

There are two paths that emerged from Senator Chafee's hearing. One was the path of science to success against ozone depletion. The other—the one we have unfortunately chosen—is the path of climate denial fraud and dark-money political corruption that leads to failure.

We can do better, but only if we wake up.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, let me thank my colleague from Rhode Island and recall affectionately that, when I came to the Senate in 1997, John Chafee was serving. And I had an opportunity to meet with him and to work with him on something that he loved called the Atlantic Forum. He asked me to join him in a bipartisan way to lead that effort in the Senate—such a compliment for a freshman Senator to have that kind of request from a man of his stature.

He served our country so well in World War II, maybe even in the Korean war, as well, in the Marine Corps, before he was elected Governor of your State.

I attended his memorial service in Providence, and it was quite a crowd, as there should have been.

Thank you for bringing up his name in this positive way.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. To the Senator, through the Chair, I, too, was at that memorial service. It probably was the first time we saw one another.

Thank you.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I was first elected to the House of Representatives, here in Washington, in 1982. That is a long time ago, but I remember very well my first year in the House.

Politically, I was scared to death. It was my first election victory, and I had defeated a 22-year Republican incumbent Congressman. I was looking over my shoulder every day, every minute, every bill, every vote, thinking: This is it. I can't get this done.

And then they came around and told us something I didn't want to hear at all. They said: Incidentally, the Social Security system is going broke, and it will happen within a year or 2, and we have to fix it.

I thought to myself: This is the end of me. No matter what they come up with—whatever proposal it is—the controversy will be so intense that it will cost me my congressional seat.

I listened to the debate, and I saw the end product that was suggested, in 1983, for 50 years of solvency for Social Security and decided, in the end, that the responsible thing to do was to vote for it.

We passed it. We waited to see what the electorate would do. Not a single Member of the House of Representatives of either party lost an election

attributable to the Social Security vote.

By making some hard decisions in a timely fashion, saving Social Security, we did the right thing for America, and, politically, it turned out to be a safe thing, whether we believed it at the time or not.

So now we face another crisis in Social Security. The 50 years of solvency which we bought in 1983 is running out. The Social Security Board of Trustees releases a report that tells us about the status of Social Security finances. Their 2026 report, released yesterday, should send alarm bells through Congress. According to the Board of Trustees, the Social Security trust fund will be unable to make full scheduled payments in 2032.

So the effort that I was involved in, in 1983, paid off. We bought 50 years, but now what are we going to do?

Just 6 years from now, Social Security will only be able to pay 78 percent of current benefits. What does that mean?

I will give you a rough illustration. The average Social Security check in the United States is around \$2,500. If you reduce it by 22 percent, people will receive about \$450 less each month.

It means that beneficiaries across our Nation will see their benefit checks cut by 22 percent. Twenty-two percent means \$455. It is about or around the average a retired household spends on groceries each month.

That could be devastating. We cannot let it happen.

Roughly, 70 million Americans—seniors and people with disabilities—rely on Social Security for food, medication, housing, and utilities. In my home State Illinois, over 2.3 million people receive Social Security. Twenty percent of seniors in Illinois rely on it for all or nearly all of their income. It is all they have. Each year, Social Security lifts 533,000 seniors 65 and over out of poverty in my State.

Social Security is a lifeline that they earned after a lifetime of hard work. But many beneficiaries still struggle with living expenses. Every day, seniors are forced to make decisions most Americans pray they will never have to face, like whether to buy groceries or pay the utility bill, refill their medications or pay their rent or mortgage.

Now, if we do nothing—if Congress does nothing—with this Board of Trustees report, every single Senator faces the prospect of making do with \$455 less a month in just 6 years.

These are not hypotheticals. Every single Senator has received these heartbreaking stories from constituents about what they are doing, struggling to survive on a fixed income or Social Security.

One of my constituents Kimberly shared her appreciation of Social Security and said it is traced back to her grandmother, who was a maid and commuted to the suburbs from Chicago to work each day.

Kimberly said her grandmother stopped school in the ninth grade and

had a family of eight children. When she retired after her husband died, she relied heavily on Social Security.

Kimberly said:

Social Security was [my mom's] monthly stream of income—her only monthly stream of income.

So why haven't we done something to avoid this deadline in 2032? It is because we have a fear of doing what is right and maybe politically unpopular.

Every year, when the Social Security Trustees Report is released, we again bury our heads in the sand and say: Thank goodness some future Congress will take care of this problem.

Social Security is a bedrock promise we made to America—the most fundamental safety net program in America—and I am concerned that Congress will wait until the absolute last minute to try to do anything to save it. That would make it extremely difficult and make it irresponsible conduct and unacceptable.

Earlier today, I released a bipartisan statement. Yes, Senators of both political parties issued a statement together. Senators BILL CASSIDY, TIM KAINE, THOM TILLIS, and I are saying to Congress: Don't wait. Do something.

We must find a way for Congress to debate this issue in a transparent, fair, and bipartisan way, a mechanism that forces us to make meaningful, important policy choices.

Several of us have been working together, trying to figure out how we can strengthen Social Security for future generations of retirees. We say to our colleagues: Join us in doing what we were elected to do—legislate on hard issues and protect this lifeline program, Social Security, for our kids and grandkids, because we do not have a shortage of ideas. What we lack is the will to do it.

There are many bills that are out there. The senior Senator from Vermont has a bill to address this crisis; the junior Senator from Rhode Island, the same; the senior Senator from Hawaii, equally. The senior Senator from Louisiana is working on it as well.

Good ideas are out there, but we need to come together on a bipartisan basis and agree on a path that buys 50 years of solvency at a minimum. Those Senators worked their proposals for a long time. They want to present them to the Senate, and they should.

But to do that, we have to do something we haven't done in a long time. Get ready. Buckle your seatbelts. I am talking about legislating, actually bringing a measure to the floor and opening it to amendment. We would say: You could offer an amendment, if you wish, to anyone's proposal for Social Security, but whatever you do, it has to buy a minimum of 50 years of solvency for Social Security. And then let's vote.

There will be some ideas that will be crazy and that you wouldn't even consider them. But I think we can work to a bipartisan solution to our challenge as well.

These measures should be debated, receive a vote, and have their own chance to become law. Let's not run away from this responsibility anymore. Let's not say: It is somebody else's problem.

We were elected to solve problems, and there is no greater problem than the solvency and the future of Social Security.

If you think I am making that up, blowing smoke, ask senior citizens how important Social Security is. They will tell you it is critical for their survival.

We were sent to Congress to legislate and work on hard issues. Four Senators—two Democrats and two Republicans—are stepping forward and saying: We can work on this together.

We owe it to our kids and grandkids to protect and bolster this critically important program.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUESTS

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, the Senate is now debating section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, which expires on Friday. Last week, the Senate resoundingly rejected a bill that would have continued the surveillance status quo.

It is clear the path to 60 votes in the Senate on section 702 runs through real reforms. There is no reason why the Senate can't start moving forward with surveillance reform now.

I and other colleagues have introduced comprehensive, bipartisan, bicameral surveillance reform legislation, which would protect both Americans' rights and national security.

We have been championing these reforms for some time, but I understand the Senate is divided on the issue. So Senators are going to need to get to work trying to forge a path forward.

So I am prepared to put some real offers on the table right now. So I am going to start by asking unanimous consent to pass a simple bill that makes one very important reform. It would require government agencies to get a warrant before using section 702 to read the communications of Americans. It contains a number of exceptions, including for emergencies, and our analysis is that it would be very feasible for the executive branch and the FISA Court to implement it.

Most importantly, it would finally bring section 702 in line with the principles of the Fourth Amendment. Law-abiding Americans are getting swept up in section 702 now, and this bill would require that government agencies get a warrant if they want to read Americans' emails, text messages, or other sensitive communications.

And let me note: A number of Republicans in both the Senate and the House have sponsored or cosponsored legislation to create the kind of warrant I am talking about.

This bill is only one part of my comprehensive surveillance reform bill. It

doesn't address numerous other concerns related to FISA or other intelligence authorities and the sale of Americans' location data. It is not a long-term solution by itself; it will, however, extend section 702 of FISA for 9 months, well into next year.

So I would ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 4738, 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. Is there an objection?

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, the Senator from Oregon is prepared to let this essential foreign intelligence surveillance tool go dark unless we accede to his demands. And frankly, the demand for a warrant to search lawfully collected foreign intelligence makes no sense whatsoever.

Section 702 is probably the most important law most people have never heard about. It protects American citizens by saying that only foreigners can be the object of surveillance, but necessarily sometimes, when the communication is between a foreign target and an American citizen or a U.S. person, that call is documented in metadata, so-called—time, place, and persons who have made the call. That is lawfully collected intelligence.

What this requirement would mean is that the FBI, mainly, would have to go out and try to prove the elements of a crime, a probable cause that a crime has been committed, in order to get a judge to issue a warrant to look at lawfully collected intelligence, which is basically the metadata. If content is required or asked for by the FBI, they have to go before a judge and establish why that is.

But one of the basic points of confusion is that some people think that gathering intelligence is the same thing as investigating a crime. It can be sometimes, but basically seeking intelligence is forward-looking in order to prevent future acts, for example, of terrorism. Criminal investigations look backward to see if a crime has been committed and are subject to criminal penalties, which do include, particularly with U.S. persons involved, all the constitutional protections that U.S. citizens and U.S. persons enjoy. Foreigners do not enjoy Fourth Amendment protection against this sort of surveillance.

So first of all, I believe that this is misguided. We have heard from the intelligence community that this requirement will slow down collection of intelligence, including and during occasions where time is of the essence. So courts have found that none of these queries require or implicate Fourth Amendment protection. So the very foundation for this argument has been rejected by the courts that have reviewed it.

Senator WYDEN's bill would be akin to asking police officers to get a war-

rant every time they happen to look at legally collected evidence in their evidence locker. It makes no sense whatsoever. Requiring a warrant for every query of already lawfully collected information in the 702 database would significantly hinder the ability to respond to emerging threats.

For that reason, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I think it is unfortunate what my friend from Texas is saying.

Let me be clear. The warrant requirements that I am talking about are sponsored or cosponsored by Republican Members both in the Senate and in the House. And my bill does not require a warrant to search metadata. A warrant is only required to read the contents of Americans' communications.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, if the Senator will allow me to respond—

Mr. WYDEN. Of course.

Mr. CORNYN.—what we are talking about is the contact between the foreign target and the U.S. person or American citizen. We are not talking about content. That would require another step to find that content approved by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court. So I think there is some confusion about what is already collected and what would seek to be collected but which would require another step.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, without continuing this well into the evening, let me just say that I am quite certain that the senior Republicans who have sponsored or cosponsored these ideas understand what this is all about, and I believe we will continue this conversation.

Mr. President, I am now going to move to another unanimous consent request to pass an even narrower bill that is hard to see anybody objecting to. It would not make any changes to surveillance law, but it would significantly increase public transparency about the impact of surveillance on Americans' rights.

It would create some new reporting requirements that would help inform Congress and the public about surveillance activities that impact American citizens. It would direct the executive branch to declassify a March 2026 FISA Court ruling on section 702 that found significant violations affecting Americans. The executive branch is already legally required to declassify the report, and they have had 3 months to work on it; in my judgment, it needs to be redacted and released in the next couple of weeks so they can inform the surveillance debate here in the Senate.

The chairman and the vice chairman of the Select Committee on Intelligence, which I am honored to serve on, called on the executive branch to redact and release this court ruling by May 15, but the executive branch simply disregarded their request. This bill also extends 702 for 5 weeks.