

repeat the same mistake. Trump always finds a way to saddle the American people with the cost of his corruption. We have an opportunity to stop it. Will our Republican colleagues join us to make that happen?

Democrats will continue to expose how the Trump administration's corruption is driving up Americans' costs every chance we get—the slush fund, an exemption from taxes, what he did on his own social media in charging people for it, and now this Air Force One corruption. Every day—just about every day—there is a new story about how Trump's corruption is rampant and raises the costs of the American people.

ELECTION PROTECTION TASK FORCE

Mr. President, on the Election Protection Task Force, Donald Trump knows he can't defend Republicans' disastrous record. So he is attacking the midterm elections that could hold him accountable. Instead of trying to earn Americans' votes, Trump is trying to discount them.

That is not going to happen, Donald. Today, Senate Democrats' Election Protection Task Force will gather for a second time to war-game responses and to plan how we can counter Trump's effort to subvert our elections. We are going to red-team a number of different instances that Trump might try to subvert our election and what we will do to counter them. We are fighting to protect the right of every eligible American voter to cast a ballot and to have it counted without interference, intimidation, or obstruction.

Our task force is preparing, over and over again, to meet the election threats we know are coming. We are bringing together top experts to identify threats to the election, to test responses, and to strengthen our defenses because we are defending the American people's right to vote and have a free and fair election. We are preparing our responses to what they might do now so that voters can have confidence later.

Trump is doing everything he can to undermine confidence in our elections because he knows just how bad of a bind he is in. The Trump administration has made life harder and more expensive for the American people. Trump knows Americans won't ignore the higher costs, the rampant corruption, and the widespread chaos he has unleashed on our country, which is why he is trying to ignore their votes altogether. But this country and this election belong to the American people, not to Trump. Democrats are going to make sure it stays that way.

NOMINATION OF CHARLTON ALLEN

Finally, Mr. President, on the Charlton Allen nomination, you know, it is no secret that the Trump administration is chock-full of people who have a known history of racism, anti-Semitism, and other forms of prejudice; and Trump's nominee for general counsel of the Federal Labor Relations Authority, Charlton Allen, is no exception to this.

Back in 1996, Allen published a front-page article in his student newspaper that included a cartoon depicting a Jewish candidate for student president as the devil. Allen's article explicitly highlighted the candidate's Jewish identity and parroted numerous anti-Semitic tropes. Allen also reportedly displayed homophobic signs around campus and even drew comparisons between homosexuality and bestiality. He also wrote other articles that were racist and Islamophobic.

A bigot like Allen doesn't belong on the board of a student newspaper, let alone in a Presidential administration. Every Senate Republican ought to be against this guy.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

WAIVING QUORUM CALL

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I also ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum call with respect to the Martin nomination.

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

WORKING FAMILIES TAX CUT ACT

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, the American people deserve to have more money in their own pockets. The Working Families Tax Cut law made that happen. Republicans stopped the largest single tax increase in American history. That is what the Democrats wanted.

Americans already filed their taxes this year, and working families are keeping more of what they earned, and the data proves it.

More than 7½ million Americans benefited from the no-tax-on-tips policy that we put into place right here on this Senate floor. So today, there are waiters, barbers, bartenders, tour guides—all were able to claim deductions—and it averaged over \$7,100 in deductions—because of no tax on tips. More than 29 million Americans benefited from no tax on overtime. These are firefighters, police officers, and nurses. They are linemen and coal miners in Wyoming. They claimed an average deduction of over \$3,000—all as a result of the law the Republicans have passed. Money that once went to bureaucrats in Washington, DC, now stays in the pockets of hard-working Americans, and that is where it belongs.

Had Democrats gotten their way, taxes would have gone up by a lot. Every Democrat in this Chamber voted to continue taxing tip income, overtime income. They just wanted to get a hand on people's money. Every Democrat voted to raise taxes by \$4 trillion. Well, because Republicans were in the majority in the Senate and in the

House, we were able to stop this Democrat price increase and tax increase.

Now what we see is that extremist Democrats in Governor mansions across the country and State legislatures are trying to undermine the Working Families Tax Cut law, and they are doing it in city halls and in State capitals.

In Washington, DC—right here—the city council tried to force hard-working Americans to pay taxes to the city. They can't force them to pay it to the Federal Government; hey, the city wants the money on tips and on overtime. The city council of Washington, DC, refused to allow the hard-working waiters, bartenders, police officers, and firefighters to keep that hard-earned money. They didn't have to pay it on Federal taxes, but local taxes in DC—the DC city council said: Give it to us. This is the city that is soon going to get a socialist mayor, just like they have in New York City right now.

Right now, in 21 different States, we have far-left Governors refusing to allow the tax cuts that we passed to be passed down to the State level. So Democrats in California, in New York, in Minnesota, Illinois, New Jersey, North Carolina, and Virginia continue to take away people's tip money and overtime money so they can spend it locally. That is the States and the cities, not the people, the individuals.

So just like Democrats here in Congress, the leaders in Democrat States around the country want to raise taxes, not cut them. They believe they can spend your money better than you can. They believe they make better decisions than you do. They decide, and you end up as a loser if you are living in one of those liberal States.

Well, we know why Democrats refuse to loosen the grip on your tax dollars. Democrats want to take more money out of your pocket to give free healthcare to illegal immigrants. And that is what we see in so many of these States with sanctuary cities, sanctuary States—free healthcare. And it is not free. People pay for it. It is taxpayers. It is people going to work every day and having their tax dollars taken to pay for healthcare for illegal immigrants. That seems to be part of the manifesto that the extremists in the Democrat Party are trying to slam down the throats of American taxpayers.

We know these extremists are winning Democrat primaries all across the country. Their manifesto includes mass amnesty, open borders, and elimination of Immigration and Customs Enforcement in the country. That is what they are demanding, and it is not for the benefit of the American people. That is the agenda of the radical left.

In far-left States, from California to Minnesota, we have seen their policies in action. Working families are overtaxed, and fraud is out of control.

Now Democrats are going to make life less affordable. That is what we see. That is their model. Take it to the

government; they know better than we do as taxpayers. That is not what the American people want.

Here is what Republicans are doing: We are protecting taxpayers. We are putting more money back in their pockets so they can decide how to spend it, how to save it, and what to invest in. We are fighting the fraud. And that is what I hear about so much in Wyoming—the fraud in Democrat States that Democrats ignore, that Democrats enable. It is awful fraud. You look at it and say: How can this continue?

Just this week, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent announced that we stopped nearly \$100 million in taxpayer money from going to dead people—going to dead people.

Just yesterday, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services stopped more than \$1 billion in Medicaid funding from going to California and Minnesota. Why? Because of fraud and failure to comply with the regulations to make sure that the money is actually not wasted, that the money is spent as it is supposed to be—taking care of people who need those services, and there are people who need those services. Every time a fraudster takes \$1 or \$100 or \$1,000 or \$1 million, that is services that don't go to people that need them, desperately need them.

Here in the Senate, Senator JONI ERNST of Iowa is a leader in the war on fraud. When it comes to exposing that fraud, Senator ERNST is both a watchdog and an attack dog. She has proposed a comprehensive anti-fraud piece of legislation. Her bill cracks down on fraud. It claws back stolen money. It prosecutes the crooks and the criminals and the scammers who prey upon the taxpayers. I support what Senator ERNST is doing. I am a cosponsor. Her anti-fraud legislation would save taxpayers \$240 billion. That is what kind of fraud is out there.

Senator SCHUMER recently said on this very floor that Democrats want to fight corruption. It is time for Democrats to prove it.

Republicans are cutting taxes. We are stopping fraud. Democrats, on the other hand, are voting to raise taxes and, up until now, have been protecting the fraud.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I would like to react to the statement of my friend and colleague from Wyoming. I am against fraud. That is it. On the record: I am against fraud. I am a Democrat, and I don't know where he reached this different conclusion, but I want to make it very clear.

Having said that, I am also a realist. I know that the families I represent in Illinois and across the Nation are facing budgets, family budgets, which are impossible to live with. They are not only struggling paycheck to paycheck, they are also watching the price of groceries go up. They know the price of

gasoline goes up and down, and now it is on the upward trend because of the President's war in Iran. Utility bills in my State are up 15 percent this year over last year because of President Trump's energy policy, which is opposed to sustainable, renewable sources of energy, which are the most affordable. The list goes on and on.

The Big Beautiful Bill, which Republicans brag about, was a bill that ended up with millions of Americans losing their health insurance because the cost of premiums had gone up too high.

So I think it is just great that we have tipped income exempt from taxes and that other breaks are given to working people. I would support those any day. But the bill that created those also gave the biggest tax cuts in the history of the United States to the wealthiest people in the United States—nothing, very little, for families in comparison. That is the difference.

I think we ought to be honest with the American people. The No. 1 issue in this campaign is the affordability that families worry about every single week. There is an issue I am going to address here more particularly, which gets to the heart of this as well.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr. President, in 1983, I was elected to the House of Representatives. I was a freshman Congressman and as nervous as any politician could be. I had defeated a Republican incumbent to come to the House, and I was just sure, looking over my shoulder, there was an issue, a press release, a vote that was going to do me in in the next election. I was as nervous as could be.

In the midst of that situation, I had a visit from the leaders of the U.S. House of Representatives, and they said: Congressman DURBIN, there is news for you which may decide your fate in the years to come.

I said: What is it?

Social Security is about to go broke.

In 1983, we faced the possibility that we would not be able to make the promised Social Security payments to beneficiaries across America.

I couldn't imagine a tougher challenge. One of the most popular programs in America, one out of five Americans on Social Security—and in 1983, it faced the situation where they couldn't make their payments as promised.

And so I proposed a Commission to take a look at it—a bipartisan Commission—and come up with changes in Social Security in 1983: raise the retirement age, raise the amount of money paid by employers and employees into Social Security, and tax income from Social Security for the first time.

These changes were not easy. Some were controversial, but we knew we had to do it. Our goal was to buy 50 years of solvency for Social Security with the changes in 1983. You know, what? It worked.

It worked to the point where we just had an announcement last week by the

trustees in bankruptcy that the system will make every payment promised until the end of 2032—50 years after the 1983 changes were made.

So the promise was kept, but then the problems arise. After that, the Social Security trust fund will not have enough money to pay the promised benefits.

What does that mean? Well, go back to my notation that one out of five Americans receive Social Security—either elderly or disabled receive Social Security. Out of those, one out of five of the recipients of Social Security have no other source of income.

The average Social Security check in America is about \$2,400 a month. The announcement, according to the trustees, is each one of those recipients will see their monthly paycheck cut between \$450 and \$500. So if \$2,400 is the average payment and there is a cut of \$400 to \$500, you can imagine the impact it will have on families. They will be making some very difficult decisions because one out of five, as I mentioned, Social Security recipients have no other source of income. They depend on Social Security.

What happens when those people lose \$450 to \$500 a month? They have to make hard decisions on prescription drugs; on paying some utility bills and not others; on groceries—what they are able to buy, if anything. So it boils down to a very terrible situation, a terrible challenge.

So the obvious question from the American people, just those receiving Social Security today as well as those that will in the future is, What is Congress going to do about it now? In 1983, you responded with 50 years of solvency by changing the policy. What is the plan in the current situation where we face another dramatic situation with Social Security?

And the answer is, if you look at the agenda of the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives, this year we are going to do little or nothing—little or nothing.

Why is it important that we move now instead of waiting another year, 2, 3 years before we do something? It becomes more expensive and more difficult the longer you wait to fix Social Security. The sooner you do it, the easier it is.

And it won't be totally easy. There will be some changes people will like and some they won't like. But the bottom line is, the longer Congress waits to act on Social Security, the more expensive it will be, the more difficult the policy choices will be.

I have reached out to several of my colleagues saying: Can we finally agree, as Democrats and Republicans, that the No. 1 social policy of the U.S. Government, Social Security, should be a bipartisan issue that we address?

Well, it turns out that four Republicans joined me as well as three other Democrats, and we have eight members, Democrats and Republicans, who are supporting the bill that I call the PROMISE Act.