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Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, the fountain of wisdom, You are more majestic than the mountains and steadfast through all generations. Give the Members of this Senate a deep reverence for You that will motivate them to seek Your will above personal interests or partisan advantage.

Lord, grant them wisdom in their deliberations, integrity in their judgments, and courage in their leadership. Help them to listen with respect, speak with truth, and act with justice. May they remember the trust placed in them by the people of this Nation and faithfully pursue Your purposes.

When challenges seem overwhelming, strengthen their resolve. When differences arise, guide them toward understanding. When difficult decisions must be made, illuminate a path of righteousness and peace. Bless this Senate, this Nation, and all who serve the public. May Your wisdom guide every effort and Your grace sustain every worthy endeavor.

We pray in Your saving Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. MOODY). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

21ST CENTURY ROAD TO HOUSING ACT—Resumed

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the House message to accompany H.R. 6644, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant executive clerk read as follows:

House message to accompany H.R. 6644, a bill to increase the supply of housing in America, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Thune motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to the bill, with Thune (for Scott (SC)/Warren) Amendment No. 5823 (to the House amendment to the Senate amendment), in the nature of a substitute.

Thune Amendment No. 5824 (to Amendment No. 5823), to change the enactment date.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

IRAN

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, 1 week in June, 4 in July, 3 in September—that is the number of weeks the Senate is in session between now and the election. A lot of people think a lot of things need to be done between now and the election, and I agree with that.

But those weeks I just named add up to about 21 days that the Senate is going to be in session; a lot of work to be done in 21 days. I can think of one I am interested in—E15, for the agricultural economy of Iowa.

Another Senator spoke to me about the necessity of getting some control of college athletes in legislation that is pending and doing that before the beginning of the college football season.

So I hope my colleagues will think about that there is not a whole lot of time left and use it very efficiently.

Last week, President Trump signed a deal to end the hostilities between the United States and Iran. That deal could be called a memorandum of understanding, as it is so named, or you could look at it as a letter of intent.

Let's remember what Operation Epic Fury was all about: preventing the Iranian regime, which has chanted "Death to America" for 47 years, from having a nuclear weapon.

"Death to America" is death to Americans. We have seen it as the alert threat is up. If you had the secure briefings that I have had, you would be very thoughtful about what can come from Tehran to affect Americans.

We have seen it, two people shot in Austin, TX, by a person that had "Allah is great" on his sweatshirt, and we saw it, two bombs thrown in Brooklyn that didn't go off that would have killed a lot of people.

So with the peace agreement at hand, the devil is in the details. While key details are set to be finalized within 60 days, Congress will and must keep a very close eye to ensure that Iran is held accountable every step of the way.

Accountability starts with facts, because we have heard these absurd claims from opponents of the Iranian war, suggesting that Iran has never been better off. The facts don't back that claim up.

Under President Trump's direction, America's military has put a massive dent in Iran's nuclear program, military arsenals, and its energy and transportation infrastructure.

What is more, Iran's economy is buckling with hyperinflation. The United States naval blockade in the Strait of Hormuz cost Iran up to \$500 million per day, and by early May, Iran lost \$4.8 billion in oil revenue.

In May, inflation in Iran reached 77 percent, and the cost of basic goods in Iran has risen as much as 400 percent in a year.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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The currency in Iran has also plummeted to historically low levels. In late April, their currency hit a record low of 1.8 million to the dollar and remained at historically low levels.

Now you put all that together, and the picture is pretty clear. That is not a thriving nation; it is a nation facing total collapse. And that is exactly why we need to pay attention as the United States and Iran continues these negotiations because when a country is under this kind of pressure, it changes what it is willing to do and raises the stakes for getting this agreement right in the first place.

So we shouldn't take anything at face value. We must verify, and we should judge this agreement by what Iran does, not what it promises, because in a situation like this, pressure alone doesn't guarantee results; only accountability guarantees results.

And then you always have to keep in the back of your mind that people in that part of the world consider those of us in the Western World as infidels, and you don't have to keep an agreement with infidels.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. Madam 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 majority leader is recognized.

WORKING FAMILIES TAX CUT ACT

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, we are approaching 1 year since the Working Families Tax Cut became law. For nearly a year now, the American people have been seeing the benefits of this bill, from a more secure border to a stronger military, larger paychecks and bigger refunds, support for farmers and ranchers, and a lifeline for struggling rural healthcare providers.

For the past year, the story of the Working Families Tax Cut has been unfolding across the country in different ways. And this afternoon, I want to talk about how Republicans' landmark bill has strengthened our economy and put more money in America's pockets.

When this Republican majority took over last year, the American people were reeling from the pain of the Biden economy. They had suffered through an inflation crisis, during which the cost of living increased by more than 20 percent in just a few years. And without action from Congress, they were looking at a \$4 trillion tax hike in the not-too-distant future.

For folks from my home State, that would have meant paying \$2,500 more in Federal taxes this year, and that was completely unacceptable to Republicans. And so we set out to prevent that tax hike and not just prevent it, we made our 2017 tax reform permanent so that that tax hike would never come.

And then we provided additional tax relief to lower and middle-income Americans so they would be able to keep more of their hard-earned money. Thanks to the Working Families Tax Cut, 97 percent of Americans that filed this year got a tax cut.

Let me repeat that. Republicans prevented a tax hike for 97 percent of tax filers, collectively saving them \$82 billion on their Federal taxes just this year.

We made lower tax rates permanent, raised the standard deduction, and made that permanent as well. We increased the child tax credit to \$2,200 and linked it to the cost of living so that it never loses its value. Then we created a number of new tax-relief provisions. The new senior deduction helped 35 million Americans over age 65 reduce their tax burden this year.

No tax on tips meant that 7.5 million workers' income from tips landed in their pockets instead of going to the IRS. And 29 million workers—from nurses to police officers and factory workers—took advantage of the new overtime deduction.

All told, Americans earning between \$100,000 and \$200,000 last year who took advantage of the new tax relief saw an average tax cut of \$1,250.

A bakery owner in Sioux Falls said her head chef got a bigger refund this year and that she was able to put that extra money toward a crib for her new baby and she is not the only one. Hard-working people all across the country have additional money to put toward their expenses or their savings thanks to Republican tax relief.

The good news doesn't stop there. The Working Families Tax Cut also delivered meaningful pro-growth tax reforms for Americans' small businesses, farms, and ranches, enabling them to invest more in their operations and in their employees.

Small businesses have benefited from lower tax rates, and the 199A small business deduction is now a permanent feature of the Tax Code. One agricultural co-op in my State estimates the impact of that one provision helped its co-op members reinvest more than \$100 million into our local economy in the last 10 years.

Then there is 100 percent immediate expensing for new equipment, which allows small businesses, farms, and ranches to deduct the whole cost of any piece of equipment the year they start using it. The owner of Montgomery's Furniture Store in Sioux Falls, SD, called bonus appreciation a "huge, huge deal" for his furniture store.

And a car dealer in my State said this enabled his business to build an addition and to hire 10 new employees. And then our permanent research and development tax credit is making a similar impact on small businesses in my State and on our farm economy.

In fact, our former colleague, a neighbor to the north in North Dakota, former Democrat Senator Heidi Heitkamp has said:

For many producers and ag-related businesses, this is more than a tax break; this is a real opportunity to reinvest, innovate, and stay competitive.

She is right, and the same could be said for a good number of provisions in this bill.

I have already talked a little bit about how tax relief we passed benefits farmers and ranchers. And although I haven't mentioned the higher estate tax threshold that protects a lot more family farms and ranchers from the death tax, not to mention the costly estate planning that comes with that unfair tax, but this bill went further than tax relief; it strengthened critical programs that producers depend upon.

It raised reference prices for every covered commodity so that they more closely reflect the actual market conditions that farmers are dealing with. It bolstered crop insurance, and it supported livestock producers by making existing programs more responsive to drought.

We still have more work to do to strengthen the ag sector, but the Working Families Tax Cut delivered meaningful relief to farmers after a challenging few years, defined by higher input costs, higher interest rates, and national disasters—all while many farm programs were inadequate to meet the circumstances that farmers were living in. So helping our ag producers was a priority for Republicans when we came in last year, and it will continue to be a priority for us moving forward.

RURAL HEALTHCARE

Madam President, I have spent a lot of time this afternoon talking about how Republicans aim to turn things around with this bill, and there is one more thing I want to discuss before I finish, and that is rural healthcare.

For all the challenges in healthcare today, it is even harder for rural providers. More than 100 rural hospitals have closed in the last two decades, and doctors in rural areas can be hard to come by.

So last year in the Working Families Tax Cut, Republicans did something to address the rural healthcare crisis. And in the last year, every single State has applied for funding from the \$50 billion Rural Health Transformation Program created by our landmark bill.

Rather than a top-down, Washington-based approach, we are giving States the resources and freedom to find solutions to their unique challenges and to find sustainable ways of ensuring access to healthcare in their rural communities.

And as I said, the response has been robust. Every single State—red, blue, and purple—is planning to take advantage of this much needed support, and they have big plans for folks in rural parts of their States. And I can't wait to see just how transformative the Rural Health Transformation Program is across this country.

It is fair to say that things weren't going great in a lot of ways the last

few years before President Trump and Republicans took control in Washington, but we have been working to address those issues and implement solutions to the problems facing the American people. And far from patting ourselves on the back, we are keeping our foot on the gas.

Later today, we will pass a housing affordability bill. The Agriculture Committee is continuing to work on a farm bill and additional agricultural relief, and we continue important legislative efforts on issues from cryptocurrency to artificial intelligence, to reining in waste, fraud, and abuse in the Federal Government.

One year ago, Republicans delivered major wins for the American people in the Working Families Tax Cut, and we are working every day to build on that success and to deliver again and again.

I yield the floor.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The minority whip.

TORNADOES

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, there are memories you have as a child which you never, ever forget. And one of my memories was growing up, smack-dab in the Midwest, in the middle of our country, and the experience I had as a child when my mother would wake me in the middle of the night, and I would hear the tornado sirens blaring. And she would say: Get down to the basement.

The basement was our shelter for the potential of a tornado hitting our home. That was part of growing up in the Midwest. But I thought it was a great adventure to go down and sleep in the basement on the spare bed, with the sirens blaring, wondering if our home would be touched. Thank goodness, it never was.

But we have witnessed more tornadoes in our State of Illinois this year than any year in the history of our State. According to the Chicago Tribune, Illinois has experienced more than 147 confirmed tornadoes over the past 6 months, nearly three times the State average of 54 in the last 30 years.

Even in 2024, the previous record year for tornadoes in Illinois, there were only 92 recorded as of June 22, nearly 60 fewer than what we have seen this year.

Over the past weekend alone, as many as 24 separate tornadoes hit Downstate, killing two Illinoisans—Delores Shelton and Sarita Kimble—and injuring many more. My wife and I are praying for the families and friends of Delores and Sarita, as well as for those who were injured in these storms, who are starting the daunting

task of repairing the damage that has been done.

While the traditional tornado season in Illinois will be over at the end of June, tornadoes have become increasingly common in the fall and winter months, in recent years. I can recall recently a tornado in December, unthinkable when I was a child. This was a summer phenomenon—spring and summer.

With the frequency of tornadoes rising across Illinois, it is more important than ever that we in Washington help families rebuild. My office has been in touch with State FEMA officials and is working with those affected by the tornadoes, but I am concerned that FEMA will not display the same level of urgency after its refusal, recently, to assist thousands of Illinoisans impacted by certain severe storms last year.

Disaster relief is no place to play politics, period. I urge FEMA and the Trump administration to put aside political differences with our Governor or anyone—even me—and think about the families who have been touched by tornadoes and how desperate they are to get a helping hand.

I know the Presiding Officer knows this phenomenon well. In her State, hurricanes, of course, and other damage are fairly common and devastating when they hit. You feel so helpless as a Member of the Senate or Congress going to view the damage afterward, and people look at you, waiting for one word or another of encouragement.

And I came to play it down over the years: I will do my best. I will see what you qualify for. I will fight for you to try to help you.

But we ought to make this a bipartisan commitment across the aisle, regardless of the natural disaster. The victims are not playing politics. They are trying to put their lives back on track. That is why I hope we will do the same.

IRAN

Madam President, I want to take a moment to reflect on a rather infamous letter that was sent 11 years ago by the junior Senator from Arkansas to the leaders in Iran. The letter was signed by 46 of his fellow Republican Senators.

What did it say? It, incredibly, warned Iranian leaders about entering into any nuclear agreement with the Obama administration without the approval of Congress.

Let me read an excerpt in which the signers of this letter said:

[They] will consider any agreement regarding your nuclear-weapons program that is not approved by the Congress as nothing more than an executive agreement between President Obama and Ayatollah Khamenei.

Understand what was happening here. We had a coalition of countries from around the world, many of them competitive, not many of them friendly. But they all came together, saying: Stopping Iran from developing a nuclear weapon is the right thing to do.

They negotiated for 2 years on an agreement known as JCPOA, and the

object, among other things, was to have careful inspection and monitoring of nuclear activity in Iran and then have an enforceable agreement to stop them from ever developing a nuclear weapon.

This letter was sent by Republican Members of the Senate, 11 years ago, to the Ayatollah, in the midst of the negotiations, telling him not to take it seriously, dealing with the White House, because the agreement had to be approved by Congress.

The letter sent by the Senator from Arkansas went on to say:

The next President could revoke such an executive agreement with the stroke of a pen and future Congresses can modify the terms of the agreement at any time.

What the Senator from Arkansas was basically saying to the Ayatollah was: Don't waste your time negotiating with this President because we can decide, at a later time, to reverse whatever he decided on.

Forty-seven Republican Senators sent this unprecedented letter, in the midst of a negotiation with Iran, to Iranian leaders during a sensitive period. More than two dozen of those Senators are still here today. Presumably, they are drafting the same letter now to remind the Iranian leadership about the risks of doing any such deal with President Trump as well.

Two months after this letter was sent, Congress overwhelmingly passed the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act with broad bipartisan support. I believe there was only one dissenting vote in the U.S. Senate.

This law, which we passed 11 years ago, requires any nuclear agreement with Iran to be sent to Congress within 5 days for review and a potential privileged vote of approval or disapproval within 30 days. This law is very much applicable today.

That is exactly what happened with the deal signed between Iran and the P5+1 nations during the Obama administration, known as JCPOA.

I remember the debate in the Senate, very clearly, at the time. Republican opponents of the Obama deal in Congress said it was weak, that it awarded Iran with sanctions relief, that it empowered the Revolutionary Guard, and it weakened American security.

In reality, the JCPOA included some of the most intrusive inspections ever agreed upon.

I hosted the IAEA Director General a number of times, after the agreement was implemented, and he said repeatedly that Iran was in compliance with the agreement, which meant he said that, if he pointed to a door and said, "I want to know what is behind that door," they opened it—period, end of quote.

Ultimately, the JCPOA severely restricted Iran's enrichment capabilities at lower levels, notably extending any nuclear weapons breakout time—that is, until President Trump tore it up during his first term as President, leading to Iran's significant expansion of its uranium enrichment capabilities.

Now, after 4 months of hostilities, after an invasion—or attack, let's say—on Iran by the United States, without support of any allies behind Israel, we have reached a point where we spent billions of dollars, 13 American servicemembers have given their lives, and the global economy held hostage.

What do we have to show for it? A negotiation. I hope it ends well. I hope it ends as well as the JCPOA under President Obama. I hope that then the Congress, which was warned by Republican Senators, years ago, and to the Iranians, does its job in oversight, if it is deserving of that.

I am also curious, though: What did we actually achieve at this point?

Remember when he first started this war, alongside Israel back in February? The President gave several different rationales. Destroying Iran's military capabilities was one of his goals. Ending its nuclear ambitions was another. Regime change, even liberating the Iranian people—on each of these issues, we have seen little or no progress. Instead, President Trump seems to have signed an ambiguous deal with terms far more favorable to Iran and more vague than Obama's JCPOA.

Iran is emerging from Trump's ill-conceived war with an ever more emboldened group of belligerents in charge, with the Iranian people continuing to suffer. These regime hardliners suddenly have a new way to blackmail the United States.

When we attacked Iran weeks ago, there was no question about access to the Strait of Hormuz. Now we know it is an issue that is going to be with us for a long, long time. How do we know it? Gasoline prices. American families know exactly what has happened. In the short period of time after President Trump's attack on Iran, the cost of gasoline has gone up dramatically and diesel as well.

So they can bomb American and allied targets in the region and continue to cause mayhem in the Strait of Hormuz with their proxies, but the Iranians are in a stronger position today than when we attacked initially.

They even seem to have blackmailed their way into a \$300 billion reconstruction fund—a commitment from unspecified sources. Who is putting this money on the table?

In the JCPOA under Obama that was being negotiated, that was one of the points made over and over again: Don't give Iran back money that we have held up in American and foreign banks. They will only use it for weapons and use it against us.

We heard over and over again that Obama was selling out.

Now when you look at this memorandum of understanding—and I read it—it says there is going to be some commitment of \$300 billion for a reconstruction fund. Who is going to pay it? The memorandum of understanding is silent.

So where are the howls of dismay and indignation from the Senator from Ar-

kansas and others? After all, President Trump petulantly walked away from a deal that by all accounts was measurably constraining Iran's nuclear program with rigorous inspections. President Trump closed down that agreement in his first term as President. And what is President Trump's replacement? A promise of something, unfortunately, weaker.

As I have said time and time again, it is a lot easier to start a war than it is to end one. We should not be risking any further American lives and taxpayers' dollars on this unnecessary, unconstitutional war.

But let me be as clear as the junior Senator from Arkansas and his 46 colleagues were 11 years ago: The terms of any nuclear agreement with Iran must come to Congress for review as required by the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act. The requirements under this law are not waivable or open to interpretation no matter who the President may be. Until then, the President may not move forward with any sanctions-related relief or final implementation of any agreement.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to hold President Trump to the same standard they held President Obama to 11 years ago.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the letter I referred to from the Senator from Arkansas be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,

Washington, DC, March 9, 2015.

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE LEADERS OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN: It has come to our attention while observing your nuclear negotiations with our government that you may not fully understand our constitutional system. Thus, we are writing to bring to your attention two features of our Constitution—the power to make binding international agreements and the different character of federal offices—which you should seriously consider as negotiations progress.

First, under our Constitution, while the president negotiates international agreements, Congress plays the significant role of ratifying them. In the case of a treaty, the Senate must ratify it by a two-thirds vote. A so-called congressional-executive agreement requires a majority vote in both the House and the Senate (which, because of procedural rules, effectively means a three-fifths vote in the Senate). Anything not approved by Congress is a mere executive agreement.

Second, the offices of our Constitution have different characteristics. For example, the president may serve only two 4-year terms, whereas senators may serve an unlimited number of 6-year terms. As applied today, for instance, President Obama will leave office in January 2017, while most of us will remain in office well beyond then—perhaps decades.

What these two constitutional provisions mean is that we will consider any agreement regarding your nuclear-weapons program that is not approved by the Congress as nothing more than an executive agreement between President Obama and Ayatollah Khamenei. The next president could revoke such an executive agreement with the stroke

of a pen and future Congresses could modify the terms of the agreement at any time.

We hope this letter enriches your knowledge of our constitutional system and promotes mutual understanding and clarity as nuclear negotiations progress.

Sincerely,

Tom Cotton, David A. Perdue, John Cornyn, James M. Inhofe, Mitch McConnell, Marco A. Rubio, Joni Ernst, Richard Burr, Dan Sullivan, Steve Daines, Roger F. Wicker, James Lankford, John Hoeven, John Boozman, Richard Shelby, Cory Gardner, Mike Rounds, Shelley Moore Capito, Thom Tillis, Ron Johnson, Jeff Sessions, Mark Kirk, Chuck Grassley, Lisa Blunt Rochester.

John H. Isakson, John Thune, Michael B. Enzi, James E. Risch, Pat Toomey, Mike Crapo, Bill Cassidy, Deb Fischer, John Barrasso, Ben Sasse, Ted Cruz, David Vitter, Tim Scott of SC, John McCain, Rob Portman, Pat Roberts, Orrin Hatch, Dean Heller, Kelly A. Ayotte, Lindsey Graham, Rand Paul, Mike Lee, Jerry Moran.

Mr. DURBIN. I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

IRAN

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, on Iran, Donald Trump's foreign policy by clown car continues to careen toward disaster. After this failed war with Iran, Trump needs to rename "The Art of the Deal" as "The Art of the Face Plant"—"The Art of the Face Plant." Just days after Trump boasted he had reopened the Strait of Hormuz, Iran announced it was closing the strait again. Trump hasn't been able to guarantee safe passage through the strait yet, but he already has waived the sanctions to allow Iran to bring billions of dollars in oil revenue. Iran gets what it wants; Trump dithers.

Now Trump and VANCE are patting themselves on the back about getting Iran to agree to nuclear inspections that only stopped after Trump's 2025 strikes. And what exactly will this access look like? Trump and VANCE refuse to provide details, just like the rest of this so-called understanding.

Trump's memo of understanding reads like an Iranian wish list. After Trump's war, Iran gets to keep backing its terrorist proxies, to keep building ballistic missiles, to maintain a stranglehold on the global economy, and to rake in hundreds of billions of dollars in reconstruction aid and maritime tolls. Trump got taken to the cleaners by Iran.

The administration keeps telling us not to read too much into the understanding, but there is one thing that is very easy to read: The American people hate this war. They want it to end. Roughly 80 percent of Americans say they want this war to end immediately. Two-thirds—two-thirds—disapprove of how Trump has handled Iran. And can anyone blame them? All the American people have gotten from Trump's war are skyrocketing gas prices at the pump, backbreaking inflation, and the tragic loss of 13 servicemembers and the wounding of hundreds of others.

The story of Trump's ruinous war has been the same since day one: The Iranian regime gets emboldened, the

American people get screwed, and Donald Trump gets himself into a deeper and deeper hole.

The cost of this war will only get worse every second it continues.

We need a full accounting of everything Trump has given away as part of his 14-point understanding. I continue to call on Trump, Secretary Rubio, and the rest of the leadership team to brief the full Senate without delay. It is outrageous that none of us have gotten a briefing yet. Why don't they want to give us a briefing? Are they embarrassed? Is it so vague that they told Iran one thing and will have to tell the world another? Is it because Trump got taken to the cleaners? Is it because Trump is embarrassed to have this understanding fully discussed by the people who put it together? It has been 8 days since this so-called understanding was announced. Why is the administration so scared to come to Congress and the American people and defend their war and their deal?

Trump ought to listen to what Senate Democrats and the American people have been saying for months and end this war for good.

H.R. 6644

Madam President, on housing, as Trump fixates on vanity projects that only he seems to care about, we are advancing our housing bill to address issues Americans actually care about.

As home ownership has gotten further and further out of reach for working families, so is the American dream. As Americans, it is every young family's dream to own their own home. So when they pay money, it builds equity; it builds a future for their retirement, for their kids. Instead of when you pay rent, the money just goes away.

So people want home ownership. But now, the median home buyer in America is 40 years old. The downpayment is excruciating to many and puts housing out of reach for them. A record 242 cities in the United States now have typical starter homes valued at \$1 million or more.

ROAD to Housing helps put our country on the right track towards fixing the housing shortage that is driving up costs. The legislation starts to streamline the zoning bottlenecks that have slowed down construction from one end of the country to the other. The bill also supports new manufacturing of modular housing, as well as the conversion—something really important to New York and to me—the conversion of old office buildings into housing so we can get more homes on the market.

ROAD to Housing also stops institutional investors from squeezing American families out of the housing market.

The ROAD to Housing is a strong start, but it is just the beginning. Democrats will continue to come up with innovative solutions to lower the cost of housing and all other necessities that working families need to achieve that American dream, which seems more out of reach than ever be-

fore because of this administration. We will work with whomever it takes to end the affordability crisis.

So congratulations to Senator WARREN, congratulations to the members of the Banking Committee for their leadership on this bill, and congratulations to all my colleagues on both sides of the aisle who supported it.

FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE SURVEILLANCE ACT

Madam President, on the FISA negotiations, Trump didn't simply move the goalposts, he set fire to the whole stadium with his team still inside. They are sort of rushing out right now.

Trump's plan to visit the Capitol on Wednesday will probably only add fuel to the fire in the GOP. Senate Republicans are in complete disarray on this important issue with Trump blindsiding them everywhere they turn. Trump has embarrassed Senate Republicans every step of the way.

Trump is proudly holding America's national security hostage, demanding the passage of the SAVE Act—the worst anti-voting rights legislation he has ever dreamed up, and that is a high bar—and he wants it as ransom. In attaching the SAVE Act to FISA, Trump is saying he won't make America secure unless we abandon our voting rights.

What a trade. You want to be more secure? Give up on your voting rights. What a horrible bargain. Only Trump could come up with something this mendacious.

If Trump wants to blow up his own party, so be it. But threatening our national security just to disenfranchise millions of Americans and to install an inexperienced political hack like Pulte as DNI is reckless even for Trump.

REFLECTING POOL

Madam President, on the reflecting pool, Donald Trump has just handed Americans a perfect picture of his Presidency: Families are drowning in bills, and Trump is drowning in reflecting pool algae.

Americans are losing their homes. They are cutting back at the grocery store. They are walking to work because gasoline is expensive.

And Trump's top priority right now is cleaning up the reflecting pool. Give me a break.

How many hours did Trump spend last week talking about lowering costs, about helping families, about making life easier for working Americans? Compare that to how many hours did Trump spend talking about the reflecting pool? It ain't pretty.

America needs a President right now, not a pool boy. Trump's priorities are completely out of whack. He still manages to screw up something as trivial as the reflecting pool. It is a tale as old as time in Trump's Washington: Trump ignores the experts, jumps at the first idea that pops into his head, gives a buddy a no-bid contract at the taxpayers' expense, and then blames invisible enemies when his stupid ideas fail.

Trump handpicked the personal pool guy for his hotels to helm the project.

It doesn't matter whether the job is leading the Pentagon or fixing the reflecting pool, the only criteria Trump cares about is that you are his crony or you look good on TV. Qualifications have nothing to do with it.

Every day, Trump, his administration, the Republican Party, and America pay the price. When you have such unqualified people, you always pay the price, Donald Trump.

If Trump devoted the same amount of time to cleaning up the corruption in his own administration as he does to cleaning up the reflecting pool, maybe his approval ratings wouldn't be at a record low. Trump's reflecting pool debacle is so unbelievably stupid, it would be funny, except the taxpayers are paying for it.

Trump hasn't drained the swamp. He has made it even filthier than ever and invited his cronies in to take a swim.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum. The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. BRITT). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from North Dakota.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY MUSEUM ARTIFACTS ACT

Mr. HOEVEN. Madam President, notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be discharged from further consideration of S. 675 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 675) to contribute funds and artifacts to the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library in Medora, North Dakota.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. HOEVEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the substitute amendment, which is at the desk, be considered and agreed to; that the bill, as amended, 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 amendment (No. 5897), in the nature of a substitute, was agreed to as follows:

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute)

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library Act".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) FOUNDATION.—The term "Foundation" means the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library Foundation.