

sneezes on the food, are you more or less likely to take the food that somebody just sneezed on. This is crazy. It is insulting, and it is ridiculous.

Why shouldn't we cut some of that waste and use it for this new veterans program. And this isn't a veterans program where there is or there isn't money. There is money being spent. This is to allow more money for a veterans program. This isn't to supply money to people who aren't getting any money.

I am for—we are a rich country. We should do it. But we should cut spending from where we are wasting it, and there are plenty of alternatives. If the Senator has another alternative where he would like to cut spending, I am your guy. I am for cutting spending across the board. There is waste everywhere.

But rather than come forward with programs that are feel-good and that have sympathetic people you want to help, come forward with these programs and say: But I am conservative. I worry about the debt. I worry about the trillion dollars in interest. And this is how we will pay for them.

Until that day, I will object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, we can agree or disagree with what my colleague from Kentucky has just said. It is entertaining, but it is deeply irrelevant to what I have asked to be done here. I am asking for a vote. The speech that he made could be made when we have time to vote, when this measure is put on the floor and we have a chance to express the will of this body. That is all I am asking.

We have 80 Members of the U.S. Senate cosponsoring this bill. The Secretary of Defense has endorsed it. Veterans service organizations are unanimously in favor of it.

The U.S. Congress pays for plenty of programs without demanding an offset. I am simply asking that a program for disabled veterans be treated in the same way.

Contrary to what my colleague says, this is not a VA program; it is not a veterans program. This is a Department of Defense program: retirement pay, disability benefits. Secretary Hegseth supports this bill without an offset.

But if Republicans insist on treating the Major Richard Star Act differently, then, at the very least, the money to pay for the wounds of war—the wounds of war that are occurring right now—at least 400 members of the military have been injured in some way so far in the Iran war. It should come from the Department of Defense.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

#### SECURE AMERICA ACT

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I was doing a little bit of work this past

weekend when I was in Tennessee and talking with Tennesseans about what is important to them. They are very hopeful that we are going to get the price of gas and groceries down.

During the Biden years, that 9 percent inflation and elevated inflation rates every year really hurt the pocketbook. And we all want these prices to come down. And, indeed, we are working on making certain that life is more affordable. Right now, we have got a lot of people that are struggling to make ends meet. So we hear a good bit about that at home.

Another thing we hear about is public safety. People want to feel safe and secure in their homes, in their communities, in their States. They want to know that their children, as they are out and about and working, that they are going to be in a safe environment.

So, this past weekend, we had many people who mentioned the work we did last week with passing the Secure America Act. Now, the good thing about this is, it puts the American people first. It is vital legislation because it will fund ICE and Border Patrol for the rest of President Trump's term, making certain that we are going to have the funds that are necessary for Federal law enforcement to go track down criminals, stop the flow of drugs and fentanyl into our country, and to enforce immigration laws. Those are things that—wrapped into this bill—help make every single community safe.

People want to make certain that people that are in the country illegally are deported. They want to make certain that criminal illegal aliens are picked up, that they are detained, that they are going to be prosecuted for their crimes. They want these illegal alien gangs to be apprehended and removed from their communities.

So passing this bill last week was a victory for the American people. This is something they voted for: Close the border; make certain that the homeland is safe. And they like the fact that the Senate passed this legislation.

One thing that came up regularly, as I talked to Tennesseans this weekend, was, Why did every Democrat vote against this? Not one—not one—voted aye. Not one.

And I would remind them that we saw this as must-pass legislation because, for 76 days—76 days—the Democrats had thrown the Department of Homeland Security into a shutdown. That is kind of the 2026 version of “defund the police”: Abolish ICE.

They have not been able to get their way; so they said: Well, we will just take away their money.

Now, I think it is important to note what they do when they act like this. Childish? Yes. Ridiculous? Absolutely. Disrespectful? Of course. They should listen to themselves and how they sound because the American people are listening, and they don't like what they are hearing.

What the Democrats did was to say: OK. We are going to put you in a shut-

down because we want to abolish ICE. We want to defund law enforcement. So it doesn't matter to us that TSA, Secret Service, Homeland Security Investigations, FEMA, all of these are going without pay. They are going without pay.

So what we did by passing the Secure America Act is to really slam the door on these antics, and Republicans said to the Democrats: Nope. We are not going to let you get by with risking these hard-working Americans and many times putting their lives at risk.

I think it is important to note, too, while they object to immigration law being enforced, every single immigration law that is on the books has been passed by Congress, and it has been signed by a President of the United States; some Democrats and some Republicans. Every single one. That is how they became the laws.

But instead of standing with the rule of law, what the Democrats have done is to say: We are going to pick and choose some laws we like and some laws we don't like. So we are just going to ignore the laws that we don't like.

And when I talk to Tennesseans, they cannot believe that the Democrats would put our national security at risk, but that is what they have done.

You know, I have said many times—many times—the Democrats have worked overtime during the Biden years trying to find ways to make “illegal” legal because they don't like the law. So then they try to find a workaround. And then we know that what they do—circumvent the law and try to make an illegal activity legal.

Now, another area where we have seen this is in the election integrity issue. And we support fair, secure, open elections. That ought to be a bipartisan issue. We should all want that. We should all treasure one person, one vote. And election integrity should be something that is at the top of the list.

Now, part of this is making certain that we ensure that only citizens can vote. This is one of those things that is common sense. And you know what? It is the law. Only citizens can vote in U.S. elections.

Now, what has happened is some States have allowed people that are illegally in the country or people that are legally here but they are on a visa or a work permit or a student visa or they are a legal permanent resident—they are not allowed to vote in our elections. But in some States, they have been voting.

So there is a way that States can make certain that it is only a citizen that is voting, and that is to compare their voter rolls with the Department of Homeland Security's SAVE system, the SAVE database.

This registry allows Federal, State, and local government Agencies to verify the immigration status of anybody in their jurisdiction. It is useful when determining whether an individual should be registered to vote.

What we know is that 26 States check their voter rolls against the SAVE

database. Now it probably will not surprise you, it is unfortunate, but the 26 States are overwhelmingly red. My State of Tennessee has led on this issue for years, and it is ranked No. 1 in this country for election integrity.

Now, thanks to President Trump, the process is easier than ever for States to use this registry. Under his leadership—and probably is no surprise—under his leadership, our State and local governments can use this for free. They do not pay any kind of fee. They can go in here, put in the name, the last four digits of the Social Security number—not all nine, just the last four—and they can see what pops up.

The good thing is that the States who are doing this—and by the way, the States that are using it have submitted more than 46 million verification requests through the database, and they are getting results from this.

Texas uses this system, and their secretary of state identified more than 2,700 potential voters that were violating the system. They ought not to be on the rolls. Ohio discovered more than 1,000 potential noncitizens on its voter rolls. More than 160 of them have cast votes in elections going back to 2018.

They are not citizens. They ought not to be voting in our elections.

Now, for the States, the SAVE database is a commonsense tool to ensure the integrity of their elections. Yet, we have got about half the States in this country—especially the blue ones—that are not taking this basic step to verification.

When you look at California and New York, between those two States, they are estimated to be home to 3.5 million illegal aliens, and we can only imagine how many noncitizens are on their voter roll because they are taking zero—zero—steps to verify these rolls.

New Jersey, another blue State, refuses to use the SAVE database. Just this week, we learned through public records requests that there have been hundreds of cases of noncitizens placed on the State's voter rolls in just the last few years. Many had no idea that they were registered to vote. Others voted in elections going as far back as the year 2000.

You know, many times, elections are decided by a few votes. Might be five or six. Might be a couple hundred. And when you look at the numbers—you look at what Texas found; you look at what Ohio found; you find out that in New Jersey, that you have got people that have been in the country illegally and have been voting since 2000.

Congress should do everything possible to encourage the States to use the SAVE database to secure our elections. The American people do not want voter fraud. They want to have confidence in our elections. It is the foundation of our system of representative government.

Now, this is why Senator GRAHAM and I have introduced the Election Security Partnership Act. This legisla-

tion would provide increased grant funding to States that submit their voter registration lists to DHS to identify ineligible voter registrations, including for noncitizens. It would also improve election administration technology and security.

This is something everyone should do, but they are not doing it. So we are saying: All right. We will incentivize you. If you are going to get grants that deal with your elective systems, then we will give you a plus-up of 10 percent if you will do the right thing and abide by the law, if you will verify that the people in your State are voting because they are a citizen, if you will guarantee the integrity of your voting system.

You know what? We have got States—they don't want to make it easier to vote and harder to cheat; they are looking for the way to cheat. They are looking to make "illegal" legal. They are looking for ways to circumvent the law.

This is not fair. It is not right.

Every Member of Congress should support this legislation. Why would our colleagues on the other side of the aisle oppose election integrity measures? Why would they oppose States cleaning up their voter rolls? Why would they oppose being a citizen to register to vote and then when you go to the poll show an ID? Prove that you are who you are. Treasure that right to vote. It is foundational.

We have been a free country for 250 years because we value protecting our freedom. We believe in robust, respectful, bipartisan debate, and we believe in standing with the rule of law.

I think it is troubling that we have to ask our colleagues: Why? Why? Why is it that they do not want to exercise election integrity?

#### RECESS

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the previously scheduled recess begin immediately.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 12:27 p.m. recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. BRITT).

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Anthony W. Mattivi, of Kansas, to be United States District Judge for the District of Kansas.

#### NOMINATION OF ANTHONY W. MATTIVI

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, today, the Senate will vote to confirm Anthony Wayne Mattivi to the U.S.

District Court for the District of Kansas.

While it is commendable that Mr. Mattivi is a long-time public servant, I have deep reservations that he can be impartial if confirmed to the bench.

As the director of the Kansas Bureau of Investigation, KBI, Mr. Mattivi signed a 287(g) agreement to participate in Federal immigration enforcement and touted Kansas as being only the second State in the country to do so. Given ICE's cruel and inhumane tactics, that is nothing to brag about.

I am also concerned that Mr. Mattivi will not treat criminal defendants fairly, given that he has repeatedly characterized as soft on crime decreasing or eliminating mandatory minimums.

We have seen how outdated mandatory minimum policies stemming from the failed "War on Drugs" continue to impose lengthy, one-size-fits-all sentences for many nonviolent drug offenses. They don't deter crime; instead, they overcrowd prisons and strain budgets.

Lastly, Mr. Mattivi has demonstrated that he is too afraid to cross President Trump. When asked in written questions if he stood by his view that it was "preposterous" for President Trump to claim that he had issued a standing order to declassifying the documents he kept at Mar-a-Lago, Mr. Mattivi declined to answer.

Given Mr. Mattivi's inability to demonstrate that he will be a neutral arbiter, I will oppose this nomination.

#### VOTE ON MATTIVI NOMINATION

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

Mr. COTTON. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) would have voted "yea" and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) would have voted "yea".

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 166 Ex.]

#### YEAS—51

Armstrong	Cornyn	Hagerty
Banks	Cotton	Hawley
Barrasso	Cramer	Hoey
Blackburn	Crapo	Husted
Boozman	Cruz	Hyde-Smith
Britt	Curtis	Johnson
Budd	Daines	Justice
Capito	Ernst	Kennedy
Cassidy	Fischer	Lankford
Collins	Grassley	Lee