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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O Lord our God, restorer of the joy of those who find You, we praise Your holy Name.

Today, strengthen our Senators. Infuse them with integrity, humility, and courage. Empower them to disagree without being disagreeable, as they seek to protect our constitutional Republic. May their primary aim be to please You. Remove from them clouds of frustration as they strive to seize those opportunities that best serve the interests of freedom.

Lord, instruct and teach them in the way You desire them to go.

And, Lord, bring peace to our Nation and world.

We pray in Your marvelous Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ARMSTRONG). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Iowa.

MEDICAID

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, the Medicaid Program is an important resource for the support of the most vulnerable people in our society, and we intend to keep it for the most vulnerable.

The Working Families Tax Cut Act, passed and signed by the President last year, strengthened the Medicaid Program by cracking down on fraud, waste, and abuse, and by improving access to home and community-based services.

And I would like to give one example of taking care of fraud, waste, and abuse. We learned last year, in looking back, when the Biden administration made eligibility for ObamaCare above 400 percent of poverty, that we found that there were 6-4/10 million people that were put on ObamaCare that were already on Medicaid. Now, you need one or the other, but you don't need both.

So the waste, and maybe fraud, came when agents for insurance companies—health insurance companies—would call you up and say: You can get really low-cost or no-cost insurance now under ObamaCare.

And 6-4/10 million people took that offer up, and we wasted billions of dollars of money with 6-4/10 million people not needing it, if they were already on Medicaid.

So we made those changes to make sure that Medicaid is staying strong for the most vulnerable, the original intention of Medicaid 60 years ago.

Now, to bring you up to date about the legislation—because we hear from our constituents that we are hurting Medicaid by the changes we made—I want to bring attention to lesser known provisions of the law, enabling a broad range of individuals with developmental disabilities to gain access to home and community-based services.

The new law also enabled interim home and community-based service coverage while newly eligible individ-

uals developed their full care plan. The law will cut redtape and provide more services to vulnerable citizens.

While Congress has added new flexibilities to Medicaid in the tax act of last year, I also want to highlight an important milestone in integrating people with disabilities into their local communities. More than 20 years ago, I helped enact legislation that goes by the title of Money Follows the Person Program, helping people with disabilities transition from long-term care facilities into home based in their very own communities of that person's choice.

Rebalancing individuals from institutions to their home community is a very important goal. Iowa began its program with Federal support, more than 16 years ago, and has now transitioned over 1,100 people out of institutional-based care into independent settings in the communities of that person's choice. Last year, Iowa surpassed moving over 1,000 people through this program.

This program, which I said is entitled the Money Follows the Person Program, is helping more people with intellectual disabilities and brain injuries gain independence for the very first time. This also means people are choosing their own daily activities for the very first time, going to work or going to school or participating in other things that you might say are the first in their life.

Iowa is the leader in moving people with intellectual disabilities into the community. In 2025, 96 percent of the people who went through this program were still living in the community a year later.

This program is helping Americans with disabilities find independence in their daily lives.

Whether a new or old program in Medicaid, I am proud to support these efforts that support the original purpose of Medicaid to help those who are the most vulnerable.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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S2501

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

TRUMP ACCOUNTS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, as of tomorrow, we will be one month away from the opening date for Trump Accounts. These are new tax-advantaged investment accounts for children created by the Republicans' Working Families Tax Cut.

And as of a few days ago, parents can now download the new app for Trump Accounts. The app will allow parents to track current and projected account balances; schedule automatic account contributions, whether that is \$20 a month or \$200 a month; and, eventually, choose among multiple broad-based investment accounts, all designed to make investment easy.

The app also offers several modules to educate children and parents on investing and to boost financial literacy.

Trump Accounts, as I said, were created as part of the Republicans' Working Families Tax Cut law. We call it the Working Families Tax Cut for a reason—because that is whom we were focused on with this legislation.

We prevented a massive tax hike on Americans making less than \$400,000; made lower tax rates for hard-working Americans permanent; increased the child tax credit, which we had already doubled in 2017; implemented no tax on tips and no tax on overtime to give American workers a further break on their taxes; instituted a new bonus deduction for seniors and more.

All of these measures were designed to help everyday Americans and to make life a little easier for working families and help put their dreams within reach. Trump Accounts are a part of that.

These tax-advantaged accounts were designed to allow parents to save for their children's future beyond their education: to give kids a nest egg, whether large or small, to help them buy a home or start a business, to help them pursue their American dream.

And if kids choose not to withdraw money once they reach adulthood, they can use these accounts as retirement savings, a financial priority for every American.

To get savings started for a lot of families, kids born between 2025 and 2028 will receive a free \$1,000 for their Trump Account, should their parents

choose to open one and opt into the money.

That money alone will grow over a kid's childhood. And then, of course, parents will be able to add, as desired, anywhere from a few dollars to up to \$5,000 a year.

And parents are not the only ones who can make contributions. Employers will be able to contribute to Trump Accounts for their employees' kids. And multiple philanthropists are also offering initial contributions for a lot of American children.

All of this is designed to give kids a leg up in the world of savings and investment and, as I said, a head start on their American dream.

Musician Nicki Minaj attended a Trump Account summit with the President a few months ago. She grew up in a housing project in a family that faced its share of financial struggles, and now she is raising her own family. And she has said of the Trump Accounts:

This program will benefit everyone, decreasing the gap for future prosperity between children who traditionally aren't born with a full bank account and children who are.

“[d]ecreasing the gap for future prosperity between children who traditionally aren't born with a full bank account and children who are.”

Increasing opportunity, opening new paths to prosperity, ensuring that working families can keep more of their hard-earned money, that is Republicans' mission, and the goal of the Working Families Tax Cut.

I am proud that working families are benefiting, and I look forward to seeing the opportunities that will be unlocked next month when Trump Accounts kick off.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

PARTY PRIORITIES

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, this week, with the contrast between the two parties in bright lights, Republicans are consumed by Donald Trump's priorities: his corrupt slush fund, his gilded ballroom, his rogue police force, his reckless war with Iran, and his refusal to contain the rising costs Americans face every week. Democrats are focused on the American people's priorities: lowering costs, bringing stability, and fighting back against this administration's rampant—rampant—corruption.

At a time when families are struggling and looking for answers, that

contrast matters. Republicans are fighting for Trump. Democrats are fighting for the American people. And we will keep driving that contrast every day, on every issue.

ANTI-WEAPONIZATION FUND

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now, on the slush fund, to anyone who takes the constantly lying Todd Blanche at his word, I have a bridge to sell you. Yesterday, Todd Blanche claimed the Trump administration will halt its plans to establish a \$2 billion MAGA slush fund for Trump and his cronies, but, when asked, Blanche said:

I'm not committing to doing anything in writing.

Are you kidding me? This, one of the most corrupt things that America has, and he won't even put it down in writing? The American people need the commitment to stop Trump's corruption not only in writing but codified in law, and he won't even write it down because he knows that Trump is lying.

He probably knows that he is lying, that in a week or two, Trump will come back, he will come back, and others will come up with a new corrupt scheme very similar to this slush fund, if not the same.

Blanche also said that Trump and his family will keep their brazenly corrupt tax immunity. That means that Trump and his family get to keep at least \$100 million they owe in unpaid taxes—at least \$100 million—no audits, no consequences, no strings attached.

No matter what, from the start, I will personally push to permanently ban both the slush fund and the blank check Trump cut to himself and his family that would allow them to cheat on their taxes when this Republican reconciliation bill comes to the floor.

Again, I tell Republicans: You are going to have to vote on ending the corrupt Trump slush fund once and for all. You are going to have to vote on deciding whether Trump will be able to evade any tax audits and will be allowed to cheat on his taxes. You are going to have to vote on it.

I ask you this—I ask Leader THUNE, I ask every Republican Senator: If you believe the slush fund should be banned, if you believe Trump shouldn't get tax immunity, then why wouldn't you just vote yes and make sure we put it into law? Because we all know that the word of Trump and the word of Blanche are, to put it kindly, flexible and, to put it realistically, not to be trusted—particularly on a matter as vital as this.

Does anyone think that Blanche will keep his word to drop this gift? Just weeks ago, Blanche lied under oath to Congress claiming that he met with Epstein survivors. The Epstein survivors themselves said that was a lie.

Does anyone think they can trust Blanche when he is in ongoing legal battles with former clients who have accused him of forgery and malpractice? Todd Blanche's word is as worthless as Trump's.