

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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

#### MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 4744

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I understand that there is a bill at the desk due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The senior assistant bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 4744) to amend titles 10 and 38, United States Code, and other Federal laws, to improve benefits for veterans and the administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Mr. THUNE. In order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I would object to further proceeding.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

#### NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, last week, Senate Republicans passed legislation to fund Border Patrol and Immigration and Customs Enforcement for the next 3 years. On Tuesday, House Republicans passed the legislation, and, yesterday, the President signed the bill into law.

I am proud that we got this done, of course. Republicans are deeply committed to ensuring a safe country and safe communities, and border security and immigration enforcement are key parts of that. No country—no country—can be secure if bad actors can make their way freely across the borders or criminal illegal immigrants are able to operate freely within our neighborhoods.

So, as I said, I am proud that we got this done, but I also have to ask: How did we get here? How did we get to the point where one party has completely abdicated any responsibility for our Nation's security?

It is not just this bill. Democrats have been playing fast and loose with our national security all year. Their two recordbreaking shutdowns strained our Nation's critical national security Agencies, particularly Agencies at the Department of Homeland Security, which was shut down for a staggering 119 days, all told, this fiscal year. The TSA, responsible for the security of our Nation's airports, has seen a flood of resignations, thanks to Democrats' decision to make these critical workers go without pay for quite literally months.

And then there is border security and immigration enforcement. Democrats absolutely refused to provide so much as a dollar—a dollar—to fund the agents who provide security at our Nation's borders and remove criminal illegal immigrants from America's streets. I can't make that point enough.

If Democrats had their way, there would be zero—zero—physical presence at our Nation's borders and zero agents to remove criminal illegal immigrants who do make their way into our country. It is a breathtaking—breath-taking—level of irresponsibility.

I am still not done because I haven't yet talked about FISA. Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act is our Nation's most critical intelligence-gathering tool. Policymakers across the Federal Government from both parties rely on section 702 information on a near daily basis. And we were well on our way to reauthorizing it, with Democrat and Republican lawmakers here in the Senate working on an agreement. And then, as has happened more than once this year, Democrats backed out. Now, this critical tool is set to go dark on Friday, and what the consequences of that will be we cannot predict.

It is striking how weak Democrats' ostensible reasons have been for all of these actions. They are blocking a critical national security tool because they don't like the President's temporary, short-term pick for Acting DNI. They shut down the Federal Government twice and refused to fund border security and immigration enforcement because they couldn't take yes for an answer.

Ultimately, Democrats have made it clear this year that, for them, it is always politics over policy. And if our economy suffers, if our national security suffers because of Democrats' decision to shut down the government or refusal to fund border security, well, Democrats are apparently just fine with that.

Polls tend to show that Americans trust Republicans more than Democrats when it comes to crime and national security. I think Democrats are making it very clear why that is. The fact that Republicans had to act alone to fund security at our Nation's borders is all the evidence you need to know to show that Democrats are fundamentally unserious about their national security responsibilities.

Republicans, of course, will continue to do everything we can to keep our country and our communities secure. It is too bad the same cannot be said of Senate Democrats.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. 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 MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

#### INFLATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, well, it may genuinely be impossible for Trump to be more out of touch with the American people than he already is. After Trumpflation reached a record high yesterday, Donald Trump said:

The numbers are great . . . I love the inflation.

That is what he said. Those are his words.

The numbers are great . . . I love the inflation.

That is when inflation hit a record high, long-time high of 4.2 percent. Look at this guy. How out of touch is he?

Donald Trump, the American people hate the inflation. They are shouting it from the rooftops every day: Bring costs down. And Donald Trump says "I love the inflation."

What is wrong with him? How out of touch is he? It is sickening, and you can't even make this stuff up. Americans are losing their homes. Parents are working multiple jobs just to feed their kids. Workers are walking to their jobs because they can't afford to fill up their tanks, but Donald Trump has the audacity to say "I love the inflation."

In fact, I was told that a veteran in New York one night had to choose between feeding his child and feeding his service dog. Isn't that—doesn't that make you sad?

What we are seeing from Trump isn't just benign neglect or blind indifference. Trump is actively rooting for the financial demise of the American people when he says "I love the inflation."

What is Trump thinking? Did Trump lose a bet where he had to say the most asinine, tone-deaf thing imaginable on national television?

Trump has torched the American economy with his tariffs, with his disastrous war in Iran, and with his unprecedented cuts to healthcare and other vital services. Now most arsonists flee the scene of the crime; Donald Trump calls a press conference. The only thing Donald Trump loves more than inflation is the corruption.

As Americans live through a financial nightmare, Donald Trump is living out his billionaire dreams: golden ballrooms, lavish gifts from foreign countries, sweetheart deals for his family business, taxpayer-funded cash payouts for him and his cronies through the slush fund.

Apparently, Senate Republicans love the inflation too, helping Trump every step of the way as he drives up costs and lines his pockets. You would think

given how out of touch Trump is, given how he talks about loving inflation while the American people are suffering, that some of our Republican colleagues would have the guts to cross the aisle and join us in fighting this inflation. But instead, silence, fear, knees knocking because they are afraid of Trump.

Well, we will see how much Trump and the GOP love inflation come November.

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#### STOCK BUYBACK ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2026

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on stock buybacks, you know costs are skyrocketing, but corporations are making massive profits. And instead of using the profits to create jobs and invest in growth, corporations too often buy back their own stock to increase its value and reward executives.

I am introducing legislation today with Senators WYDEN and WARREN to rein in the stock buybacks that corporate executives use to line their own pockets to the detriment of the American people. Americans need more jobs and higher wages right now, not more privileges for millionaires and billionaires.

Our bill would quadruple the tax big corporations pay on these stock buybacks, which will both push companies to invest in their workers in the future and allow us to invest more in lowering costs and helping working families get ahead, with some of the money we could use when you collect that 4 percent on stock buybacks.

While Trump and Senate Republicans don't have any plan to lower Americans' costs—in fact, their policies are doing the opposite—Democrats continue to fight back against corporate giveaways and push for solutions to help the American people deal with skyrocketing costs in Trump's economy.

Let's not forget, if you are the CEO of a company and you are often measured by your stock price, buybacks raise that stock price. The damn shame of it all is those buybacks don't create a single new job or an investment in workers or an investment in equipment to increase productivity and produce more.

No. They simply raise the stock price, which benefits corporate executives and shareholders but not the American public.

So we ought to, at the very minimum, raise the tax which was put on at 1 percent to now 4 percent. And in addition, it will bring in revenues to the Federal Government, hopefully, that we can use to help lower costs for the American people. That is certainly what we would do.

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#### WILLIAM PULTE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now on Bill Pulte. The whole job of the Director of National Intelligence is to

keep America safe, but Trump's decision to appoint Bill Pulte—someone with absolutely zero relevant experience—is going to put Americans in danger.

Let me repeat, America. With Pulte in charge, we are in danger.

This job is so sensitive, we need real leadership in the intelligence community, not a national security novice sent to undermine the work of intelligence professionals. That is what Pulte is expert in. Trump has an enemy, he goes after them, even if the facts don't merit it. Look what he did to my attorney general in New York Letitia James, and with so many others, including Cook at the Federal Reserve.

He is just a hit man in a certain sense, a financial sense. And it is outrageous. He has no fidelity to fact. He is just a yes-man to Trump. Trump says: Go after one of my enemies—and Pulte does.

No one in their right mind would trust Bill Pulte, a person nicknamed "Little Trump" by his administration colleagues to speak truth to power, to conduct objective analysis, to resist efforts to politicize the intelligence community.

In a job where facts are so important and the President knowing the real facts is so important, to have this man who has no fidelity to facts in this job, again, is very dangerous for the American people.

Trump and Republicans need to put an adult in the room. Bill Pulte is not the man for the job, and my Republican colleagues know it.

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#### IRAN

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on Iran, for weeks, Donald Trump, Pete Hegseth, and Marco Rubio have insisted their disastrous war in Iran is over. How stupid do they think the American people are?

This morning, Trump said he plans to take Kharg Island, which could even mean putting American boots on the ground. It doesn't take a military genius to see that Trump's fiasco of a war with Iran never ended, not with American helicopters being shot down, not when American bases are being attacked and American troops are coming under fire.

Saying this war is over is an insult—an insult—to the brave American servicemen who are risking their lives every day to fight it.

The only thing more absurd than the Trump administration's lies about the Iran war is that Republicans accept them at face value and just go along—too many, too many of them.

For months, Democrats have urged Republicans to support our War Powers Resolution to end this war for real. And for months, Republicans have failed to do so. Americans have made it clear they don't want this war. They don't want the high costs, gasoline and fertilizer and everything else that

comes with it. And Trump has made it clear he is incapable of cleaning up this mess.

You just have to listen to his statements over a period of a few days, and they completely contradict each other. Typical of Trump. He doesn't care if he says one thing one day and says the total opposite thing the next day. The American people know he is lying to them. He doesn't care.

Trump is incapable given his way, his lack of concern for facts, his only concern being his own ego. He is incapable of ending the war, incapable of cleaning up his own mess.

Republicans need to stop buying the BS, show some spine, and help us bring our servicemembers home.

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.

The majority whip.

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#### ENERGY

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, 12 years ago, Barack Obama drew a target on the back of American energy producers and, specifically, coal. Coal mines were under attack by the Obama administration, and his deliberate goal was to kill clean, affordable coal—the most available, reliable, secure source of energy we have in this Nation.

He tried to do it by shutting down coal mines all across the Nation and do it by shutting down coal powerplants that use that coal. And one of the targets that he painted on the back was that of the Dave Johnston Power Plant in Converse County, WY.

Now, the Dave Johnston Power Plant uses Wyoming coal. Our coal is some of the cleanest, most affordable, most available, most reliable coal in the world. It is low-sulfur coal. People around the world want to use Wyoming coal in coal-fired powerplants. It supports hundreds of good-paying jobs. It delivers affordable, available, reliable energy all across the Rocky Mountain West.

Obama wanted to take a sledgehammer to coal powerplants and, specifically, to the Dave Johnston Power Plant in Wyoming, and it was scheduled to close at the end of 2027.

Now, fortunately, the Trump administration has reversed the Democrats' harmful, heavyhanded regulations. The Dave Johnston Plant will keep its doors open. The jobs will be protected. The power it produces will continue to keep the lights on for families across the West. This is the difference between Democrats and Republicans.

We just heard the minority leader come to the floor and talk about costs. Well, let me tell you, Democrats love