collateralized so that the company has to pay it back. But my wishes were not followed. The Department of Commerce gave Intel $8.9 billion cash in return for 10 percent of the company.

Well, here is why I think Intel might have winky-dooed us. Intel just announced they were taking $5 billion of that, and do you know what they are doing with it? They are building a chip manufacturing plant in Ireland—in Ireland. I mean, I don't get it. And I know Intel is going to say: Oh, it wasn't the $8.9 billion that the American taxpayers gave us that we took and helped the Irish economy.

Money is fungible, folks. Money is fungible. And they can say all they want ''Oh, it wasn't American taxpayer money; it came from a different pot of money.''

Now, if this is true—and I saw it announced publicly that they are building a $5 billion chip manufacturing plant in Ireland—after $8.9 billion of American taxpayer money was given to them, as far as I am concerned, this deal is a breech birth; it is a total cockup. And somebody from the Department of Commerce or from Intel needs to explain this to the American people, because I don't like it.

I didn't like it when we started giving money to particular companies going: Yeah, we like you, but we don't like you. You don't get any money, but you get money.

If that decision will be made, it ought to be made by Congress, folks—your elected representatives. But it was done.

But right after we did it, Intel took the money and invested it in Ireland. It triggers my gag reflex. I hope I am wrong.

Intel, if you are listening, I hope you will explain all of this.

Department of Commerce, if you are listening, I hope you will explain all of this.

The Department of Commerce, I think, is going to say: Oh, Intel has outside investors in building this plant.

That, to me, is a distinction without a difference. As far as I am concerned, the way it looks to me right now, we gave them $8.9 billion of American taxpayer money, and they said ''Thank you very much'' and went and decided to spend it in Ireland. And where I come from, we call that a three-wheeled shopping cart.

So Intel needs to build that manufacturing plant in America or they need to give the American people their money back, and they need to do it now. And they need to explain it to the American people.

Mr. President, we have to vote, but I have still got 5 minutes. That is a dangerous combination, but I am going to do it in 5 minutes.

FOOD STAMPS

Mr. President, last year, we passed the One Big Beautiful Bill. One of the provisions of the One Big Beautiful Bill was that, in America, if you are hungry, we are going to feed you. We are going to give you food stamps. We don't want you to be hungry. But in return for those food stamps, if you are able-bodied, if you are not disabled and you don't have kids at home, you have to go get a job. You have to work 20 hours a week or go to school for 20 hours a week or do community service for 20 hours a week—a fair trade.

We said: We don't want to take food stamps away from people who need them; we want fewer people to need food stamps.

And it is working. The full provision of the law is not even implemented, but so far, we have had 4 million people who were on food stamps—in those States that have implemented the work requirement, we have 4 million people who have either decided they don't need food stamps because they didn't want to work or they have gone to work for a living and they no longer need food stamps.

Now, those are the only two possibilities. When you say ''You have to work to get food stamps,'' and 4 million people say ''We are off the food stamp rolls,'' one of two things has happened: You either really didn't need the food stamps or you went to work and you didn't need the food stamps.

It is going to have an even more meaningful impact as more and more States implement the work requirement. It was long overdue. We ought to extend it to every social program in America.

I am not talking about and we weren't talking about taking food away from a mother with a sick child in her arms. This rule just applies to able-bodied people who aren't disabled, who aren't elderly, and who don't have kids at home. And all we require is that they work 20 hours a week or go to school for 20 hours a week and get job training or do community service. It is working.

Some of my colleagues in this Chamber are going to try to roll it back. We need to fight them tooth and nail.

I made it. I am done. Peace out.

CLOTURE MOTION

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair 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 nomination of Executive Calendar No. 738, Kara Marie Westercamp, of Virginia, to be a Judge of the United States Court of International Trade.

John Thune, Ted Budd, Thom Tillis, John Barrasso, Tim Sheehy, Joni Ernst, Jon A. Husted, Katie Boyd Britt, David McCormick, Mike Rounds, John Boozman, Bill Cassidy, Rick Scott of Florida, Josh Hawley, Cynthia M. Lummis, Kevin Cramer, Steve Daines.

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 nomination of Kara Marie Westercamp, of Virginia, to be a Judge of the United States Court of International Trade, 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 Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY) and the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY) would have voted ''Yea.''

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) is neccessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 49, nays 48, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 198 Ex.]

YEAS—49

Armstrong	Fischer	Moreno
Banks	Graham	Murkowski
Barrasso	Grassley	Ricketts
Blackburn	Hawley	Risch
Boozman	Hoeven	Rounds
Britt	Husted	Schmitt
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Scott (FL)
Capito	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Justice	Sheehy
Cornyn	Kennedy	Sullivan
Cotton	Lankford	Thune
Cramer	Lee	Tillis
Crapo	Lummis	Tuberville
Cruz	Marshall	Wicker
Curtis	McCormick	Young
Daines	Moody	
Ernst	Moran	

NAYS—48

Alsobrooks	Heinrich	Reed
Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Bennet	Hirono	Sanders
Blumenthal	Kaine	Schatz
Blunt Rochester	Kelly	Schiff
Booker	Kim	Schumer
Cantwell	King	Shaheen
Collins	Klobuchar	Slotkin
Coons	Luján	Smith
Cortez Masto	Markey	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murray	Warnock
Fetterman	Ossoff	Warren
Gallego	Padilla	Welch
Gillibrand	Paul	Whitehouse
Hassan	Peters	Wyden

NOT VOTING—3

Hagerty	McConnell	Murphy

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BUDD). On this vote, the yeas are 49, the nays are 48, and the motion is agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session.

The Senator from Oklahoma.

MAIDEN SPEECH

Mr. ARMSTRONG. Mr. President, for generations, Americans understood that building our critical infrastructure was not a partisan cause; it was a national responsibility.

Previous generations built the powerplants, pipelines, highways, transmission lines, and mines that raised our standard of living, enabled the growth of our economy, protected our national security, and expanded opportunity across this country. The generations before us were builders, and their efforts gave us the great Nation we often take for granted today. They understood that large-scale infrastructure was not merely a collection of projects; it was the backbone of national prosperity. That broad consensus built out the most advanced infrastructure of its time, delivering affordable energy and economic growth.

Over time, America showed that we did not have to choose between a strong economy or a cleaner environment. We could achieve both because we had the confidence to build and innovate.

Today, however, we have moved away from that spirit of national purpose. Instead of building for the future, we are increasingly living off what previous generations were willing to imagine, finance, and construct. We have been relying on the fruits of their labor for decades. And today, we are beginning to see the harsh realities of infrastructure that is too aged and insufficient to support the next wave of growth.

America's energy problem is not a lack of resources, nor is it a lack of ingenuity. It is our failure to build the infrastructure needed to move these resources to the people who need them.

We should be honest about how we got here. Like a frog in the boiling pot, we have slowly gotten into this dangerous condition that holds our great Nation back. Over time, too many political leaders have become complacent. It became easier to oppose a project than to defend the need to build one.

When every pipeline, transmission line, power generator, and industrial project is treated as something to stop rather than something to build responsibly, the costs of that do not disappear; they accumulate slowly, until families are paying more, reliability is deteriorating, and investment is moving elsewhere.

Nowhere is that failure clearer than in the Northeast. Pennsylvania sits atop one of the most prolific natural gas formations not in the United States but in the world. Yet, only a few hundred miles away, families and businesses in New England pay some of the highest energy prices in the country because the region lacks sufficient pipeline capacity.

That constraint creates an artificial scarcity. When demand rises during the winter, natural gas must serve both home heating and electricity generation. Because the pipelines cannot deliver enough fuel, prices surge, and generators turn to more expensive and dirtier alternatives, like fuel oil.

We saw this during the 2018 bomb cyclone. New England was forced to burn additional oil and actually import LNG from Russia even though abundant natural gas was available nearby. And I will remind you that this is gas that is priced at an equivalence of $0.42 a gallon versus the $4 per gallon fuel oil that it was substituted with. That outcome was not caused by a shortage of American energy; it was caused by a shortage of American infrastructure and by years of political decisions that made blocking projects easier than building them.

I saw this problem firsthand while leading the Williams Companies. We pursued the Constitution Pipeline, a 120-mile project designed to carry low-cost Pennsylvania natural gas to constrained markets in the Northeast. We had our Federal certificate. We had bought the pipe, we had bought the right-of-way, and we were actually in the process of clearing the route. But we were stopped by a State government that used section 401 of the Clean Water Act as a political veto, actually waiting until Earth Day to deny a permit for reasons that had absolutely nothing to do with water quality.

It is actually ironic. Opponents to natural gas projects act like they are saving the planet, but what their efforts really do is make us shift to energy sources that have much higher emissions, like having folks in New England burn fuel oil. Yes, New England and New York use more fuel oil for power generation than anywhere in our Nation.

I also saw the chilling effect of judicial overreach. Williams built a billion-dollar pipeline project to move gas from Pennsylvania into New Jersey. It was completely constructed. It was up and running. It was operating at a 90-percent load factor during the peak of the winter load. Yet, 9 months after it was fully constructed and in service, the court vacated the certificate.

Mr. President, put yourself in that board room for a minute. Imagine explaining to your board that you just spent a billion dollars on a project the government now says you have no license to operate. What do you think that board is going to say the next time you bring them a large project to build?

These consequences are not limited to heating bills. The same infrastructure constraints leave our electricity system with less flexibility and almost no margin for error when demand surges. In fact, we saw this just 2 weeks ago in the PJM market—the Nation's largest power market. Electricity that normally trades at approximately $60 per megawatt-hour rose to roughly $300 per megawatt-hour. At certain locations on the system, prices actually reached up to $2,500 per megawatt-hour. In addition to that, PJM reduced and took emergency steps to restrict electricity to certain facilities, shutting down certain industries.

Those wholesale price spikes do not remain confined to an electricity market; they eventually appear in the utility bills paid by families and businesses.

I have spent a good deal of my time over the past several months sitting in the presiding chair where you are today, Mr. President, and listening to Democratic leaders rail against high gasoline prices. Well, gasoline is not the only energy bill families have to pay. In New York, retail electricity prices have risen by approximately 60 percent over the last 5 years—significantly more than gasoline prices have risen. Yet we hear far less outrage about the rising costs of keeping the lights on, heating a home, or running a small business.

We cannot simply blame those increases on energy producers. In fact, wholesale natural gas prices have declined over the same 5-year period on an inflation-adjusted basis. We cannot blame them on instability in the Strait of Hormuz either. The problem is actually much closer to home. It is the result of years of complacency here in government and a political culture that rewarded saying no while ignoring the cost of failing to build.

When we prevent pipelines and transmission lines from connecting abundant supply with growing demand, the consequences are actually predictable: Prices rise, reliability declines, and generators rely more heavily on costly backup fuels.

The economic consequences extend far beyond the utility sector. A manufacturer, a data center, an industrial facility will not commit billions of dollars to a region if it cannot obtain reliable energy at a competitive price. Those projects move elsewhere, taking jobs, tax revenues, and economic opportunity with them.

That is the central contradiction of our current system—America can produce extraordinary quantities of affordable energy, but our permitting process too often prevents us from being able to deliver it to the consumers. That is not an inevitable outcome. It is the result of political choices, and it can be corrected by political courage. That is why the opportunity before us is so significant, and this is why permitting reform is such a passion of mine.

I constantly ask a simple question as I spend my time here in the Senate: Why wouldn't we do this?

In this body, we often debate how much taxpayer money we should spend to solve a problem, but permitting reform presents us with something fundamentally different—an opportunity to strengthen the country that requires zero taxpayer investment. By cutting unnecessary delays and restoring predictability to the permitting process, we can attract private investment, lower consumer costs, create jobs, and grow this economy. It is, quite literally, economic opportunity lying on the ground. We simply need to pick it up.

That leads me to another question: Who would actually be against this? Who would oppose a plan that attracts private investment back to our shores by providing the clarity that project developers desperately need?

Perhaps our enemies would oppose it. They certainly see our inability to build as a huge vulnerability and as a weakness of our great democracy. They benefit when our projects are trapped in an endless loop of reviews, appeals, and litigation—or perhaps it is the cottage industry of litigants that has learned to profit from delay. These special interest groups have increasingly used administrative tools—originally intended to protect legitimate environmental interests—to stall or block projects for political purposes and end up doing more harm than good for our environment.

They may not actually care about the environment, but I do. They need a villain to drive their fundraising. They have made the energy company that villain even though it is the utility—and particularly the consumer of the utility—who ultimately pays the price.

Every day, Americans probably don't see the connection between something like a 401 water quality certificate and their skyrocketing utility bills, but I do. I have seen firsthand how these arbitrary standards are used as political footballs. When we allow these delays, we aren't hurting Big Energy; we are forcing American families to pay three times the rate for their power because of the massive risk that we have injected into the system.

It is time to stop the regulatory creep and the endless litigation. It is time to embrace a fuel source-neutral approach that focuses on one thing: building a stronger, more secure America. Unless you are a trial lawyer looking for a payout or a foreign adversary looking for a weakened America, there really is no reason to be against this.

This country was built by men and women who understood that great nations must be the best places to host tomorrow's industries. We should honor that inheritance not by merely maintaining what was left to us but by demonstrating the same courage and ambition.

The defining geopolitical contests of this century will be won by the nations that can deploy their resources, not just those that possess them. America has the energy, the capital, and the technology to lead. The only remaining question is whether we have the political will to build the infrastructure necessary to turn those advantages into sustained global leadership.

I am retired from the industry. I have zero political ambition beyond this seat that I hold right now. I am here because I have seen how this system is positioned to strangle our great country. Let's stop choosing short-term popularity over long-term economic and national security.

We have a bill. Let's work together to legislate a solution. We cannot let what has been one of our greatest strengths turn into our biggest vulnerability.

It is time for this Senate to show courage and lead. It is time to restore confidence in America's capacity to outrun our competition, and it is time to get America building again.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I am pleased to welcome Senator ARMSTRONG from Oklahoma in his delivering his maiden speech. It is an important part of this institution, and I hope all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle who weren't able to hear him in person will have a chance to listen to it and to get to know him during his stay here.

Welcome to the Senate.

Mr. ARMSTRONG. Thank you very much.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, I welcome my colleague from Oklahoma and thank him. I completely agree with his ideas. We have got to get energy production increased in this country and drive down the prices for all consumers.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 3857

Mr. President, I rise today to seek the passage of my One Nation, One Visa Policy Act.

Imagine if every State in the Union, on a whim, had the power to allow foreign nationals to travel to their States without a visa. In other words, imagine if American States allowed anyone, from anywhere, for any reason, to access American sovereign territory—even those from adversarial countries; that you could do it in any State. Most Americans would say that that would be an insane policy, and they would be absolutely right. Florida can't set its own visa policies, neither can, you know, New Mexico, Texas, California, or New York. That would be chaos, and it would make our immigration system meaningless.

Currently, the only place in the United States where visa-free travel from foreign countries is allowed—the only place—is in the Mariana Islands, a territory. It is in this small U.S. Pacific island territory where foreign nationals can legally enter America without having a visa.

Since 2009, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, or CNMI, has become a hotbed for birth tourism, which is a strategy used by citizens of foreign powers to deliberately undermine our Nation's immigration laws. Over 3,300 communist Chinese nationals have been born on these islands except they are also bona fide American citizens. They have passports, birth certificates, and Social Security cards. Keep in mind this is a territory where only 45,000 Americans live. The CCP and Chinese civilians found this loophole and have exploited it for birthright citizenship. You can be a full-fledged devotee of the CCP—you can actually hate America and hate our people and hate our way of life—and still abuse birth tourism to get a foothold in the country you seek to undermine and destroy.

Now, come on. That is ridiculous. It all needs to end now.

All the One Nation, One Visa Policy Act does is stop this visa-free travel from communist China to the United States. It doesn't ban travel from China—you can still come—but it says: If you are a citizen from China, which is our foremost adversary, you have got to get a visa. We have got to know who you are if you want to enter my State, any of our States, or any other sovereign territory of our country. You have got to get a visa if you are from communist China. It is common sense.

I am grateful to Secretary Mullin, who, while a U.S. Senator, signed on to my letter to then-Secretary Noem that called for an end to China's participation in any Chinese visa waiver program.

As Secretary Mullin continues to work to end China's visa-free privilege, I hope the United States Senate can offer the administration the support it deserves by passing this legislation immediately.

I would also like to thank my friends, Senators LEE, MCCORMICK, BUDD, and LANKFORD, for cosponsoring this legislation.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of S. 3857 and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration. I further ask that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, in reserving the right to object, this bill will needlessly punish the Northern Mariana Islands and significantly—or I should say further—harm its tourist economy, which is the islands' largest source of revenue and jobs.

There is a current program in place. The current program requires any visitors who come to the Northern Mariana Islands through this program to undergo a two-step vetting process by the Department of Homeland Security, including having an in-person interview. That program has already reduced visitation from the PRC from over 185,000 visitors down to 18 in 2026—not 18,000 but 18. The purpose is to ensure that visitors do not pose any risk to the United States but allow the islands' economy to grow. The current visa program was put in place after a long and thoughtful consultation between the United States and our territory the Northern Mariana Islands. It successfully balances both our national security needs and supports the economic vitality of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The Northern Mariana Islands are more than just an American territory; they are one of our most important partners in the Pacific to actually counter China's influence in this critical theater. We can't ask them to further decimate their tourism economy. This legislation, as well meaning as it is, would certainly undermine the stability of our partner and American territory. We should not abolish the program. Instead, we need to ensure the Department of Homeland Security is doing sufficient screening to prevent visitation that poses a risk.

The Northern Mariana Islands do not have a voice in the Senate, and that is why I am objecting today in support of our partner in the Pacific.

While I oppose the passage of this bill, I do stand ready to work with Senator SCOTT and others to support the security of our Nation in a way that does not harm the people and government of the Northern Mariana Islands.

So I object to the request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Mr. President, I recognize my colleague. We both are in the same position. We don't want to do anything that absolutely hurts the economy of the CNMI, but at the same time, we have got to figure this out to make sure that we don't have birth tourism.

So I look forward to working with my colleague in a constructive manner to make sure that, you know, the Communist Party of China does not abuse this so as to have birth tourism there.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE CENTERS FOR MEDICARE & MEDICAID SERVICES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES RELATING TO ''MEDICARE PROGRAM; IMPLEMENTATION OF PRIOR AUTHORIZATION FOR SELECT SERVICES FOR THE WASTEFUL AND INAPPROPRIATE SERVICES REDUCTION (WISeR) MODEL''—Motion to Proceed

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 447, S.J. Res. 198.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 447, S.J. Res. 198, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services of the Department of Health and Human Services relating to ''Medicare Program; Implementation of Prior Authorization for Select Services for the Wasteful and Inappropriate Services Reduction (WISeR) Model''.

Mr. WYDEN. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

The yeas and nays are ordered.

S.J. RES. 198

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, colleagues, at the beginning of this year, the Trump administration empowered unaccountable AI companies to delay and deny certain types of care in traditional Medicare.

Now, Donald Trump promised—promised—that he would not touch Medicare, and, today, it is clear that that Trump promise has been broken.

Seniors paid into Medicare out of every paycheck during their working years, and they did so with an expectation they would have an ironclad guarantee of affordable healthcare.

Today, seniors in six States across America are discovering that care their doctor has recommended for them has been slowed or halted by a shadowy AI-driven third party.

The consequences are not abstract. Seniors with severe back pain have to wait weeks for relief, upending their lives and leaving them suffering because of the bureaucracy of healthcare.

The types of care that are subject to these restrictions are not frivolous: knee arthroscopies, nerve stimulations, steroid injections, cervical fusion. These types of procedures are the care that seniors rely on to stay mobile and pain-free in the aging process.

Now, decisions between doctors and patients are overridden by for-profit AI contractors. The Trump administration's only defense of this model has been to point to the rapid rise of skin substitute procedures to justify their flawed experiment.

The Trump administration's work doesn't pass the smell test. First, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services already have now lowered payment rates for this procedure; in doing so, closed the loophole driving the dramatic increase.

(Mrs. CAPITO assumed the Chair.)

Second, the skin substitute procedures only account for a tiny fraction of care under the model. In the case of Oregon's neighbor to the north, Washington State, skin substitutes account for less than 1 percent of services—less than 1 percent of the services, Madam Chair—subject to the prior authorization under this model. So the excuses hold no water.

Prior authorization has run rampant in the American healthcare system. For-profit insurance companies are increasingly using this business tactic to block and deter care in order to increase their profits.

I want to put a fine point on this. In 2024, insurance companies that sell Medicare Advantage plans denied more than 4 million prior authorization requests—just think about that: 4 million prior authorization requests. Of those denials, only 1 in 10 were appealed by a senior or their doctor. But when the denial was appealed, it was overturned 8 times out of 10. What this tells me is that prior authorization is being used to deny legitimate care, often acting as a bureaucratic hurdle meant to discourage seniors and their doctors from pursuing a course of treatment that might impact insurance company's bottom line.

It is bad enough that this is the state of affairs in Medicare Advantage, but now the Trump administration is trying to import insurance company tactics into traditional Medicare. And that would mean that seniors who selected it precisely because they don't want to deal with the headaches and complexity of an insurance company would suffer.

This is not a partisan issue. Many of my Republican colleagues have expressed concern about prior authorizations and the state of Medicare Advantage. I hope that they will stand with those of us today who want to tell the Trump administration to abandon an ill-advised experiment that seniors don't want. They didn't ask for it. It doesn't make sense.

There is a lot of work to be done to improve both traditional Medicare and Medicare Advantage for seniors that count on the Medicare guarantee.

And I have been working on that Medicare guarantee since the days when I was a codirector of the Oregon Gray Panthers. Let's work on that together, and we can start by ending this AI-driven prior authorization experiment. It is a mistake. We can't run the risk of it being sent to other parts of the healthcare system. I urge a ''yes'' vote.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAPO. Madam President, in response to the discussion that my colleague from Oregon has just engaged in, far too often, our Nation's healthcare system incentivizes low-value, high-cost services. For years, bipartisan policy makers throughout Capitol Hill and across administrations have endeavored to disrupt this flawed paradigm, especially in the Medicare Program. Unfortunately, despite progress to incorporate new value-based payment arrangements, Medicare's underlying reimbursement structure continues to rely heavily on the volume of services provided, rather than the quality of care.

In addition to failing patients and providers, Medicare's perverse financial incentives contribute to massive waste and abuse. Well-meaning clinicians often face opaque coverage guidelines that can result in denied reimbursements, while malicious actors exploit bureaucratic vulnerabilities to defraud the program.

Through the wasteful and inappropriate service reduction model—work WISeR—CMS is testing whether enhanced technology can help address these systemic failures. For a limited set of nonemergency services with a documented history of abuse and overuse, providers in select States must submit claims for review. Claims that meet existing Medicare coverage requirements are quickly approved, offering providers payment predictability.