

lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 6644, a bill to increase the supply of housing in America, and for other purposes, with amendment No. 5823.

John Thune, Tim Scott of South Carolina, Katie Boyd Britt, Pete Ricketts, John Barrasso, Bernie Moreno, Tim Sheehy, Mike Crapo, Joni Ernst, John Cornyn, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Jon Husted, Mike Rounds, John Boozman, Jim Banks, John R. Curtis, Lindsey Graham.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the mandatory quorum call under rule XXII has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 6644, a bill to increase the supply of housing in America, and for other purposes, with amendment No. 5823, offered by the Senator from South Dakota, Mr. THUNE, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) and the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) would have voted "yea."

Mr. SCHUMER. I announce that the Senator from Maryland (Ms. ALSOBROOKS), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET), the Senator from Delaware (Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER), the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN), and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) are necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 84, nays 8, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 180 Leg.]

YEAS—84

Baldwin	Gallego	Merkley
Banks	Gillibrand	Moody
Barrasso	Graham	Moran
Blackburn	Grassley	Moreno
Blumenthal	Hagerty	Murkowski
Booker	Hassan	Murphy
Boozman	Hawley	Murray
Britt	Heinrich	Ossoff
Budd	Hickenlooper	Padilla
Cantwell	Hirono	Peters
Capito	Husted	Reed
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Ricketts
Collins	Justice	Risch
Coons	Kaine	Rosen
Cornyn	Kennedy	Rounds
Cortez Masto	Kim	Sanders
Cotton	King	Schatz
Cramer	Klobuchar	Schiff
Crapo	Lankford	Schmitt
Curtis	Lujan	Schumer
Daines	Lummis	Scott (SC)
Ernst	Markey	Shaheen
Fetterman	Marshall	Sheehy
Fischer	McCormick	Slotkin

Smith	Van Hollen	Welch
Sullivan	Warner	Whitehouse
Thune	Warnock	Wicker
Tillis	Warren	Wyden

NAYS—8

Armstrong	Lee	Tuberville
Cruz	Paul	Young
Johnson	Scott (FL)	

NOT VOTING—8

Alsobrooks	Duckworth	Kelly
Bennet	Durbin	McConnell
Blunt Rochester	Hoeven	

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. On this vote, the yeas are 84, the nays are 8.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, cloture on the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment with an amendment numbered 5823 is agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Missouri.

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE REAFFIRMATION ACT OF 2026

Mr. SCHMITT. Mr. President, on July 4, 1776, 56 men crossed a line from which there was no return. These men knew the King they defied. They knew the empire would come for them. They knew the prisons that could hold them and the gallows that could take them. They had wives, children, homes, names, property, and honor. They signed anyway. They made a bold declaration to the world that had never been made before. It was, in fact, revolutionary.

Our rights come from God. Government rests on consent. Citizens are not subjects. America is a nation. Those truths made America possible, and every generation that inherits America must decide whether or not those truths still command it. That is why I rise today in support of repassing the Declaration of Independence.

The declaration is America's birth certificate. It is the first great act of an American union. It is the character of a free people. It is the public oath by which 13 Colonies became one American nation. It presupposes America is one people, and that matters because a people is more than a population. A people has memory. A people has duties. A people receives an inheritance and decides whether to defend it.

The declaration is the public oath of a people who knew it had received an inheritance and would have to defend it. It is an oath of liberty under God. It is an oath of self-government under law. It is an oath of one people bound across generations, accountable to the Creator, responsible for the Republic, and charged to carry freedom forward. That oath still binds us. That errand has not expired.

America's deepest crisis is a loss of memory. We do not lack experts; we lack fathers. We do not lack managers; we lack patriots. We do not need more people trained to administer decline. We need citizens formed to love and defend the good.

The Constitution can divide power. It cannot supply virtue. That is why the declaration still matters. It tells every King, every court, every Agency, every President, every Congress, and every officeholder the same exact thing: Your power is borrowed. Your authority is limited. Your office exists to serve a people whose rights you did not create and cannot erase.

A Congress that forgets the declaration forgets why Congress has power at all. The truths of the declaration entered history through flesh-and-blood men—men with names, men with families, men with property, reputations, and everything to lose.

Adams saw the break before others would name it. Jefferson gave cause its words. Franklin faced danger with wisdom and wit. Hancock signed with a boldness that made caution look small.

They were men in danger. They acted when delay would have been easy. They acted when fear could have been dressed up as prudence. They acted because the hour had arrived.

Heroes see that line. Then they cross it. The first American heroes chose sacred honor over safe submission. They acted when the safe men counseled waiting.

Heroes do not wait for permission from the powerful. Heroes do not ask whether courage is fashionable. Heroes do not poll cowardice before obeying duty. Liberty was won by men who risked everything. America was born from courage, conviction, duty, and faith in almighty God.

The oldest lie in politics says that the many exist for the few. The declaration broke that lie. Once they signed, the words had to travel. A declaration made in the name of people had to reach the people. Then the declaration moved. Copies went out on a rider. They entered churches, courthouses, taverns, army camps, town squares, and homes. The declaration belonged to the people before it belonged to the archives.

Americans had to hear they were free. They had to hear what freedom would require. One of those copies reached George Washington in New York, where he was preparing to face the empire the signers had defied. He had it read aloud to the army. His men already knew what they were fighting for. They had left their farms, their shops, their families, and their homes because they knew liberty was worth the cost.

But now Congress has spoken for the country. Now their cause had been declared before the world. The British were coming. The army was raw, exposed, and outmatched. So Washington put the words before his men. He let them hear from the voice of their own Congress that they were no longer fighting for grievances; they were fighting for a nation of their own.

At Valley Forge, men endured because liberty demanded endurance. They endured because their children deserved more than submission. They

endured because they knew a free people could survive if courage did not fail.

Patrick Henry said it best when he gave his countrymen the choice every free people eventually faces:

[G]ive me liberty, or give me death!

The same fire moved beyond the army. It entered the life of the people. It traveled wherever Americans carried the sense and cause of liberty. It moved from hand to hand, from town to town, from father to son, from battlefield to courthouse, from pulpit to schoolhouse. Then it moved west.

As the American people moved west, the Declaration moved with them. It moved into river towns, frontier trails, farms, churches, courthouses, and homes.

I come from the great State of Missouri. In Missouri, we know the Declaration did not stay on the Atlantic coast. It moved through St. Louis and Jefferson City. It moved with Lewis and Clark. It moved with Daniel Boone and the frontier families who cut homes out of the wilderness. It moved with farmers and soldiers and preachers, rivermen, mothers, fathers, shopkeepers, builders, and pioneers.

It inspired the naming of Missouri towns like Liberty, Independence, and Defiance. Missouri is what the Declaration looks like when it walks west and builds a country.

America was made by people like that, a nation that builds, a nation that discovers, a nation that dares, a nation that refuses to live on its knees.

Our ancestors did not fight, bleed, freeze, build, plant, sail, preach, settle, invent, and die so their descendants could be taught to apologize for existing. That inheritance now rests in our hands, and too many powerful voices in this country teach the next generation to receive it with suspicion instead of gratitude.

We are done being ashamed of America.

We love our country. We honor the men that built it. We give thanks for the inheritance they placed in our hands, and we intend to keep it. America 250 is a time to remember that inheritance and renew national pride.

We can see the damage in the numbers. A generation ago, American pride was nearly universal. After 9/11, more than 90 percent of Americans said they were proud to be an American. Today, Gallup puts that number at 58 percent. PRRI puts it at 51 percent.

On the left, the collapse is even sharper. Gallup found that only 36 percent of Democrats are extremely or very proud to be an American. I take no pleasure in saying that. PRRI puts Democrat pride at 31 percent. Only 28 percent of Democrats say they are proud of America's 250-year history. Only 11 percent say America is the greatest country in the world. Only 27 percent plan to display the American flag this Fourth of July.

That is a national forgetting made visible. Elite culture gives that damage

a vocabulary. A recent essay in the New Yorker Magazine set out to answer the question: Is national pride worth trying to salvage? It asks: Is patriotism problematic?

The most revealing line in that essay is its claim that patriotic education means learning to forget. No serious country—no serious country—can survive that kind of contempt for gratitude.

America does not need historical amnesia; America needs honest memory, memory of sin and sacrifice, failure in correction, courage in renewal, fathers and sons, graves and glory, memories strong enough to produce citizens.

That phrase reveals the deeper fight. A fight over patriotism is a fight over memory. Memory matters. A people that forget its heroes will soon be ruled by men who despise them.

A nation that sneers at its fathers will leave its children orphans. A republic that mocks sacrifice will produce citizens unworthy of freedom. The dead, the living, and the unborn are joined in one chain of obligation; we receive before we create, we owe before we choose, we hand down what we did not make.

That is why citizenship is not just paperwork. That is why borders matter. That is why children matter. That is why memory matters. That is why the Declaration matters.

Memory carries authority with it. A people that remembers its inheritance also remembers its right to govern. The Declaration says the people are sovereign; no king, no queen, the people.

The modern regime says the people are a problem to be managed. That is the fight. A great nation needs men who can say what is true. The old founding is enough. The question is whether we are enough for it.

Calvin Coolidge gave that truth its anniversary form 100 years ago. He said:

If all men are created equal, that is final. If they are all endowed with inalienable rights, that is final. If governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, that is final.

And that is final. No real progress moves beyond those truths. Every movement away from them leads us backwards.

Coolidge said that in America's 150th. We stand at the threshold of her 250th. America 250 cannot become a fireworks show arranged by people embarrassed by their country. A nation cannot celebrate its birthday while forgetting why it was born in the first place.

America 250 should tell the country one thing: The founding was good, the Declaration is true, and the American people still have the right to govern themselves. The American people are real. The American flag is not a symbol of shame. The American Nation is not an administrative unit.

Our Republic is the greatest inheritance ever placed in the hands of a free people. We should act like it. We

should speak like it. We should teach like it. We should govern like it. That is why Congress should act. That is why the Declaration should be spoken again from the center of American government.

America is the country of Washington's army and Jefferson's pen, of Adams' fire and Franklin's wit, of Hancock's signature and Henry's thunder, of Lexington and Concord, of the Delaware crossing, of Valley Forge, of river towns and frontier trails, of farms and factories, of steeples and courthouses, of soldiers and sheriffs, of mothers and fathers, of sons and daughters who deserve a country of their own.

America lives because real people—real people—carried a real inheritance across real farms, frontiers, battlefields, churches, courthouses, and graves. This is America: a nation, a people, a place, a bold declaration, a grand experiment, an inheritance, a duty, a country with a soul.

That country is now in our hands. We were asked to prove that the blood, labor, prayer, sacrifice, and courage of those who came before us were not wasted on a generation too timid to say what is true.

Let Congress repass the Declaration of Independence. Let the American people hear it again. Let the children of this Republic learn that they are heirs to heroes.

Let the enemies of this Republic learn that Americans still know who they are, and let this generation take its place in the long line of patriots who understood that freedom is inherited only when it is fought for.

Mr. President, notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 4828, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HAGERTY). The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 4828) to reaffirm the Declaration of Independence as an Organic Law of the United States.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. SCHMITT. I ask unanimous consent 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. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (S. 4828) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 4828

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Declaration of Independence Reaffirmation Act of 2026".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) On July 4, 1776, the Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence.

(2) The Declaration of Independence announced that the United States of America were free and independent States.

(3) The Declaration of Independence declares that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, and that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed.

(4) The Declaration of Independence is recognized among the Organic Laws of the United States.

(5) The Northwest Ordinance was adopted by the Congress of the Confederation in 1787, and was thereafter reenacted by the First Congress in 1789, so that it could continue to have full effect under the Constitution of the United States.

(6) Congress has authority to recognize, reaffirm, and carry forward the foundational laws and principles of the American political order.

(7) The 250th anniversary of American independence calls upon Congress to reaffirm the Declaration of Independence as the charter of American sovereignty, natural rights, equal citizenship, and government by consent.

(8) The Constitution of the United States gives lawful form and enduring structure to the principles of republican self-government announced in the Declaration of Independence.

(9) The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States together establish a political order in which the people are sovereign and public officers are their servants.

(10) The Declaration of Independence presupposes that Americans are "one people" with the right to govern themselves as a distinct political community, to preserve their national independence, and to secure the rights and liberties of their own citizens.

SEC. 3. REAFFIRMATION OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

Congress reaffirms and re-adopts the Declaration of Independence as an Organic Law of the United States and as the enduring charter of American independence, national sovereignty, natural rights, equal citizenship, and government by consent.

SEC. 4. TEXT OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

In commemoration of the 250th anniversary of American independence, Congress sets forth the text of the Declaration of Independence as follows:

"The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,

"When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed, by their Creator, with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.—That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed,—That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should

not be changed for light and transient causes; and, accordingly, all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves, by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.—Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having, in direct object, the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

"He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

"He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and, when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

"He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the Right of Representation in the Legislature; a right inestimable to them, and formidable to tyrants only.

"He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their Public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

"He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

"He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative Powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining, in the meantime, exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

"He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose, obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

"He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary Powers.

"He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

"He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our People, and eat out their substance.

"He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies, without the Consent of our legislatures.

"He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil Power.

"He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our Constitution and unacknowledged by our Laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

"For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:

"For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:

"For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:

"For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:

"For depriving us, in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury:

"For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences:

"For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries, so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies:

"For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:

"For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

"He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

"He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

"He is, at this time, transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation, and tyranny, already begun, with circumstances of Cruelty and Perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

"He has constrained our fellow Citizens, taken Captive on the high Seas, to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

"He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes, and conditions.

"In every stage of these Oppressions, We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

"Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them, from time to time, of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native Justice and Magnanimity, and We have conjured them, by the ties of our common kindred, to disavow these usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They, too, have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as We hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

"We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name and by the Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be, Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown; and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved; and that, as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do.

"And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, We mutually pledge to each

other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.”

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHMITT. Mr. President, I ask that the Senate proceed to executive session and the Chair execute the order with respect to the Holding nomination at 1:45 p.m. today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of George Holding, of North Carolina, to be United States Director of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

FATHER'S DAY

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I have come to this floor many times to be able to talk about a lot of serious policy issues, to be able to walk through all different kinds of tax policy, energy policy, immigration policy. We have worked through a lot of different issues on this floor, and I have had the opportunity to be able to speak on a lot of issues.

I don't often take time just to be able to pause and talk about a cultural issue. I want to do that today.

This weekend, the Nation will pause and celebrate Father's Day. Now, this will be the 116th year of celebrating Father's Day in America; the 54th year since it was officially recognized as an official Federal holiday.

It is kind of a big deal. Every human being on Earth has a mom and a dad. You may or may not know them, but it does take two to tango, they say, and every single person does have a mom and a dad.

There are a lot of dads that are separated, and there is a lot of disjointedness. What we are watching in culture is culture pushing back on men, to challenge men to be better dads. I applaud a good thing that is happening in culture with that.

We are literally seeing the statistics on this. The numbers on it bear out. Literally in this generation of dads right now, they are three times more likely to spend more time with their kids than the dads during the 1960s.

It is an interesting shift that is happening. We have fewer dads out there, but the dads that are there in America are looking at their kids and saying: I want to spend more time with them.

Good. We need more engaged dads. Quite frankly, being a dad is a courageous job and a challenging job but exceptionally important. And it is not

just being a breadwinner, it is not just being a disciplinarian, it is just being there for their child.

I first want to say happy Father's Day to my own dad, but I also want to be able to challenge all dads that are out there to turn to your kids and to rededicate again, not just this weekend, but to rededicate again to actually spending more time with your kids because healthy families are the most basic building block of culture.

I have said it to people over and over again: Healthy families make healthy communities, make a healthy nation.

And when I hear people complain about the status of where we are as a nation, I have to tell you, the first place that I look are dads and to say how are dads doing because dads will define a tremendous amount of the strength of our Nation and the strength of our culture.

If dads back away from their families, families get weaker, communities get weaker, the Nation gets weaker.

If dads are engaged with their kids and with their families, the Nation gets stronger, communities get stronger.

Now, it is not just me speaking on this; I mean, you can go to any statistic that you want to be able to go to. The research out there for youth and adult offenders, between—depending on a State and a place—between 70 percent and 85 percent of incarcerated individuals do not have a dad in their life. They came from fatherless homes.

Around 85 percent of the abortions that happen in our country, year to year, happen with a single mom when no dad is around and no man is around—85 percent. That is a woman who is making an incredibly difficult decision to take the life of the child, often because she is afraid she will not have the resources or the support to be able to support this child, and so she makes this decision to take the life of a child instead.

I have a friend of mine that often says behind every abortion is an irresponsible man. Dads, dads are important.

Now, it is not something we can legislate, though I would tell you there are initiatives that are out there. Right now there is fatherhood.gov if people want to go to that site that encourages ideas for dads. It is not just up for Father's Day, it is up all the time. And people can go to fatherhood.org. Right now, the Ad Council is running an ad campaign across the entire country that just is called “Be a Good Dad Today.”

That is cultural encouragement on these things. But there are also things that we are working on as well: marriage penalty, for instance, in our tax law. If there are areas of our tax law that actually give you greater benefit not being married than married, those things need to be fixed. And there are several of those.

The Brookings Institute for years has asked the most basic question: How

does someone rise out of poverty? If someone is born in poverty, how do they rise out of poverty? For years, they have done this study, and the same three things rise up over and over again every time they do this study: if you graduate high school, if you have a job of any type, and if you wait until after marriage to have children. If those three things are true, 97 percent chance you rise out of poverty.

That is someone making good decisions, and it allows the next generation to also be successful as well. That is just good tax policy to be able to incentivize ways that we can keep families together and to encourage families in that way.

The Trump administration has also made some changes to be able to encourage more dads to make alimony payments; if there is a divorce that happens and a child is there, for the dad to make sure he is providing alimony.

It is incredibly important to that woman, that mom, that is raising those kids to still have the financial support and for that dad to still show his financial support, I hope, as well as his love and encouragement to those kids. The Trump administration is now saying if a dad is not paying child support, they can't get a passport, and if a dad is not paying child support, they can have their tax refund, if they are getting that, withheld. Good for them to be able to encourage that man to be able to be responsible as well.

But, ultimately, you can't legislate being a good dad. That is a decision that a man makes. Now, I would tell you, I have talked to men, and they have said: Hey, I didn't have a man in my life and so it is tough to be able to learn how to do that.

I have talked to plenty of folks in churches and in communities and friends and neighbors that are just encouraging other dads to be able to be a better dad. It is a good gift to the next generation to be able to do that.

I will tell you this, pure and simple: Every child needs a mom. Every child needs a dad. There is no substitute. Many people in this body know I am a former youth pastor, and I would have parents that came up to me all the time and say: You are such an influence on my child for teaching and role modeling. And I would say that is very kind, but there is no influence that is a bigger influence on a child than their mom and dad. The path of their life will be set by their mom or dad.

So dads should not think it is somebody else's responsibility; it is theirs. If the next generation is going to be patriotic, if the next generation is going to love God, if the next generation is going to make good decisions, if the next generation is going to have a hard work ethic, if the next generation is going to learn to be kind, if the next generation is going to stand up for what is right, it is going to be because a dad invested that into that child's life.