

Lummis	Murkowski	Scott (SC)
Marshall	Paul	Sheehy
McConnell	Ricketts	Sullivan
McCormick	Risch	Thune
Moody	Rounds	Tuberville
Moran	Schmitt	Wicker
Moreno	Scott (FL)	Young

NAYS—46

Alsobrooks	Hirono	Sanders
Baldwin	Kaine	Schatz
Blumenthal	Kelly	Schiff
Blunt Rochester	Kim	Schumer
Booker	King	Shaheen
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Slotkin
Coons	Lujan	Smith
Cortez Masto	Markey	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warnock
Fetterman	Murray	Warren
Gallego	Ossoff	Welch
Gillibrand	Padilla	Whitehouse
Hassan	Peters	Wyden
Heinrich	Reed	
Hickenlooper	Rosen	

NOT VOTING—3

Bennet	Graham	Tillis
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The nomination was confirmed. The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BANKS). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

IRAN

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I am sure I speak for everyone in the Senate and in the country when I say I am relieved that the two American helicopter pilots shot down over the Strait of Hormuz earlier today have been safely rescued.

The U.S. helicopter that went down over the strait is a stark reminder that every second Trump's disastrous war continues is another second that our troops remain in harm's way. Our servicemembers are the best and the greatest in the world, and they deserve better than to risk their lives in a reckless, aimless war. The only sure way to protect our troops is to end this war as soon as possible—something Donald Trump is clearly incapable of doing.

Senate Republicans need to step up, advance our War Powers Resolution to end the war, and bring our troops home.

WILLIAM PULTE

Mr. President, on Mr. Pulte, there is a reason the law requires the Director of National Intelligence to have "extensive" national security experience. The role is essential to protecting the American people and has access to the most sensitive information imaginable. But Donald Trump's decision to appoint Bill Pulte as Acting DNI would elevate someone with absolutely zero experience—zero—in national security.

In Trump's eyes, the only qualification someone needs to serve in any post in this administration is absolute, unwavering loyalty to him and to him alone. At a time when our Nation is at war, our troops are in danger, and massive security events like the World Cup and America's 250th anniversary are fast approaching, we need someone

with extensive national security experience leading the intelligence community. We need a Director of National Intelligence who will speak truth to power, not cater to Trump's every wish. We need a Director of National Intelligence who is objective, not one who distorts the truth for political gain, as Pulte has repeatedly done. We need a Director of National Intelligence who truly has a national security background, not someone with zero experience.

ENTITLEMENT PROGRAMS

Mr. President, now, on MIKE JOHNSON's plan to cut Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid: It is amazing. Doesn't he ever learn? Yesterday, MIKE JOHNSON revealed to a reporter that congressional Republicans have a plan to slash Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid if they stay in the majority. America, do you hear that? His plan is to slash Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid if they stay in the majority.

We found out this morning that—thanks to the Republican massive tax giveaway to the wealthiest Americans—Social Security is in worse shape than ever, with insolvency coming faster and finances deteriorating worse than at any point in more than 30 years.

And now JOHNSON just gave the game away. After making the largest cut to healthcare in American history and undermining Social Security, Republicans are coming back for second cuts. Republicans have had no problem adding \$5 trillion to the debt to cut taxes for billionaires, but they suddenly get stingy when it comes to protecting Americans' healthcare and retirement benefits that affect the vast majority of working people.

Imagine telling the American people that they can't retire or can't get their children the lifesaving care they need because billionaires like Donald Trump aren't rich enough already. Well, that is what Speaker JOHNSON is saying, and it is disgusting. JOHNSON can try to backtrack, dodge, or distort what he said all he wants, but he has reminded Americans of Republicans' true colors, and Americans don't like what they see.

NOMINATION OF TODD BLANCHE

Mr. President, on the Blanche nomination, yesterday, Trump officially nominated Todd Blanche to serve as his Attorney General permanently. Letting Donald Trump make his personal lawyer Attorney General makes as little sense as letting a defendant pick his prosecutor.

"Attorney General" might appear on Blanche's business card, but we all know the job description will stay the same: Trump's fixer, bagman, and hired gun. There are billboard lawyers I would trust more as Attorney General than Todd Blanche.

Blanche was the mastermind behind the \$2 billion MAGA slush fund to funnel America's taxpayer dollars to Donald Trump and his MAGA cronies.

Blanche has had the audacity to come before the Senate and claim he was dropping the slush fund. I would say a promise from Blanche isn't worth the paper it is written on, but Blanche told the Senate:

I'm not committing to putting anything in writing.

Meanwhile, Trump continues to sing the praises of his blatantly corrupt slush fund for billionaires and violent criminals.

Blanche has withheld 3 million pages of the Epstein files, lied to Congress under oath about meeting Epstein survivors, and brought baseless charges against Trump's political enemies; but Senate Republicans seem more than happy to shake his hand as he picks the American people's pocket.

Democrats are going to fight this confirmation with everything we have, and if Republicans have any respect for the rule of law, they will do the same.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Louisiana.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, I am a physician. I used to work in a hospital for the working uninsured and the uninsured, the poorly insured, and so, as you might guess, I am very sensitive to the idea, to the understanding, to the fact that healthcare is becoming more expensive and less obtainable to the American people.

And last week, if I can put this up, I pointed out that the average American household has \$10,000 in credit card debt, and these aren't people paying it off every month. These are people, like in the State of Tennessee or in the State of Louisiana, who are carrying a balance. And over the last 5 years, to show that this is becoming an increasing problem, the average—if I remember correctly—the average percent of someone's income going to credit card interest has risen from 1.9 to 3.2 percent of their income. They are not paying this off. They are carrying a balance with 22 percent interest sometimes, and they are paying more and more.

And the way this factors into healthcare is that, when someone has a multithousand-dollar deductible, even if they have insurance—they have a multithousand-dollar deductible—in order to pay for the out-of-pocket, they are putting it on their credit card, so much so that over 60 percent of personal bankruptcies relate in part to healthcare expenses, period.

Credit card debt reflecting the overall debt burden—the overall problems of affordability in our society—is huge.

Now, we have an obligation here. We in Congress, whatever our party, working with the President, we all have a mutual obligation to address this issue.

And now I would like to stress that it is not just for the patient, if you will, the family, the individual, the employee—you name how you want to put it—to address this, but it also is important for businesses.

I had a townhall a couple of months ago back home, or a roundtable, and there was a woman named Debbie in DeRidder, LA, who owns a coffee shop. She has 50 employees, and that is 50 employees for which she has to provide insurance. And so she is having a difficult time expanding her business because then she has to provide coverage to more employees, and she cannot afford to expand because of the money that she is putting toward their benefits.

Now, we need businesses to be strong. We need businesses creating more jobs, paying better wages for the people of the United States. By the way, that is not a Republican or Democrat or congressional or Executive office—that is an American priority for our fellow Americans.

So one thing that is kind of lost is the ability to hire new employees—or, I should say, more employees—and the ability to pay them more is getting swallowed up by the increased percent of compensation to an employee that is going to provide health insurance.

To give a little bit more background, whenever a person, whenever a business owner makes a decision to hire an employee, the amount they set aside for that employee is the wage, the Social Security tax they pay upon those wages on behalf of the employee, and then their benefit package. The more that benefit package costs, the less they can pay the employee.

And, right now, we are seeing the cost of health insurance climb to the extent that businesses are not able to pay more wages because they are having to put more into paying for the health insurance.

This is not new. This is getting worse. And we spoke earlier—to kind of feed back into the credit card debt—businesses are compensating by buying the cheapest policy they can. It is still more expensive but cheaper. But that cheaper policy has a deductible that is more and more. That cheaper policy may have a deductible of \$5,000.

The average family carrying a \$10,000 credit card debt doesn't have \$5,000 to pay expenses, and that brings us back to where we started. They don't have it in their money. They don't have it in their pocket. So they are putting it on their credit card. They are carrying the debt, and more and more of their income is going toward paying interest on rolled-over credit card debt.

By the way, it is a big problem in my State of Louisiana. I think we are the No. 3 State in the Nation, in terms of families carrying credit card debt.

And if I remember correctly, 11 percent of families nationwide are going

delinquent on their credit card debt, which means they are not even paying the minimal balance required.

This is an issue for Congress, whatever your party, for President Trump to engage with each other to accomplish this mission. And, by the way, we need the President, and I personally will make an appeal to President Trump.

Let's do something for the American people. And you can say it is an election year. No, say it is not an election year. This is the year in which we have got to help the American people afford their household items. It is a huge issue.

And the answer is that President Trump's intuition on this is fantastic. During the debate over extending the enhanced premium tax credits on the exchanges, President Trump said: Don't give the money to the insurance company; give the money to the family—because if you give it to the insurance company, the insurance company takes 20 percent of it for profit and overhead. And, by the way, the family is still left with a multithousand-dollar deductible. So President Trump's intuition on this is the correct intuition.

We need to make it so that, when the Federal Government is taking the money we are already using to subsidize the purchase of health insurance by employers and by the employee, the money is going to the patient, not to the insurance company. Give the patient the power, not the profit to the insurance company.

And so I emphasize: The President's intuition is correct, because that opens the door for the President and for the Congress, no matter your party, to come together to address this issue.

By the way, you could say that it is good politics. I would say: Good policy is good politics. And so it would be important for us to consider to do this.

Now, I have come up with a plan. I call it the MVP plan—MVP, Money and Value for the Patients. How do we do this? So, again, taking the President's intuition, don't give the money to the insurance companies; give it to the patient. We advance the dollars to the patient in a health savings account that they can use to pay for that out-of-pocket expense. Under this plan, a family of four would get about \$2,000.

And, by the way, there is a way to pay for this. This would not add to the Nation's debt, because we already are subsidizing the purchase of health insurance by Americans. We just do it a little differently.

And in this you give \$2,000 to the health savings account. Why is that important? Sixty percent of American families will not spend more than \$2,000 in a calendar year on out-of-pocket expenses for healthcare.

And once you take care of that first 2k, they can take a higher deductible policy, which will lower the cost of the premium. Put together, this could save a family as much as \$6,000 on healthcare, on the cost of being insured.

So \$6,000 a year, \$500 a month—this could help that family carry a \$10,000 load right now, the part of that credit card debt coming from the need to put healthcare expenses on the card.

This would help the employer because the employer could, plausibly, get a policy which is less expensive, which keeps more money in the employer's pocket—better able to hire more people or pay more compensation.

And it doesn't increase the Nation's debt. We make it debt neutral.

And it builds upon the President's insight: You don't give the money to the insurance company; you give it to the patient. And you add value. So we bring money in with value to the patient.

In the HELP Committee right now, the committee I am privileged to be the chairman of, we have a bill—bipartisan, with ROGER MARSHALL from Kansas and JOHN HICKENLOOPER from Colorado. Our committee staff is working hard with them on this, to increase price transparency.

Now, price transparency began with legislation and Executive orders in the first Trump administration. I am familiar with that. Part of it was the No Surprises Act, which I helped author, and that began the process of price transparency.

Price transparency, just to be clear, we know what it means. Price transparency is knowing the price of something before you make the purchase, as opposed to knowing the price afterward.

I use the example—in the No Surprises Act, we made it so that, when you go in for a colonoscopy, they are obligated to tell you if it is going to cost more than anticipated. They have to tell you what that additional cost is going to be.

I chuckle because, in the bad old days, you would find out that you are obligated to pay the extra cost for a colonoscopy when you are waiting to go back for the colonoscopy, and you have been prepped—and, if you have ever had one, you know what that means—and you are sitting there with a thin sheet over you, and they say: By the way, if you want to walk out, you can. Otherwise, we are going forward. Just sign this sheet of paper.

It was not a way to acquaint people with the price beforehand, at a point in which they were prepared to walk away.

Now, under the No Surprises Act, we have to be informed. We are going to increase that—increase the power of price transparency—so that the patient would know, when she is going to go in, how much it is going to cost beforehand, as opposed to afterward.

We teamed this up. There are a lot of applications being developed right now by the private sector, taking the information we are creating to bring value to the patient. For example, I use the example of “my daughter has an earache, and I need to bring my daughter

to the hospital or to an urgent care center.’

You can take your phone and say: Urgent care center near me. Which one has the lowest price? Is there any difference in quality?

These apps will be able to give the patient—the mom, the dad—the information she or he needs right then as to which urgent care center is near them, is open, their cost for a routine visit or any other type of visit, and the quality of the care.

When you walk out, you can say: Pharmacies near me. Which has the best price for Bactrim DS—I forget the dose; I am a doc, but I haven’t prescribed it for so long—say 250 milligrams twice a day?

And they are going to send you to the pharmacy with the best price. Now, you are paying for this from the refunded money in the health savings account. So you are bringing money in the pocket of the patient, coupled with value proposition, price transparency, and the apps being developed in the private sector for the patient. The effect of this is to take power from the insurance company, power from the middlemen, and give it to the patients—power to the patient, not profit to the insurer.

Now, we can do this. We can do this, but it will take a commitment from Congress and from the President of the United States to do it. But first, you have to care about it. We have to care that the families back home are carrying a balance of \$10,000 on their credit cards.

If we care about this, if the President of the United States cares about it—when I say “we,” I mean the Senate; I mean the House of Representatives—we can come together and fix it. Let’s be constructive. Let’s acknowledge that this is something we have to do together, but first, we have to care about it together.

Just to point out that it is doable, earlier this year, the President signed into law a PBM reform bill that Congress had negotiated last Congress but got signed into law this Congress. President Trump is attempting to do this through TrumpRx. The MVP plan would allow—could work with TrumpRx to give the patient access to the better price.

So, ultimately, we have to care. Ultimately, we have to make a decision as a Congress, as a government, to address the issue which is most pressing upon the American people: affordability.

There are some things we can’t touch. Housing—whatever solution we put into housing will not affect next year. The price of gasoline and groceries—we cannot affect that as long as the Iranians are holding the Strait of Hormuz. That will be up to the President to come up with an end game that addresses that issue. But one thing we can do collectively is to address the cost of being insured. Some of the things we do immediately, when this

happens, will begin to decrease the amount of money a family puts in their personal budget in the cost of healthcare.

Get engaged, all of us. With the President, get engaged. We will be held accountable by those families if we don’t, and by golly, we should be.

I yield the floor.

Mr. President, 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.

254TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE “GASPEE” RAID

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I come to the Senate floor every year around this time to remark upon an event in our pathway toward revolution.

As we close in on the semiquincentennial celebration of our day of independence—July 4, 1776—I want to take this Chamber back 4 more years than that to June 9, 1772, when the first blow was struck of armed conflict between the American Colonies and Great Britain’s fleet.

The story begins with the arrival on Narragansett Bay of His Majesty’s officer Lieutenant William Duddingston, the captain of a revenue cutter named the *Gaspee*. Lieutenant Duddingston’s task was to police the commerce going in and out of Narragansett Bay, and he went about his task with bumptious, arrogant zeal, which included arrogant exchanges of correspondence with the Colonial Governor and Chief Justice and unnecessary harassment and interference with colonial shipping on Narragansett Bay.

Before we get to June and the events that I am going to describe, I will take a quick sidebar to one of his first exploits in February. He had only gotten there in January. By February, Captain Duddingston of the *Gaspee* seized a ship called the *Fortune*, and he seized its cargo. He had the ship and the cargo transferred up to Boston, where His Majesty’s government sold the cargo and sold the ship and transferred the funds to the exchequer of Great Britain.

What they had not appreciated was that one of the owners of the *Fortune* was a Rhode Islander named Nathanael Greene, who had not beforehand been much involved in the Committees of Correspondence and the spirit of rebellion. But the seizure of his vessel put him into what he called a spirit of resentment that changed the course of his life. As students of history will know, he went on to become the chief operating officer of the Revolutionary War, the top lieutenant to George Washington, the guy who made the supplies and the work—everything—happen.

He was important in that role, but he constantly begged General Washington

for a real command. Ultimately, General Washington relented, though it wounded him to lose the administrative capability of General Nathanael Greene. General Greene went down to run the southern campaign of the Revolutionary War, whose motto, according to General Greene, was: We fight, we get beat, we rise up, and we fight again.

Sure enough, he did. He fought over and over and over again, never winning a battle but definitively winning the war in one of the first real examples of guerrilla-type conflict the world had seen. They were used to staged, matched armies in colorful regalia, standing at a reasonable distance from each other and firing at each other with muskets and with cannons. The entire campaign in the South was a guerrilla campaign in which they fought, they got beat, they got away, they rose up, and they fought again.

The result was that General Cornwallis, commanding the British Army, wrote to his wife:

That damn Greene is more dangerous than Washington.

He was a very significant participant in the victory that America achieved and the independence that we asserted on the Fourth of July, 1776. He doesn’t get the credit he deserves because he spent so much of the war facilitating the work of General Washington, but historians know what a remarkable job he did running that southern campaign. You can trace that all the way back to Lieutenant William Duddingston and the *Gaspee* seizing his ship the *Fortune* and lighting up that spirit of resentment.

So scroll forward to June 9, 1772. Lieutenant Duddingston is still helming the *Gaspee*, and the *Gaspee* is still harassing Rhode Islanders. A June day on Narragansett Bay is a beautiful thing to behold, and in the sparkling light of that wonderful day, a little ship called the *Hannah*, bearing cargo, was sailing on its way up to Providence, which was one of the maritime centers of the Colonies, and the *Gaspee* gave chase, seeking to arrest the *Hannah* and seize its cargo and send it off to Boston the way the *Fortune*’s had been sent. Only Captain Lindsey of the *Hannah* decided: To hell with that, I am not going to surrender. I am going to run for it.

He sailed away up Narragansett Bay with the *Gaspee* in chase.

Along the Warwick shore, about halfway up Narragansett Bay, the Pawtuxet River comes into the bay, and, as rivers do, it carries silt and dirt from the river washing through into the bay. When the river slows down and the water goes out into the larger bay, the silt and the sand fall to the bottom, and there is a little barrier along the bottom of the bay left by the river.

Well, Captain Lindsey had sailed there quite a lot, and like any good captain, he had a pretty good idea of how deeply his vessel drew. He sailed over the sandbar off of Namquid Point

and continued on his merry way in the sparkling midday of June 9, 1772. Behind him came the bigger, heavier, lumbering *Gaspee*, and it floundered and stuck on that sandbar. The tide was falling, so the *Gaspee* was going no place until the tide fell all the way to low tide and came all the way back up to the tide level at which it foundered and then raised farther enough to lift the vessel off where it was stuck.

When the *Hannah* got to Providence, her captain told the story of what had taken place. He described to the worthies on the Providence shore that the *Gaspee*—this dread vessel that had caused so much nuisance and cost to Rhode Islanders—was stuck.

That night, Rhode Islanders rode down from Providence to the *Gaspee* at night in longboats with muffled oars. As they approached the stuck *Gaspee*, Abraham Whipple, who was the local sheriff and was in the party, yelled out that he was there to arrest the captain of the vessel and arrest the vessel. Duddingston was not about to put up with that, so he called his crew up to the deck, called them to arms, and a battle ensued between the longboats surrounding the *Gaspee* and the *Gaspee* itself.

As the Rhode Islanders swarmed onto the *Gaspee*, among the gunshots was one that struck Captain Duddingston, so, injured, he surrendered his crew, and the Rhode Islanders captured—his rank was lieutenant; his position was captain. Captain Duddingston. Lieutenant Duddingston. They took him ashore with the crew and turned them all over to be held prisoner and detained. Then they went back out onto the bay, out to the stricken and stranded *Gaspee*, and they set her alight. When a ship burns, particularly a ship of that era, whose rope is covered with tar, whose rigging is canvas, whose structure is wood, with so many parts that are varnished and oiled, the combustion is rapid. And, as the *Gaspee* burned, the fire reached the *Gaspee's* powder magazine. And, when the fire reached the powder magazine, the gunpowder did what gunpowder does, and it blew the *Gaspee* to smithereens.

It is now about 4 in the morning on June 10, 1772. More than 4 years would go by before the Fourth of July Declaration of Independence; and, interestingly, more than a year and a half would go by until another event—that is much more prominent even though much less brave and significant—took place, and that is the so-called Boston Tea Party.

Now, I have nothing against my friends from Massachusetts, but they got drunk; they went onboard a civilian ship. They seized bales of tea, and they pushed the tea bales into Boston Harbor. Well, bully for them, but well more than a year earlier, Rhode Islanders had seized a vessel of Her Majesty's Navy; had captured the crew; and had blown the damned boat up, and I think that deserves a little credit. So I come here every year. When I go home this

weekend, we will be marching in the Gaspee Days Parade that goes by Namquid Point—now called Gaspee Point—where an annual celebration takes place.

And I want to make sure that all of the pages who are here know that, when they hear about the Boston Tea Party, they should know to scroll back 18 months to a bolder, more violent, and more remarkable engagement by Rhode Island.

The aftermath was immediate. King George was furious. He demanded that everyone involved be hanged, and he sent commissioners to come and root out who the miscreants were who had participated in the raid on the *Gaspee*. And here is what is interesting. There are probably five long boatloads of Rhode Islanders—enough to overwhelm the crew of the *Gaspee*—and enormous rewards were offered for people to cooperate and testify against their comrades—against all that pressure from the King, against all that inducement of reward. In Rhode Island, no one squealed. The commissioners went home emptyhanded. The nooses hung empty. That was the second conclusion. The blowing up of the vessel was one thing. The solidarity of not yielding to testify against their fellow colonists was the other.

So I will read my poem about this event with apologies to the ride of Paul Revere.

Listen, my colleagues, and you shall see  
How Rhode Islanders blew up the dread  
*Gaspee*.

Great Britain was fearsome, she ruled the sea,

But Rhode Islanders burned with the fire  
to be free.

So when George sent his frigate to tax our coast,

And its arrogant captain was heard to boast

That he'd soon have Rhode Island under his sway,

[Well] a course was set for a fateful day.  
Narragansett Bay sparkled bright and blue  
June 9 of 1772.

The trading ship *Hannah* was making her way

With cargo for Providence that fine day.  
King George's *Gaspee* pursued in chase,

But the *Hannah* decided to give her a race.  
Away fled the *Hannah* with wind in her sails,

As the *Gaspee's* cannon fired from its rails.  
Evading the *Gaspee's* cannon balls,

The *Hannah* sailed for the Namquid shoals.  
Fast and light, *Hannah* crossed the shallow,

But when the *Gaspee* attempted to follow,  
She ran aground on the Warwick shore,

In a falling tide, and could move no more.  
That night dark longboats with muffled oars,

Came slipping quietly down the shore,  
To rid our Bay of the dread *Gaspee*,

And show old King George that Rhode Island [would be] free.

The battle was fierce off Warwick Neck.  
When the gunsmoke cleared from the *Gaspee's* deck,

The Rhode Islanders had her as their prize,  
And her crew bound up in chains and ties.

When the crew was ashore, Pawtuxet's Rangers

Assured they'd present us no further danger.

Back to the Bay, in the dark of the night,  
Went the *Gaspee* Raiders to set her alight.  
The fire spread through the Raiders' prize,  
'Til a blast filled the Narragansett Bay skies.

The fire had reached the *Gaspee's* magazines,

And her gunpowder blew her to smithereens.

Away sped the Raiders into the dark,  
Leaving in the embers freedom's spark.

"I want their names!" King George demanded,

And ordered the Raiders be apprehended.  
But his call for hangings came to naught:

His nooses hung empty; no charge was brought;

Because never a traitorous tale was told.  
Rhode Island stood steady and silent and bold.

The spark that was struck in the *Gaspee* Raid

Lit a flame that still burns in our hearts today.

And the lesson from then is a lesson now,  
That every American still will avow.

"However majestic your powers be,  
You should heed our warning: don't tread on me."

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

#### WHISTLEBLOWERS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, today, I come here to speak about one of my favorite topics: protecting patriotic people that we call whistleblowers, people whose goal is, in government, to make sure that laws are faithfully enforced and money spent according to the way it should be, and sometimes these whistleblowers pay a price for doing that, even losing their job and ruining themselves professionally.

I have conducted longstanding oversight to ensure the Federal Government complies with whistleblower protection laws, and some of those laws I have gotten on the books.

Unfortunately, elements of the Federal Government—whether Republican or Democrat—have made efforts to silence whistleblowers through illegal nondisclosure agreements.

Let's not forget that in addition to Federal statute, a fundamental precept of whistleblowing is the First Amendment, freedom of speech. That is why I spearheaded a very successful effort to get what is called anti-gag provisions enacted in the law. I worked a very long time to make anti-gag provisions law. The anti-gag provisions require all Federal Agency nondisclosure policy forms and agreements to notify employees of their right to blow the whistle to Congress, to inspectors general, and to the Office of Special Counsel.

The failure to comply with the law isn't only a chilling effect that discourages whistleblowers, it is also illegal.

For decades, my oversight efforts have successfully led Federal Agencies bringing their unlawful nondisclosure and similar agreements into compliance. And I will tell you this: It is amazing that after all these years, the Federal Government still—still—has problems with compliance with my anti-gag legislation.

That is why Congress must continue to do constant oversight.