

Charles Schwab has said he will match the government's \$1,000 with another \$1,000 for all the people who work at his company.

These are just a couple of examples of how philanthropists are working together with the U.S. Government to be able to kick-start young people's American dreams through these Trump Accounts.

In my home State of Nebraska, our State government is going to open accounts for all the foster kids in Nebraska. These Fostering the Future Accounts will work just the same, making sure that young Nebraskans in foster care have a little extra financial help. This money is so that these young Nebraskans can put it toward college, buying their first home, or starting a business.

For children whose accounts start with \$1,000, additional contributions will not be required. The accounts will still grow, and these accounts will help launch those kids into their future.

Another way we are investing in our children and families is with the expansion of the child tax credits. In the Working Families Tax Cut, we increased that child tax credit to \$2,200 and made it permanent. It was set to fall to \$1,000, but Senate Republicans made it permanent and took it up.

The child tax credit will benefit over 239,000 Nebraska families. Increasing the child tax credit allows these families to have more money in their pockets, and we want to encourage Americans to work hard and support their families. This is what keeps the American dream alive.

The Working Families Tax Cut also provides an increase in the child and dependent tax credit. We increased the maximum credit from 25 percent up to 50 percent, and we took the increased tax deduction up from \$5,000 to \$7,500.

We made the first ever permanent paid family medical leave credit, based on legislation from Senator DEB FISCHER. This will encourage our businesses to offer that benefit to families all across the Nation.

We expanded the tax credits for employee-provided childcare and created new credits for small businesses to be able to create childcare at work.

We also extended the ABLE accounts, which otherwise would have expired in 2025. These accounts help individuals with disabilities to save and invest through tax-free savings, without losing eligibility for Federal programs like Medicaid and Supplemental Security Income.

These are real investments in American families and the next generation.

And similar to my colleague from Wyoming who pointed this out, every single Democrat—every single one—voted against these provisions that would help young Americans be able to achieve the American dream. Every single Democrat voted against it.

Senate Republicans, by contrast, are fighting in the U.S. Senate to renew opportunity for our kids' futures and

supporting families in our country. We are encouraging and supporting the American dream, and we are making it possible for the good life to be more attainable for all Nebraskans.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). The Senator from Delaware.

AMERICA250

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, 50 years ago this Saturday, our Nation celebrated its bicentennial—its 200th anniversary of that day on the 4th of July, in 1776, when a group of Delegates from around the then-Thirteen Colonies gathered to declare their independence from Great Britain.

This coming Saturday, July 4, 2026, I will once again be gathering with a whole group of friends and family in the small town of Hockessin, DE, where I celebrated our bicentennial.

In 1976, we had what some might think of as a sad small gathering that celebrated the Fourth of July. It wasn't huge. It didn't have tens of thousands of people. It didn't have great fireworks. But it was the heart of the town I grew up in.

We had a parade. We had firetrucks. My Boy Scout troop marched. I played the bugle as a group from a local church raised a flag at the new Swift Memorial Park in downtown Hockessin, a small rural farming town of then about 1,500 people.

And this coming Saturday, I will conclude the Fourth of July by, once again, marching in the annual parade, where we will have firetrucks from our volunteer fire company, children from different Scouting groups, different church youth groups, different things like the 4-H and the Grange, and thousands of people, gathering with family, on either side of Old Wilmington Pike to view the parade go by.

I love the tradition of the Fourth of July parade in my hometown of Hockessin, and I wanted to just take a moment and reflect because, as I have talked to my team here in Washington and at home in Delaware, some of them see so much division in our country that they aren't excited about our semiquincentennial, our 250th. Some of them are distracted, as in some ways I think many in America are, by fighting, squabbling between our President and our Congress, between different political parties. And it is too easy to be distracted.

I will remind you that, 50 years ago, on our bicentennial, our country was also in a period of division and political controversy, that we had just come out of the end of the Vietnam war and Watergate, that there had been protests and disagreement, that there were different rights being asserted and tumult in our politics.

My recollection, as a child, was that that day, that period of the bicentennial, was actually a moment for the American people to stop and reflect and think about what brings us together. And so today, I will briefly reflect on what I think we ought to be

stopping and reflecting on as we celebrate our 250th.

Mr. President, 250 years ago, where we are right now was part of Great Britain, was part of the English Empire. In looking back, it might seem inevitable, but at that time, it was uncertain which way we would go. Ultimately, we chose liberty, we chose independence, and we had to fight for it in what became a long and brutal, internally divisive conflict.

Ultimately, the American story is not simply one story. We are a nation founded not on one ethnicity or one language, one religion or one history, but on an idea—an idea embodied in the second sentence of the declaration:

We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, [and] . . . endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.

Just a few days ago, I had the chance, over at the Library of Congress, along with a bunch of my colleagues, to see the original text of the Declaration of Independence and the changes made by different Framers.

Our story is stronger when we tell it in its entirety—the good and bad, the challenging chapters, the rough places, the foundational sins, the wrongs and the arc—the arc—toward “a more perfect Union.”

My State has long played a central role in some of these fights over the abolition of slavery, over racial segregation, over protecting our environment, over the right of women to vote, over full inclusion. And over 250 years, what I think defines us is that yearning for freedom, that yearning for the opportunity to pursue life, liberty, and happiness, as we understand it and define it.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, at the end of the Second World War—after the paroxysm of a global catastrophe of violence—talked about four freedoms, recognizing and celebrating those foundational First Amendment freedoms: freedom of speech, freedom to worship, but also freedom from want and freedom from fear.

And so I think we need to recognize, at this July 4, that we have a challenge, an opportunity, and an obligation.

In the middle of the Civil War, President Lincoln and his Senate insisted on building an expanded Capitol, at the exact moment our Nation was tearing itself apart. President Lincoln said:

If people see the Capitol going on, it is a sign we intend the Union shall go on.

I have traveled around the world and heard from people all over that they look to this Nation as a beacon of freedom. And every time I recite the Pledge of Allegiance, I remind myself that, at its end, we pledge ourselves to be a nation committed to liberty and justice for all.

In the months ahead, I look forward to giving many more speeches about what I see as the core defining values of our Nation going forward.

But as you celebrate the Fourth of July, I hope you will take a moment. Think back about your childhood experiences that helped you understand what it means to be an American and that helped you confront the challenges and the opportunities we have ahead of us.

For me, living overseas and seeing our country from the perspectives of others was that great chance. And I think, for all of us, in recent days, seeing people from all over the world come to America during the World Cup and experience our Nation, our hospitality, and our values has been a refreshing reminder that, even in these divided and difficult times, we can continue to inspire and challenge ourselves and the world.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 4876

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, first of all, I want to thank my friend from Delaware. I am going to take that admonition, as we approach the Fourth of July, and reflect back on, obviously, what makes this country great.

Mr. President, I rise today to ask for unanimous consent on my bill to reassert congressional will when it comes to the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

My bill, the Do Not Interfere in Our Intelligence Act of 2026, or the DNII Act of 2026, would strengthen the existing line of succession if the position of the Director of National Intelligence is vacant and ensure that the leadership of the intelligence community remains in the hands of experienced Senate-confirmed national security officials.

As my colleagues have heard me say repeatedly, the President's appointment of Bill Pulte to be the Acting DNI is dangerous. It is dangerous for the rule of law. It is dangerous for our national security.

The ODNI was created in the aftermath of the tragic terrorist attacks of 9/11. Its purpose was to make sure that the now-18 intelligence Agencies actually coordinated with each other, so we didn't have the kind of intelligence missteps that led to the most devastating terrorist attack on our country in the history. And, thus far, thank God, we have not had another 9/11.

And because of its important mission, when Congress created the ODNI, an effort championed by my good friend SUSAN COLLINS, it codified into law—we didn't leave any ambiguity—it codified into law that the Director of National Intelligence must have extensive national security experience. It doesn't matter whether that comes from military service, being an intelligence officer, being a Member of Congress on a national security committee, or heading an Agency that deals with national security. You just have to have the experience and the judgment to lead 18 intelligence Agencies and understand their mission.

Unfortunately, Trump's choice Bill Pulte has literally no national secu-

rity experience. In fact, it seems like the only experience he has—and the only reason President Trump installed him as the DNI—is leaking and weaponizing sensitive information for political purposes. He is and currently remains the head of our mortgage regulatory Agencies. So that kind of person can absolutely not have access to all our Nation's most sensitive secrets.

If you think we were, like, just making it up, look at the pressure points so far. The guy has gone in for a few days. There are reports of firings. I don't even know how he knows who the people who are being fired or reassigned are.

We have heard, as well, that he wants to take home the Presidential daily brief. Anybody—the most junior aide in national security—knows you don't take classified information to your private residence. But in a very kind of way that reflects some of the folks around the President, the one thing he was most interested in: When is he going to get a government plane, paid for by taxpayer dollars, so he can zip between DC and his house in Chicago and his place near President Trump in Florida? Remember, those are your taxpayer dollars at work.

And on these concerns about Mr. Pulte, don't take my word for it. So many Republican colleagues of mine have also publicly expressed their concerns, many of them explicitly expressing surprise at his nomination and calling him unqualified.

But that is not the only place where President Trump has decided to ignore Congress and the law creating the Director of National Intelligence. The law also explicitly states that, in the event there is an absence of a Senate-confirmed Director, "the Principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence"—that is the No. 2—"shall act for, and exercise the powers of, the Director of National Intelligence"—not "may" or "if the President wants." The word is "shall."

And the interesting thing is, there is currently a Senate-confirmed Principal Deputy whom President Trump himself nominated. This gentleman, Mr. Lukas—I may not agree with all the things that Mr. Lukas has suggested, but there is no question, given his decades of patriotic service as a national intelligence officer and on President Trump's own National Security Council staff, that he has the experience and qualifications to serve as the Acting DNI.

So then, once again, I must ask: Why, when there is a qualified individual—one President Trump himself nominated—would President Trump ignore the law and install Bill Pulte?

The only answer is the one that President Trump has actually admitted to. He said the quiet part out loud, which is that he trusts Bill Pulte to recklessly divulge America's secrets—even if it harms our national security—all in the service of the Big Lie and his obsession that he can't get over the fact that he lost the election in 2020.

So my bill is quite simple. So I ask unanimous consent—let's make it explicitly clear that, if the Office of the Director of National Intelligence becomes vacant, you put in place the Principal Deputy or someone else who has got intelligence experience that has been confirmed by the Senate.

We have to do this before Mr. Pulte irreversibly harms our national security.

Mr. President, now, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 4876, introduced yesterday; that the bill be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence was formed after the 9/11 attacks, understandably, to try to address some of the failures that led to those attacks. Unfortunately, I think we can now assess, a couple of decades on, that it is something of a failed experiment itself.

I remember my first days on the Intelligence Committee, when I sat far down the dais from the distinguished vice chairman, and an ODNI aide came in to brief us about a new fusion cell they had created to fight against the Islamic State. And one of our senior members, Dan Coats, who later himself became the DNI, observed that he was concerned that, with the growing bureaucracy at the ODNI, pretty soon they would need a fusion cell for their fusion cells.

Now, the vice chairman and I largely agree that the ODNI needs to be downsized and streamlined, that it does perform some important functions. We may not agree on every single particular. I think many of those functions could be performed elsewhere.

But I have had an opportunity to speak, in the last few days, with Acting Director Pulte. He agrees in those general terms with us that we need to return the ODNI to its original size, scope, and mission by spinning off some of these functional centers and sending intelligence officers who have been detailed there back to their home Agencies so they can do actual intelligence work. And if he continues the work that the vice chairman and I have begun through the annual Intelligence Authorization Act and that Director Gabbard started to carry out, I think that is a win for our national security.

The vice chairman cited various media reports about Director Pulte. I can't comment on all of them. It won't shock anyone to know that I don't take CNN or the Washington Post as ironclad as the Lord's Scripture. But there is one media report that I will comment on, since I discussed it with Director Pulte: the claim that mass firings had begun. That is not accurate. He informed me that, yes, a small