do it. We can help them today. We can send more investigators into the streets. We can put more cops onto the beat. We can stand up a program to train State and local and Federal law enforcement agents together, to combine their efforts, to work together to bring home children like Lisa. We can do it. The time has come to do it.

And I am here to say we will do it because in the Homeland funding bill that this body will take up in short order, there is the largest investment in anti-child trafficking in the history of this body. This bill contains funding and directives for 200 new agents and investigators to go after child traffickers—from 7 to 200—200 new cops who can analyze those images, who can go after the traffickers, and who can go rescue children like Lisa.

It also contains new funds for programs to bring together State and local and Federal law enforcement to coordinate their efforts and to deploy them together into the field to rescue our children.

It was an incredible privilege to work on this legislation and to get it into this bill. And I particularly want to thank my dear friend and a terrific advocate for children across this country, Tim Tebow.

Yes, you heard me right: the Heisman Trophy winner and NFL quarterback, who I think will be known, when it is all said and done, for something other than sports. I think what Tim will be best known for is his love and compassion for the poor, the weak, and the vulnerable.

Tim has been working on this for years. He has been to Homeland. He has seen the cyber crimes unit. And, together, he and I worked on this legislation to create these 200 new investigators—200 new cops—to get out there and go rescue kids—new programs for State and local law enforcement. And with his support and the support of my colleagues, it is now in this legislation.

I hope, in 48 hours' time or less, we will be able to say we have voted to send these rescuers out onto the

streets; we have voted to save these children.

The time is now. This is a moral challenge for this body to stand and protect the most vulnerable among us, our children—to stand and protect those who need it most, to say that we will no longer sit back and make excuses, but we will act to save. We will act to rescue. We will act to help the weak. We will act to save these children.

Let's do it. Let's do it now.

I yield the floor.

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

#### IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, last year, the city of Chicago, which I am honored to represent, lived under President Trump's mass deportation operation, which was dubbed by the administration as "Operation Midway Blitz."

While instances of ICE agents tear-gassing neighborhoods, firing rubber bullets at protesters, and using violent force to detain individuals have slowed since that monthslong campaign, arbitrary immigration enforcement continues to grip the city. There is fear in the neighborhoods as to what is next with ICE.

I would like to share one story with you. Two months ago, a high school student named Ricardo Hernandez-Navarrete and his mother were arrested in Chicago by ICE while they were at a routine check-in for their family's pending asylum case.

Do you remember what President Trump told us about ICE, what he promised us with ICE? They were going after the rapists, the murderers, the terrorists, the criminally insane, the child predators, and those who would kill you and should never have crossed our border—the "worst of the worst" in the words of Donald Trump.

Well, let me tell you about this mother and son. They have no criminal record whatsoever—none. Ricardo is a student at Mather High School in West Ridge, IL, who also plays soccer with the iProSkills Academy. He has committed to play for Truman College in the fall after his graduation. He describes it as the answer to his prayer.

The good news is that yesterday, a Federal judge ruled that Ricardo's mother must be released from ICE custody. Unfortunately, Ricardo, who is only 18 years old, remains in detention.

Does Ricardo sound like one of the worst of the worst that the President promised would be his target—the murderer? the rapist? the terrorist? Not to me.

After being detained, the two were taken to Kentucky from Chicago, put in jail for detention, and separated by the Trump administration. They have not seen each other for 2 months. Ricardo said being in detention "plays tricks on your mind" and that the bathrooms are "filthy" with practically no privacy.

He continued, saying:

I miss my mother, [and] I miss playing soccer.

Ricardo and his mother followed the rules. His mother came to the United States in 2022 when Ricardo was 15. She filed for asylum, and that petition remains pending according to court documents. Both have been model neighbors ever since they arrived.

I will also note that a case like Ricardo's is one of the many reasons Senate Democrats continue to fight to rein in lawless, rogue ICE agents, including by making sure Federal agents follow the same standards of law, in compliance with the Constitution, as State police departments already do. That is not too much to ask. Unfortunately, many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are continuing to muscle through a partisan spending bill which would give to the ICE agents a blank check.

The memory of what happened with the ICE agents in Chicago and certainly what happened in Minneapolis is not gone. We still remember that when wearing their masks, they were harassing people and killing innocent American citizens. It happened twice in quick succession.

Giving ICE a blank check is a mistake—to the tune of tens of billions of dollars—to continue this campaign of terror unchecked. I am going to vote no on that bill.

I urge ICE to release Ricardo and reunite him with his mother as soon as possible.

(The remarks of Mr. DURBIN pertaining to the introduction of S. 4608 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

#### RECONCILIATION

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, like citizens in Ohio, Vermonters like to work hard. They get up each day and face the day, and they don't fear hard work. They are glad to do that to protect their families and to improve their communities. But, you know, they work hard, but they don't like paying for wasteful things, and right now, President Trump is demanding—demanding—\$1 billion to build an East Wing, which, by the way, is an East Wing that he destroyed. He tore it down. Now he has promised Americans that he will rebuild it and that it will be through private contributions, but he is asking—demanding, really—the U.S. Congress to spend \$1 billion to rebuild what he destroyed. Vermonters don't like that at all.

It has been said that a budget does reflect our shared values, not the personal preferences of any one individual, including the President of the United States.

So let's just talk about some of the other ways \$1 billion could be spent that would have a significant benefit to Vermonters who are working hard, who

are paying their bills, and who care about their community.

With \$1 billion, we could extend the ACA premium tax credits—that you and I worked on, by the way—to make healthcare more affordable for 30,000 Vermonters.

With \$1 billion, we could provide really important title I funding, which helps rural and underserved schools in Vermont, for 23 years.

With \$1 billion, we could provide \$153,000 in relief for every single one of our 6,537 farms, which are all struggling.

With \$1 billion, we could provide a \$12,000 small business loan—small businesses being really essential to Vermont—to all 82,000 Vermont small businesses.

With \$1 billion, we could restore the SNAP Program for every Vermonter who has been kicked off nutrition assistance because of the Trump tax bill. Mr. President, 4,547 Vermonters have lost what we call 3Squares. Terrible.

With \$1 billion, we could fund the Women, Infants, and Children benefits for Vermonters for 147 years.

With \$1 billion, we could provide childcare for every child under 5 in Vermont for a year and a half.

With \$1 billion, we could fund the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, LIHEAP, in Vermont for 50 years. This vital program provides home heating and cooling aid for more than 26,000 Vermonters.

With \$1 billion, we could help provide \$50,000 loans to 20,000 Vermonters who have been impacted by flooding or other natural disasters in the past 3 years.

With \$1 billion, we could support FEMA's Disaster Relief Fund, which is operating in immediate-needs-funding status, meaning everything is precarious.

As I mentioned, if you want to show me your values, show me your budget. This reconciliation budget bill, which adds billions of dollars to an already bloated ICE budget and CBP budget with absolutely no reforms and no oversight and gives hundreds of millions of dollars—potentially \$1 billion—to President Trump's ballroom, is a statement of values. This \$1 billion won't help communities or families from Barre, VT, to Biloxi, MS.

You know, I want to give just a straightforward, rhetoric-free reading of just a few headlines we saw this week alone. This is the world we are in, and it reflects how the administration is spending its time and resources.

The Washington Post: "Millions expected to lose Affordable Care Act coverage as costs spike."

Associated Press: "Under Congressional Scrutiny, Blanche Defends Nearly \$1.8 [Billion] Fund to Pay Trump Allies."

The Washington Post: "EPA wants to repeal limits on 'forever chemicals' in drinking water."

The Associated Press: "Trump distorts recent revisions of scientific projections of global warming."

The Washington Post: "Health worker shortage will worsen with federal loan limit."

NOTUS: "Trump's Latest White House Makeover Includes a Helipad."

The New York Times: "Deported Despite DACA: Dreamers Face Uncertainty Under Trump."

The President of the United States has been clear: He is choosing a go-it-alone approach on his ballroom, he wants to fund ICE and CBP on a partisan basis with none of the reforms so many Americans are demanding, and he is going to totally bypass regular order and any hope of a bipartisan budget.

It is really a waste of taxpayer dollars. The folks that you represent and I represent, who are willing to work hard, who are willing to pay their fair share, really wonder: Why are we spending \$1 billion on a ballroom?

I yield the floor.  
The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

E15

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, the month of May is a very busy time of year: graduation season, recital season, and, of course, planting season for American farmers. Here in the Senate, lawmakers will burn the midnight oil this week to pass a reconciliation bill that delivers essential funding for national security and public safety.

Well, I want to assure my colleagues that this Senator is never too busy to set the record straight, and today, I come to the floor to set the record straight on E15.

E15 is a higher blend, higher octane fuel that is 85 percent gasoline and 15 percent homegrown American ethanol.

Last week, the House approved landmark legislation to make year-round E15 the law of the land and lower gas prices for Americans from coast to coast. The driving force behind the House victory was Iowa's House delegation. That shouldn't surprise you because Iowa is the leading producer of ethanol. That victory was led by Congressman RANDY FEENSTRA, Congressman ZACH NUNN, Congresswoman ASHLEY HINSON, and Congresswoman MARIANNETTE MILLER-MEEKS. I applaud all four of these House Members for their effort and for supporting a major industry in Iowa and probably about 40,000 jobs in Iowa, and I am glad to take up the baton with a bipartisan coalition here in the U.S. Senate.

With those generalizations, I would like to shed some light on what year-round E15 would do. E15 would offer Americans a lower price fuel option when they fill up at the pump, giving families somewhere between 10 and 30 cents per gallon. That is a big savings. Making E15 permanent delivers more choices for the consumer and year-round savings for families who are facing these higher gas prices that we have seen since the war in Iran started. So it is very simple: A vote for E15 is a vote for lower gas prices.

Year-round, nationwide E15 would bring certainty to fuel refineries, to

the marketers, to the retailers, and the renewable fuel producers. No more costly switchovers in the summer when, under law, ethanol cannot be sold in certain parts of the country. It would end a patchwork of regulations from one year to the next, boost the domestic gas supply chain, and it would surely unleash America's domestic energy dominance. Unleashing E15 stops Americans from being held hostage to foreign crude oil. It reduces carbon emissions and tailpipe pollutants and would pump \$14 billion into the U.S. farm economy. On top of all those advantages, E15 is pro-environmental. At a time when farmers are looking for expanded markets, E15 would deliver for corn farmers and create more jobs in rural America. E15 puts American families, our farmers, and our biofuel producers in the driver's seat to power forward clean, affordable, homegrown fuel.

Here is what year-round E15 does not do, and I emphasize this part of my remarks because there is a lot of lack of knowledge about E15 and maybe a lot of lack of knowledge about ethanol generally. And this is from what I have been hearing from my colleagues. It would not force Americans to fill up their gas tank with E15. It would not force fuel retailers to even sell E15. In short, it would not create a mandate. And how many times have I heard from my colleagues that it would be a mandate? In fact, EPA Administrator Zeldin confirmed this very fact to my colleague from Nebraska just last week. E15 is not a mandate, and that is from EPA Administrator Zeldin.

President Trump delivered his seal of approval for year-round E15 during a visit to my home State in January. He called on Congress to pass E15 without delay and said he would sign it as soon as it reached his desk.

Vice President VANCE and Secretary Rollins have also traveled to Iowa to endorse E15 because they know what I know: Ethanol is good for national security, good for the farm economy, and good for U.S. energy independence.

My efforts to help get homegrown fuels from the field to the pump started five decades ago during the energy crisis of the 1970s. That energy crisis was called that because—it was referred to as an oil embargo, and it was something that OPEC forced upon the entire world.

Two decades ago, I worked with President George W. Bush to create and expand the renewable fuel standard, known here in Washington among energy people as RFS. Last year, the RFS celebrated 20 years of success, paving a cleaner, more energy independent future for Americans. Within those 20 years, I have worked with the Obama, the Trump, and the Biden administrations to expand E15 into our domestic fuel supply.

Having said all that, guess what happened. The sky didn't fall. No refineries shut down.

So that brings me to the Chicken Littles inserting themselves into today's debate, and I am talking about the so-called midsize refiners. They are running around this town trying to gut the hard-fought year-round E15 victory that passed with bipartisan support in the House of Representatives. It is interesting this coop of Chicken Littles is now crowing.

After 8 years of Presidential waivers that allowed for E15 summertime sales, the refineries are now trying to convince people in Washington—including some of my colleagues here in the U.S. Senate—that the sky will fall if we pass permanent year-round, nationwide E15.

So let's get back to the facts. We have had E15 by Presidential waiver since 2019. Ambassador Zeldin has confirmed that in these 8 years, not one refinery closed because consumers had the choice to purchase E15.

For those saying that refineries have been ignored in the E15 debate, that is surely not the case—and after 16 years of working on this issue, I would know. Refineries have been deeply involved in negotiations for years. There have been very high-level talks on the topic of E15, and the Rural Domestic Council in the House was specifically created to hear from people with these refineries.

In her remarks here on the Senate floor last week, my colleague from Iowa mentioned that the annual earnings of the Nation's six mid-sized refineries are more than all of America's family farmers combined.

Now, there is nothing wrong with making money—that is the beauty of the free economic system that we have in America. It has powered our economy and fueled innovations for the last 250 years.

However, we shouldn't let this bill's opponents talk out of both sides of their mouth. You can't take in record profits on the one hand and claim you are a step away from bankruptcy because of E15 on the other hand.

Homegrown E15 is an example of the entrepreneurial spirit and discovery that makes America great. E15 powers up American domestic energy, lowers prices at the pump, and boosts the farm economy.

You add all that up, and E15 is a win for America and for Americans. America's farmers and families are counting on this.

The commonsense choice is very clear—America needs permanent year-round E15 from sea to shining sea.

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.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. 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 Rhode Island.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. RES. 553

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I come to the Senate this afternoon with

a simple proposition and a resolution that recognizes that simple truth, and that is that: Climate change is real.

Earlier this year, I came to the floor, and I asked my colleagues if they could all agree on this simple scientific fact.

On this occasion, I also asked my colleagues to acknowledge what the fossil fuel industry has known for nearly 60 years, which is not only that climate change is real but also that they are the primary cause of climate change—their emissions. Unfortunately, Republicans refused to acknowledge those facts.

So I came back and asked for a simple recognition that sea levels were rising as a result of climate change, and Republicans refused to acknowledge that.

I came back and asked that we recognize, very simply, that oceans are warming because of climate change, and Republicans refused to acknowledge that fact.

So let's try this. It is super simple.

Resolved, That the Senate recognizes that climate change is real.

That is the text of this resolution. It is a simple, four-word proposition that I hope we can agree on.

But just to show the fact base that this simple fact stands on, we can start with NASA. NASA has pretty good scientists. They are actually driving rovers around on Mars. They are pretty good at what they do. And here is what NASA maintains:

There is unequivocal evidence that Earth is warming at an unprecedented rate. [And that] human activity is the principal cause.

And if you don't trust NASA, if you don't want to take their word for it, you can just take a look at the data. It is pretty straightforward.

This graph reflects the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. It is a known thing. It is done by measurement. I hope we still believe, in the Senate, in measurement. This chart shows what is called the Keeling curve—daily atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations measured at scientific observatories. The historic data going back is actually collected from testing air bubbles frozen in ice sheets. And I have been to the Ohio State lab where some of those ice cores from old glaciers are maintained, from where they take those measurements. The Ohio State scientists know what they are doing. The measurement is not that complicated. So that is the track of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere according to the Keeling curve.

Here is the next fact: Global average temperature is increasing at an accompanying rate as the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions climb. You can see how well it tracks. Global temperature is not that hard to measure. Again, we are dealing with measurement—in effect, thermometers. It is not that hard.

And if you look, as I said before, at what is going on with the heat in the oceans, here is how that tracks. And the reason that the ocean heat tracks the CO<sub>2</sub> concentration and the land

heat measures is because most of the excess heat that fossil fuel emission causes gets absorbed by the oceans. We would already be on an unlivable planet if it weren't for the oceans absorbing 90 percent of that excess heat.

And the amount of heat that the oceans absorb is pretty astounding. You have to measure it in zettajoules.

Last week, I explained that we are now warming the oceans by 23 zettajoules a year, breaking the ocean heat content record for the ninth consecutive year.

As I said before, what is a zettajoule? A zettajoule is the unit of heat measure—the joule—with 21 zeroes behind it. That makes it a very big number. That is actually a billion trillions or, to put it the other way, a trillion billions. It is an enormous amount of heat. It is more than 40 times the total amount of energy that human beings generate on all of planet Earth to warm ourselves, cool ourselves, drive our cars, run our motors, push refrigerators—whatever it is we are trying to do. The whole energy footprint of humankind on planet Earth is half a zettajoule. And the oceans, because of that excess fossil fuel emission, are absorbing more than 40 times that much. It has a huge magnifier effect.

And that does things like drop the Antarctic ice shelf. And when the Antarctic ice mass shrinks, the ice that is on the land that goes into the water does what? Raises the sea level.

You can test that proposition for yourself by putting ice in a cup and letting it pour into another cup as it melts, and you will see the level of the cup rise.

So here is where global sea level has been going. Again, we are not dealing with complicated stuff here. We measure heat with thermometers. We measure sea level rise with tide monitors. It is basically a yardstick, and you go and look at the time of day when the tide is the same, and you measure where on the yardstick the sea level is. This is not something that is complex or amenable to much legitimate confusion or dissent.

Here we can look at the areas burned by wildfires. It is not just coasts and oceans that are getting clobbered by our emissions, but the area in the United States burned by wildfires keeps climbing and climbing. And the harm that this causes goes on and on. Hurricanes driven by warmer seas are becoming stronger and wetter. Wildfires driven by drought and wind are burning far more land.

And it is not just scientists who are reporting what they measure. You can actually go back to a very interesting and somewhat unique dataset. In Japan, in Kyoto, believe it or not, the Japanese people have been measuring the peak bloom of their cherry trees for 1,200 years. It is one of the longest datasets on the planet: 1,200 years of when Kyoto's cherry trees hit peak bloom.

And you can see, going back to the year 800, it moves fairly steadily along

until you get to the Industrial Revolution, until you get to the fossil fuel emissions barrage that drove the CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations so high. As CO<sub>2</sub> went up and as the planet heated, spring came sooner. And so you see here, earlier and earlier and earlier and earlier comes the day of peak bloom. I thought that was interesting because I thought a 1,200-year dataset kept by the Japanese people was interesting.

So that is where we are. We have more violent storms. We have more ferocious and damaging wildfires. We have hotter temperatures. We have a dramatically warming ocean.

And as I have said, climate change has moved from the science department to the economics department because all of those science measures bring costs onto the American public. Droughts, wildfires, and hurricanes disrupt agriculture and the transit of groceries, and they make food more expensive for Americans.

These climate impacts drive up homeowners insurance in regions where the climate risk becomes unmanageable. And they drive down property values, because when your homeowners insurance cost doubles or triples and threatens to double or triple again, that cost knocks down the value of your home. And we are seeing that right now in Florida.

And then, of course, all of this drives up energy bills at a time when oil prices are already extremely high because of Trump's mad war in Iran.

All of this is real in family budgets today, and it is a big deal. It is a big cost when homeowners insurance, which starts as a big number, doubles, as it has in Iowa in recent years. It is a big deal when you get told by your insurance company that you are fired, they are not going to insure your property any longer, and now you have to scramble to find insurance. And when you do, it is worse. It is more expensive, provides less coverage. There is a huge cost factor, and there is a huge hassle factor for real Americans right now.

That is our reality. Climate change is real. Can we agree on that simple truth? That is my question today.

Mr. President, therefore, I ask, as if in legislative session, unanimous consent that the Committee on Environment and Public Works be discharged from further consideration and the Senate now proceed to S. Res. 553; further, that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHMITT). Is there objection?

The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I am down here now for the third time with a smile on my face. This is humorous. It would be humorous if it weren't so tragic.

The good Senator from Rhode Island, when he was chairing the Budget Committee, held hearing after hearing

about these enormous costs caused by manmade climate change. But what he refuses to acknowledge is the fact that the reaction of the scaremongering, of this alarmism, has been that somewhere between \$6 to \$10 trillion is what we have spent globally trying to hold back the tides—\$6 trillion to \$10 trillion. The costs he is talking about pale in comparison to that massive—the largest malinvestment in human history.

So make no mistakes. The simple resolution—by the way, I don't deny climate change. Climate change is real. It has always changed; it always will. The debate is to what extent does man cause it, and I would argue that an even greater debate would be: What can we do about it?

I mean, he is down here, again, scaremongering and—in an alarmist fashion—obviously acknowledging that the \$6 trillion to \$10 trillion we have already wasted in this greatest malinvestment in human history hasn't even made a dent.

But I want to point out—I am glad he talked about measurements, about science, about a long dataset. Here is a long dataset. These are charts of the Vostok ice core sample. This is about 400-some-thousand years of climate history. I don't know how they do it, but they know how to measure different gas percentages in the atmosphere. They can calculate temperature going back actually more than 800,000 years. This one is 400,000.

The most famous dataset from this occurred in 1999—Petit, et al.

But as you can see—this is in Celsius. But these—it is hard to call them cycles, but we will call them cycles of temperature variation. We have had one, two, three, four of them in 400,000 years. They are approximately 100,000-year cycles. Almost a 23-degree Fahrenheit change in temperature.

Now, what the Senator from Rhode Island is all concerned about is a little moment in time here. Take a look at charts and blowing them up and doing the hockey stick effect and then freaking out about little, minute movements over geologic time.

Now—then he—then he—and all the climate alarmists do this, they blame it on us, fossil fuels. We weren't burning fossil fuels 400,000 years ago. Somehow, temperatures rose and temperatures declined four times over 400,000 years, almost 23 degrees.

That is why I am not freaked out about this. That is why I am not a Chicken Little. That is why I oppose this simple resolution that has all kinds of ideas behind it, all kinds of policy implications, all kinds of new proposed malinvestment, trillions of dollars' worth to try and hold back the tide.

You see this red line underneath here. Not only do they measure temperature over time, they measure CO<sub>2</sub> levels over time. There is no doubt about it, it tracks very closely with temperature. Within that dataset of

Petit, et al., not very well publicized, kind of understated, they say, well, this doesn't really mean anything is the fact that CO<sub>2</sub> isn't the leading indicator; it is the lagging indicator.

First, temperature rises or falls, and then CO<sub>2</sub> either rises or falls. There is approximately about an 800- to 1,000-year lag.

So again, they try and—you know, the climate alarmists try and put this—oh, look, the CO<sub>2</sub> is up causing temperatures—no. Temperatures rose and then CO<sub>2</sub> rose.

And there is actually a pretty easy explanation for it. Most CO<sub>2</sub>—CO<sub>2</sub> is a trace element in our atmosphere, a trace element—not even a percent, a fraction of a percent.

Most CO<sub>2</sub> on Earth is locked up in our oceans. So as the temperature rises probably because of solar activity, wobble in our axis, these macro trends that actually cause climate change, the massive—the majority of climate change, as those factors cause temperatures to rise, temperatures of the ocean rise releasing CO<sub>2</sub> and then CO<sub>2</sub> raises. It is not the other way around.

It is not: CO<sub>2</sub> went up causing temperature to increase. Temperature increased to cause CO<sub>2</sub> to rise. These are measurements. This is science. This is a very long dataset. It just shows why—again, I don't know exactly to what extent man certainly can impact the environment. We all want a clean environment.

But the extent that man has caused climate change, obviously we weren't around back here to cause this climate change. Something else was doing it.

So again, I just don't freak out about it, and I certainly am not going to subscribe to any resolution that would cause policy here to spend trillions—misspend, waste, trillions of dollars on a fool's errand trying to hold back the tides.

Therefore, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I just want to make sure it is absolutely clear that that argument is what Republicans have sent to the floor of the U.S. Senate to question the measurements and the facts of climate change. That is what they sent to the floor.

The questions are the talking points of the fossil fuel industry. To what extent does man cause it? Here is what NASA says:

There is unequivocal evidence that the Earth is warming at an unprecedented rate. [With] human activity . . . the principal cause.

And lest it be not clear that human activity is fossil fuel burning and emissions. That is not a question. That is a known thing, just ask NASA.

And what to do about it? Well, one good thing to do about it would be to bring more clean energy onto the grid, and that doesn't cost trillions. Over time, that will save trillions.

Just in my State of Rhode Island, we tried to bring clean energy onto our

grid at a contract price of 9 cents per kilowatt hour from an offshore wind farm. Our average grid price is 18 cents per kilowatt hour. So the offshore wind would literally be half-price energy for our grid.

And the Trump administration tried twice illegally to stop it. We would have saved a lot of money had we gone to clean energy.

Look at any one of America's grids and look at what power sources run first. It is the clean stuff. Why? Because they operate by the rule of running the less expensive power first. Wherever you go in the country, clean energy is the least expensive power. It lowers costs for people. If you want a solution, there is an easy one that protects against the dangers of climate change, and that lowers costs for consumers.

I would only advise my friend from Wisconsin that he just might want to consider running his argument by the University of Wisconsin before trotting it out on the Senate floor.

I yield the floor.

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. KAINE. 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 Virginia.

#### PUBLIC SERVICE LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I rise to discuss a CRA resolution that we will be voting on soon, and it is a CRA resolution to challenge a regulation of the Trump administration concerning the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program.

The Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program is a venerable and bipartisan program that was first included in the College Cost Reduction Act of 2007, supported in a very bipartisan way during the Presidency of President George W. Bush.

The conference report including this program passed the Senate with a 79-to-12 vote, and many of my Republican colleagues, for example, who were there at the time—Senators GRASSLEY, BARRASSO, COLLINS, MURKOWSKI—are still here in the Chamber strongly supporting this program. It has been very bipartisan.

The program is pretty straightforward. It does what it says. It provides loan forgiveness for college and even some graduate loans for students who decide to go into public service careers. The longer you stay in that career, the more you get your loan forgiven. So it was bipartisan recognition that we want people to pursue public service careers.

The administration of public service loan forgiveness was put in the Department of Education, and during the first Trump administration, his first Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos, and

officials at the Department dramatically reduced the number of public service loans they would forgive. At one point, Secretary DeVos made a comment along the lines of, why is it important to go into public service rather than go into the private sector? They were not approving the forgiveness of loans for those who had gone into public service careers because they didn't fundamentally believe in the program that Congress had in a bipartisan way put into law.

President Biden restored the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program to what it was intended and forgave the loans of many people who are pursuing public service careers.

Just, you know, doing what Senators do, what the Presiding Officer and I do, traveling around the State, it has been pretty heartening to meet people and be told, the forgiveness of my student loan at age 35 or at age 45 after a long career as a teacher or another public service or healthcare professional has meant so much to my family and so much to my ability to move ahead.

So that is what the program is—an important one, a bipartisan one, still in law.

The Trump administration has decided—in the midst of dismantling the Department of Education—Secretary McMahon and the President have said they want to dismantle the entire Department. And they are taking pieces of it—career and technical education, for example—and trying to give it to the Department of Labor, which doesn't even want it and isn't really suited to managing it.

Or they are taking the administration of student loans and trying to hand it first to the Small Business Administration, who didn't want to administer it, and then maybe to the Department of Treasury.

In the midst of dismantling or handing off or divesting many programs, the Department has also decided it wants to go after Public Service Loan Forgiveness. But they are doing it in a fairly pernicious way that has earned the objection, not only of folks on my side of the aisle but also the objection of groups like the Cato Institute that are traditionally conservative policy organizations.

What is the regulation that we are challenging? The Trump administration proposes to allow the Secretary—in this case, Secretary McMahon—to individually determine whether or not an individual's job is, in fact, public service and to make that determination based on the Secretary's view of the political viewpoint of the organization for which the individual works and whether that organization is doing something that the administration doesn't like.

Now, this is a pretty dramatic and radical power to put in the hands of the Secretary of Education. Imagine if there was a Democratic President and we said we would give to the Democratic Secretary of Education the abil-

ity to determine whether or not a particular student or particular public service worker would receive loan forgiveness after they have chosen their profession to go into.

Now the administration has sort of marketed this as: We don't want to consider for public service jobs that may be doing things that are illegal.

So they said, for example: We would not want to forgive the loan of a person working for an organization that aids and abets people who are here without legal immigration status.

Well, I will give you an example. Public school systems in the United States are required to serve all who register, regardless of immigration status, pursuant to a Supreme Court decision that is about 50 years old. A teacher who works in one of those schools is assisting an undocumented person, a young student who is required by law to serve.

Is that teacher, because the teacher teaches English as a second language or the teacher teaches in a school and offers services to students who do not have lawful immigration status—is that abetting illegal immigration?

The Trump-era regulation would allow the Secretary of Education to say: Yeah, you don't get your loan forgiven because of the particular students you work with because of the particular class you teach—English is a second language class—because of the percentage of your students who might be here without legal documentation.

So get this. The teacher is required to offer services to those students by a binding Supreme Court precedent, but the Trump-era regulation could allow the Secretary of Education to take that teacher, who has been in that classroom for 10 years or 20 years, and suddenly say: But you don't get Public Service Loan Forgiveness, and the regulation vests that sole decisionmaking authority in the hands of the Secretary of Education.

Give you another example. Part of the healthcare safety net in this country is free clinics. Free clinics provide medical services through physicians and other allied health professionals to all comers, and they generally don't inquire about someone's immigration status.

We need healthcare workers, nurses, doctors, and others to work in free clinics. Someone could say to one of these healthcare professionals, who don't make great salaries in these institutions: Wait a minute. Your clinic provides services to people who are not here with legal documented status. Therefore, we are not going to forgive your loan.

After you have chosen a path and done a job and done it for years and now you feel like you are entitled to have your loans forgiven, suddenly the Secretary of Education could just say: We don't want to forgive your loan.

There is another provision in the regulation that I found challenging. It said loans could not be forgiven for any

organization that illegally discriminates. Now, I am against illegal discrimination, and I know every Member of this body is against illegal discrimination.

But the Trump administration has been pushing universities and threatening to cut off their funding if they have diversity programs, arguing that those programs are illegal discrimination, without any court ruling saying that they are illegal discrimination, without other legal justification for their illegal discrimination.

And they have even gone so far as to pressure the president of my flagship university, the University of Virginia, to resign because of diversity programming on the campus. And they threatened to force out the president of another university in Virginia, George Mason University—that president refused to resign—because of the completely unsubstantiated allegation that diversity programming on campus is illegal discrimination.

Now the Trump administration has not been able to get a court to say this is illegal discrimination, but they are forcing universities to even push for the firing of the presidents on their view that diversity programming is illegal discrimination.

So say you have worked and now you are a faculty member or say you have worked and now you work at the university health clinic or say you have worked and now you work for a university custodial service or the university campus police—and you are providing a public service in that way—but the Secretary of Education says: Yeah, but I don't like George Mason's diversity programming. I don't like UVA's diversity programming. So because I don't like the institution you work for, I am going to deny you Public Service Loan Forgiveness.

The administration says it wants to go against those who might be working for sanctuary jurisdictions. This is not a label that I have a lot of firsthand experience with in Virginia because I don't believe there are any sanctuary jurisdictions in Virginia, but there are communities in the United States that have declared themselves sanctuary jurisdictions. There are cities and counties. I don't believe any States have.

So what if you are a hardworking police officer and you had a career for a community and after a city council election, there is a new city council that suddenly says we want to be a sanctuary jurisdiction?

The Secretary of Education could say to the hardworking police officer, the hardworking firefighter, the hardworking teacher in the public school system: I don't like what your city council did. Therefore, you are not entitled to Public Service Loan Forgiveness.

I think the idea of politicizing this and giving the Secretary the power to deprive individuals of something they should be entitled to by statute is very, very dangerous.

Let me read some concerns that we have heard expressed. Here was a comment that was made against the Trump regulation from someone in Pennsylvania: My husband's military service is qualifying employment for Public Service Loan Forgiveness. The promise of PSLF was, and continues to be, a significant factor in our family's long-term financial planning, helping to make the sacrifices inherent in military service more manageable. We planned our financial future with the understanding that this program exists. To have the rules change significantly or become even more complex would feel like having the rug pulled out from under us. Military life already presents unique challenges for tracking payments and certifications through the frequent moves and deployments.

Streamlining must mean making PSLF more transparent, reliable, and truly manageable for servicemembers and their families with clear communication and accurate tracking. Putting the rules about PSLF up to the determination in each individual case of the Secretary worries a family like this.

Here is another comment submitted for the RECORD in response to this regulation: PSLF is a critical background to current military readiness directly because of medical services. We are only able to partially fund training of required doctors. We only pay them 20 to 50 percent of what they can make in the private sector. We retain them because of their deep patriotism and the ability to make it make sense by having PSLF after 10 years of public service.

All of these medical specialists and their families give up many other things in service of our troops, dependents, and country. They are not seeking to rob an education from a high-dollar school. They are accepting the lowest-paid medical job because of their passion for the military.

Taking away PSLF for military members or those providers who serve them just makes the sacrifices they make so much more difficult.

And here is a submission from a citizen in Alabama who commented on the proposed regulation: As a physician in Birmingham, AL, I am writing to urge you to protect the PSLF program and income-driven repayment plans. We have many poor and underserved patients in America, and many of these patients are treated by nonprofits who help cover the cost of their care. Without PSLF, physicians are incentivized to, instead, find the highest-paying job or even leave direct patient care in order to find more lucrative positions in the insurance industry or consulting.

PSLF has helped me maintain my values and seek out a job in a non-profit, serving patients who need them most. Please maintain this program to allow physicians like me to serve their patients.

These are the kinds of concerns people have—hardworking public serv-

ants—who would be entitled to loan forgiveness under the bipartisan program that was enacted in 2007.

And my argument to my colleagues is giving this Secretary of Education—or any Secretary of Education, including under a Democratic administration—the ability to cherry-pick this person and that person and say: No, I don't consider you worthy of loan forgiveness because I don't like the politics of the city you live in, the State you live in, or the organization you work for, is a very serious danger.

And I will conclude and just give a related example that is very, very recent of how giving a Cabinet Secretary this power is likely to lead to abuses, and it is related to education. It is not Public Service Loan Forgiveness, but it is related.

In early March, Secretary Hegseth the Secretary of the Department of Defense said that 13 universities in the United States would no longer be eligible to have senior service corps fellowships, and that is senior members of the military assigned to fellowships at the university.

One of the universities was William & Mary in Virginia, the College of William & Mary. And the reason cited for removing the eligibility of these 13 universities was the Secretary decided on his own—as this regulation would allow Secretary McMahon to make this decision on her own—Secretary Hegseth said that William & Mary and the other 13 universities were woke and weak. Because of wokeness and weakness, no longer will we allow senior military service to get fellowships at these universities.

Woke and weak.

We just had an Armed Services Committee hearing. I got to ask the key Pentagon official at the Pentagon: What is woke and weak about the College of William & Mary? It is the Nation's oldest public university. It educated Thomas Jefferson. Its most—one of its most recent chancellors—who is kind of the titular head of the university—was Bob Gates, who was Secretary of Defense under Republican administration. But according to Pete Hegseth, it is woke and weak.

Three weeks after this declaration was made that William & Mary was woke and weak and, thus, could not sponsor senior service corps fellowships, militaryfriendly.com ruled—awarded William & Mary the label as the most military- and veteran-friendly university in the United States. And that was based on data—1,600 students at William & Mary who are active or a veteran—an active ROTC program in the Army; an active ROTC program in the Navy; a clinic at the law school, the Lewis Puller clinic, where law students help veterans access VA benefits; a unique program in the school of education at William & Mary that—it might be unique in the country—that trains individuals to provide counseling to members of the military and their families.

The same publication militaryfriendly.com said that the MBA program at the College of William & Mary was the best MBA program in the country for military members and veterans. And yet a Cabinet member said that is woke and weak.

And so you could easily imagine people who are serving veterans at William & Mary in the veterans clinic, people who are providing counseling training in the counseling center, working other programs, who themselves might feel like they qualified for Public Service Loan Forgiveness—but now the Secretary of Defense has said the whole institution is woke and weak—you could easily see them because of that capricious and arbitrary label, which is against all evidence, you could see them deprived of the opportunity to have their loans forgiven.

This regulation just puts too much power in the unaccountable hands of a single person. We should not allow it to happen under either a Democratic or a Republican administration. For that reason, I will bring this motion to the floor presently.

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

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session.

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

The Senator from Virginia.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RELATING TO "WILLIAM D. FORD FEDERAL DIRECT LOAN (DIRECT LOAN) PROGRAM"—Motion To Proceed

Mr. KAINÉ. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 402, S.J. Res. 182.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 402, S.J. Res. 182, providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Education relating to "William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan (Direct Loan) Program".

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to proceed.

The motion was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session.

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

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

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. 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.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

#### RECOGNIZING THE 125TH ANNIVERSARY OF HERREID, SOUTH DAKOTA

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize Herreid, SD. The town of Herreid will be celebrating its quasiquicentennial June 26-28, 2026. Herreid will host quasiquicentennial events, including parades, live music, class reunions, and much more.

Herreid is located in Campbell County, nestled in the beautiful rolling prairies and open farmland of north-central South Dakota. The Herreid community was born when the Soo Line Railroad expanded into the area, creating new opportunities for farmers, ranchers, and other settlers. These early residents persevered through many challenges, but set the foundation for a community rooted in hard work, strength, and neighborly values. Home to more than 400 people and multiple businesses, Herreid is known for its rich historical heritage and robust rural spirit. Since its beginning 125 years ago, the community of Herreid continues to serve as a strong example of South Dakota values and traditions.

I offer my congratulations to the citizens of Herreid on their town's quasiquicentennial and wish them continued prosperity in the years to come.

#### ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act requires that Congress receive prior notification of certain proposed arms sales as defined by that statute. Upon such notification, the Congress has 30 calendar days during which the sale may be reviewed. The provision stipulates that, in the Senate, the notification of proposed sales shall be sent to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In keeping with the committee's intention to see that relevant informa-

tion is still available to the full Senate, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the notifications that have been received. If the cover letter references a classified annex, then such an annex is available to all Senators in the office of the Foreign Relations Committee, room SD-423.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE,  
Washington, DC.

#### CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION TRANSMITTAL LETTER

Please find enclosed the following notification from the Department of State.

Department Notification Number: RSAT 26-52.

Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act (AECA), as amended, we are forwarding Transmittal No. 26-52 concerning the Air Force's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of Belgium for defense articles and services estimated to cost \$236 million. We will issue a news release to notify the public of this proposed sale upon delivery of this letter to your office.

#### Recipients:

Speaker of the House of Representatives  
House Committee on Foreign Affairs  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
Sincerely,

PAUL D. GUAGLIANONE,  
Senior Bureau Official,  
Bureau of Legislative Affairs.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 26-52

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended

(i) Prospective Purchaser: Government of Belgium.

(ii) Total Estimated Value:  
Major Defense Equipment\* \$0 million.  
Other \$236 million.  
Total \$236 million.

(iii) Description and Quantity or Quantities of Articles or Services under Consideration for Purchase:

Major Defense Equipment (MDE): None.

Non-MDE: The following non-MDE items will be included: AGM-184 Joint Strike Missiles; spare parts, consumables and accessories, repair and return support; training aids, devices, and spare parts; testing and multi-purpose missile equipment; classified and unclassified software delivery and support; classified and unclassified publications and technical documentation; transportation support; U.S. Government and contractor engineering, technical, and logistics support services; and other related elements of logistics and program support.

(iv) Military Department: Air Force (BED-YAB).

(v) Prior Related Cases, if any: None.

(vi) Sales Commission, Fee, etc., Paid, Offered, or Agreed to be Paid: None known at this time.

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology Contained in the Defense Article or Defense Services Proposed to be Sold: See Attached Annex.

(viii) Date Report Delivered to Congress: May 18, 2026.

\*As defined in Section 47(6) of the Arms Export Control Act.

#### POLICY JUSTIFICATION

Belgium—AGM-184 Joint Strike Missiles

The Government of Belgium has requested to buy AGM-184 Joint Strike Missiles; spare parts, consumables and accessories, repair