the people should determine where we want to go.

And I know that AI is spending tens of millions of dollars on campaign contributions, and if you speak up against them, hey, they are going to put millions of dollars of 30-second ads against you.

But maybe just now in this moment in American history we have the guts to tell AI where they should go, stand up for our kids, stand up for democracy, stand up for privacy, stand up for workers, and utilize AI and robotics to benefit all of us, not just to make a handful of billionaires even richer.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant bill clerk read the nomination of Antonio M. Pozos, of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

VOTE ON POZOS NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Pozos nomination?

Ms. ERNST. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Alabama (Mrs. BRITT), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT), and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 49, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 209 Ex.]

YEAS—49

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

NAYS—44

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

NOT VOTING—7

Britt	Paul	Tuberville
McConnell	Scott (SC)	
Murkowski	Shaheen	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BANKS). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's actions.

The Senator from Utah.

(The remarks of Mr. CURTIS pertaining to the submission of S. Res. 812 are printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

Mr. CURTIS. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

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

The motion was agreed to.

WITHDRAWAL OF MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I withdraw my motion to proceed to Calendar No. 436, S. 4784.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The leader has that right.

SUPPORTING EARLY-CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS' DEDUCTIONS ACT—Motion to Proceed

Mr. THUNE. I move to proceed to Calendar No. 454, H.R. 5334.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion to proceed.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 454, H.R. 5334, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow early childhood educators to take the educator expense deduction, and for other purposes.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the standing rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 454, H.R. 5334, an act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow early childhood educators to take the educator expense deduction, and for other purposes.

John Thune, Darline Graham, John Barrasso, Tim Sheehy, John Cornyn, John Hoeven, Mike Crapo, James Lankford, Kevin Cramer, Steve Daines, Tim Scott of South Carolina, Tom Cotton, Roger Marshall, Thom Tillis, John R. Curtis, Jon Husted, Pete Ricketts

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

CORRUPTION

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. President, more than a year and a half ago, when Donald Trump placed his hand on a Bible and took the oath of office for the second time, he swore to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution. In the time since, he has failed to live up to that basic promise. Instead, he has focused laser-like on a very different priority: to preserve, protect, and expand his family's wealth.

The payments to the President and his family have been massive. The self-dealing and profiteering have been absolutely breathtaking in their scope. And you don't have to take my word for it. Two weeks ago, the President filed his annual financial disclosure, signed under penalty of law. It shows more than $2.3 billion in income last year alone—$2.3 billion made by the President in the last year alone. Wow. That is 3½ times what he reported the year before. So either he has just become a much better businessman since he became President, or he is corruptly using his office to enrich himself.

The same can be said for much of the rest of his family.

Exposing this corruption is the first necessary step to stopping it. This is important in its own right. Public servants should not be enriching themselves at public expense. But it is even more crucial to root out corruption for another reason, and that is because the cost of corruption is an economy that does not meet the basic needs of the American people—an economy that does not produce housing that average families can afford or a college education that young people can obtain without mortgaging their future or quality healthcare that is accessible or groceries that don't break the family budget.

When the President is fixated only on his family's personal wealth, on money he can make by abusing the power of his position, on his own vanity projects—gilding the White House, gilding statues, and gilding a ballroom—he has very little time or inclination to address the problems facing ordinary Americans. They are mere afterthoughts, and the country suffers. That is the true cost of corruption.

So, today, I am going to walk you through the top 10 ways this President has turned the Oval Office into a personal revenue stream, the settlements he has collected, the gifts he has pocketed, the money he and his family have extracted from anyone with the misfortune of needing something from this government, and the pet causes he has extorted money to fund.

Bear in mind that every number I am about to give you is either taken from his own financial filing or from public reporting. And because the President seems to enjoy ratings and rankings, we will count them down from No. 10 all the way to No. 1 of the top 10 most corrupt self-enrichment schemes of the President. By the time we reach No. 1, we will have tallied billions of dollars for him, for his family, for his personal whims, and nothing for you. That is the cost of corruption.

No. 10, overseas licensing. Let's start small, and by ''small,'' I mean $23 million.

Since his reelection, the Trump family has made at least $23 million licensing the Trump name overseas. A hotel in Oman, towers in India, golf courses on the outskirts of Riyadh and Doha—these are just a few of the more than 20 overseas projects the Trump administration is now pursuing, many of them requiring the cooperation of foreign governments.

Here is the thing about needing help from foreign governments when you happen to be the President of the United States: Those governments are going to want something in return. They are going to want you to treat them very, very favorably in return. These countries all want something from the United States of America—U.S. military protection, U.S. nuclear powerplants, U.S. technologies, U.S. AI chips. You name it, they want something from this country.

These countries are not investing in the Trump family projects out of the goodness of their hearts; they want payback. Much to the detriment of Americans' national security interests, they are getting it. Let's look at just one example, this one from Southeast Asia.

The administration agreed to lower its threatened tariffs on Vietnam but not until after the Trump Organization broke ground on a $1.5 billion Trump golf course complex outside of Hanoi, a golf complex that Vietnamese officials fast-tracked by ignoring their own rules.

This kind of overt pay-to-play is playing out in country after country after country. What is the cost of this corruption? Well, our national security suffers when the President sells advanced chips to a Gulf nation—not because it is in our interest to do so, not because our own AI companies don't need the chips to compete, but because the President or his family got a payoff. Our country suffers when the President makes national security decisions for financial reasons that benefit not the country but himself.

(Mr. BUDD assumed the Chair.)

Did the President just approve nuclear powerplants in Saudi Arabia because it is a good idea or because the Saudis have been phenomenally generous to the Trump family business, to the President and his sons, and to his son-in-law Jared Kushner, in particular, in whom they invested a cool $2 billion.

Will American troops, our sons and daughters, be more at risk of deployment to the Middle East with more endless wars or because of a nuclear arms race that we helped get started in the region, not because helping the Saudis go nuclear was good for us but because the Saudis wanted payback for their investment in Donald Trump's family? That is the cost of corruption.

No. 9, the Paramount-CBS settlement worth $36 million. No. 9 brings us to perhaps one of the most frivolous media lawsuits to ever see the inside of a courtroom. Following a ''60 Minutes'' interview with Vice President Kamala Harris during that Presidential campaign, Trump sued CBS, alleging, believe it or not, election interference. His claim? That CBS edited the interview to make Harris sound better.

Let me remind everyone: Most long-form television interviews are edited. That is how television works. But in Trump's reality, editing is election interference if he doesn't like the edits.

CBS acknowledged the suit was frivolous. The President had no right to sue because he doesn't like how an interview with someone else is edited. It is absurd. The studio has a First Amendment right to make those decisions for itself.

Nevertheless, CBS agreed to pay off the President $16 million. Why? Not because they thought they would lose the litigation. They knew Trump's claim would never be successful. So CBS agreed to pay off the President because its parent Paramount Studios wanted to merge with Skydance in a deal worth $8 billion. What was a $16 million payoff compared to an $8 billion deal?

And it wasn't just the $16 million payoff. Skydance also committed to paying another $20 million in advertising and public service announcements favored by the President. Final tally: $36 million that the President was able to extort because he could leverage his power to kill the merger deal into a personal payout.

So what is the cost of that corruption to you? Well, if you are a worker in the entertainment industry, it might just cost you your job because a merger that was approved on a corrupt basis and without considering job losses in the industry wasn't made to benefit you.

If you are a consumer, you will be paying more for your streaming service and have fewer choices because this deal wasn't approved with consumers in mind. It was approved to make money for the President.

This particular brand of corruption—suing media companies to extort them for payoffs—goes beyond anything the President did in his first term. This President doesn't just complain about the press, calling them fake news or enemies of the people. No, no. That was the stuff of Trump 1.

In Trump 2, he sues them into submission, uses the leverage he has over their business deals and mergers, and pockets the proceeds—more money for him, fewer jobs for you, and more money out of your pocket when you want to stream your favorite shows. This is the cost of corruption.

No. 8, Big Tech settlements: $60 million. No. 8 is a three-for-one: Twitter, YouTube, Meta—$60 million combined.

Trump got suspended from these platforms for conduct related to the attack he incited on the Capitol. He sued, and one by one these companies paid out to him personally and to his pet projects like the golden ballroom.

Twitter, now Elon Musk's X, settled for $10 million, a case a district judge had already thrown out and an appeals court was openly skeptical of. They paid anyway. And the President's response? He went on television to complain it was not enough, it was too low, that he was ''looking to get much more money than that.''

YouTube settled for $25 million. And in a flourish of creative accounting, $22 million of it was routed straight to the White House golden ballroom project. More on that ballroom in a minute.

But Meta, the parent company to Facebook and Instagram, they also settled for $25 million. And just to sweeten the pot, they kicked in an additional million to Trump's inaugural fund.

So let's recap just this item. The President sues these platforms over their refusal to amplify his false claims about the election and his incitement of insurrection. Using the leverage he now has over them as President to hurt their businesses, he extorts them to the tune of $60 million.

It is a disinformation loyalty program—except the rewards go to the President, and the rest of us get more false claims, more false information, more social harms from an unregulated social media, and potentially more incitement of violence around our elections. This is the cost of that corruption.

No. 7, Amazon and the ''Melania'' documentary: $40 million. For No. 7, we move back to the family business. You may have seen the trailers. Amazon struck a $40 million deal with First Lady Melania Trump for a documentary about her life before and during her time in the White House.

Reports indicate that Melania's team shopped the project to several studios and executives, many of whom had attended Trump's inauguration before Amazon closed the deal.

And Amazon separately contributed another million to Trump's inaugural fund. Of the $40 million, though, the First Lady personally received $28 million. The big-time theatrical run of this film brought in only $16 million at the box office, landing it at a sweet No. 68 on the 2026 releases behind ''Bunny!!,'' behind ''Guru,'' and behind ''Mobile Suit Gundam Hathaway: The Sorcery of Nymph Circe.''

Bear in mind, the ''Melania'' movie was so bad that one reviewer at Variety said that if you saw it on a plane, you would still walk out. But Amazon paid the Trump family $40 million for it. Why? Because Amazon has huge contracts at stake worth billions of dollars.

What is a $40 million payment for ''Melania'' when you want a Federal cloud-computing contract worth 100 times that much, worth billions?

So while families across the country are wrestling with the skyrocketing price of groceries, the First Lady is collecting $28 million for a documentary about herself.

But more important, we end up paying Amazon billions in government contracts when Amazon may or may not be the best deal for the American taxpayer, when the amount of the contract may or may not be competitive with other companies, when Amazon may or may not be the best competitor in the bidding process.

We may never know if taxpayers are getting ripped off and whether the true cost of the ''Melania'' film was a bad deal for the country, costing taxpayers billions of dollars on cloud computing that we didn't need to spend.

This kind of corrupt contracting—whether taxpayer funds are wasted because of a backroom deal or a kickback—is common in developing countries, but it hasn't been common here, not until now. And that is the cost of corruption.

No. 6 of the top 10 Trump graft schemes is the Trump meme coin coming in at a whopping $635 million. Just 24 hours before taking the oath of office, Donald Trump launched a meme coin called $TRUMP. A meme coin is kind of a joke digital currency, but Trump saw the opportunity for personal profit—about $635 million worth.

And the people on the other side of that trade—more than 810,000 of them—have lost a combined $2 billion. That is 810,000 people that bought this Trump meme coin. Mainly, the President's own supporters lost money so the President could make hundreds of millions of dollars.

But even that is not the end of the story. It gets worse. Trump hosted a private dinner for top holders of his meme coin. Investors were told they had a 2½-week window to buy enough $TRUMP to earn a seat.

He created a public auction where what was being auctioned off was access to the President: Buy Trump's meme coin, and you get to dine with the President. Where? At his own private club in Virginia. And among the guests? A crypto billionaire who had been charged by the SEC with fraud in a case in which Trump's SEC, just coincidentally, asked a judge to hit pause on the matter just weeks before the meme coin dinner.

And this March, the case was dropped entirely—dismissed with prejudice, never to be brought again—with the company paying a mere $10 million penalty while admitting nothing. This, for a crypto billionaire who had poured some $75 million into Trump family crypto ventures.

So, to recap this item, the President invents a, by definition, worthless asset, profits while hundreds of thousands of Americans lose their savings buying it, breaks bread with the people his government is investigating for defrauding investors, even as his administration puts an end to the alleged fraudster's potential prosecution.

The cost of corruption here: hundreds of millions of dollars go to Trump, hundreds of thousands of Americans lose the value of their purchases—about $2 billion in total—and fraudsters get a pass to commit other frauds on the American people. More money for Trump, more fraud for you. This is the cost of corruption.

No. 5, the White House ballroom: $600 million. No. 5 is one of the most audacious schemes in Presidential history: the gold-plated, gilded, and gaudy White House ballroom.

The President has solicited ever-larger donations for this pet project, which now has a whopping pricetag of $600 million, a $600 million monument to his vanity, built for him by people who need something from the government and paid for by you, the taxpayer—because far from the President's promise that no tax dollars would be used for his golden ballroom, he is making you pay an estimated $300 million of your tax dollars toward this project: promises made, promises broken, and the taxpayer left holding the bag.

Now, I have sought answers from the White House on this ballroom, asking: Who are the private donors and how much have they given and what business do they have before the Federal Government?

Their response, not surprisingly: no response, not willing to say, not willing to be transparent, wanting to keep it hidden from the American people.

But we know that there are at least 37 donors—among them Amazon and Apple and Google and Meta and Microsoft and Coinbase and Tether and Caterpillar and Lockheed Martin and T-Mobile and more.

Of these corporate donors, two-thirds have been awarded Federal contracts over the last 5 years—contracts worth $279 billion. And 14 of them are either facing or have had suspended Federal actions for violations of the law.

So let's get this straight: Companies under Federal investigation, many of them write a check for the President's ballroom and their legal troubles go away or their contracts multiply or, in some cases, both.

Trump even told these donors they would be the first guests welcomed into the finished ballroom ''if I still like you at that time, which I am sure I will.''

Translation: Keep paying, and I will keep liking you.

The cost of this corruption? Hundreds of millions in taxpayer funding that could go to building new hospitals in your community or building new schools or keeping the ones near you open go to a ballroom instead.

Hundreds of daycare centers that could have received funding so you don't have to pay so much for childcare or so there is even childcare in your area. But instead of building roads or bridges, hospitals or healthcare clinics or childcare, the President is building a gaudy, gold tollbooth in place of the East Wing. And Federal contracts are going to the biggest donors, not the best competitors, and that could cost you billions more in taxes.

No. 4 of the top 10 Trump grift and graft, the Qatari jet worth $400 million. No. 4 is a gift that keeps on taking, a $400 million luxury gift, gifted by the Government of Qatar, to serve as Air Force One through the end of Trump's term and then transferred to Trump's own museum foundation, his to keep.

He took his maiden flight aboard it just a few weeks ago, and while the President insists the plane is free, outfitting it to serve as Air Force One could cost American taxpayers up to $1 billion in security upgrades. That is $1 billion for this ''free'' jet that he gets to keep—paid for by you, the taxpayer, and his generous friends, the Qataris.

And let's not pretend there is nothing expected in return. Trump himself volunteered that the United States provides security for Qatar and ''will continue to.'' He also explained that only a ''stupid person'' turns down a ''free, very expensive airplane.'' Only a ''stupid person'' would turn it down. How could he refuse?

So a foreign government hands the President a $400 million jet. We pay a billion in taxes to make it usable. He keeps it when he leaves office. And if you think that is corrupt, he thinks you are the stupid one.

That is not a gift to America. It is a gift to Donald Trump, paid for by the American taxpayer, courtesy of a foreign government that now holds a great deal of leverage over the President—the same foreign government whose wealth fund is invested in developing the Doha Trump International Golf Club, complete with luxury villas and 18 holes of world-class golf.

The cost of this corruption? American foreign policy and our national security interests in the region are now skewed toward a country that gives the President exorbitant gifts or develops real estate deals with his family.

That is not putting America first but putting it last—well behind his family and personal interests in a plane and golf courses.

That brings us to No. 3, big law firm deals worth $940 million. At three, the numbers have turned even more staggering. After a barrage of Executive orders targeting the legal profession, nine wealthy law firms struck deals with the administration, pledging nearly $1 billion in ''pro bono services'' to make those threats go away—threats to disfavor their clients, threats to take their security clearances away so they couldn't represent other clients, threats to look unfavorably on the mergers their clients want or government contracts or lucrative deals favored by their clients.

Now, this money didn't land directly in the President's bank account. This is value he extracted—nearly a billion dollars in legal work redirected to causes he favors, surrendered by law firms that were afraid of what he might do to them if they refused.

And who negotiated these deals? Reportedly, Boris Epshteyn, the President's personal lawyer, not a government official, a private citizen allegedly shaking down America's largest law firms on the administration's behalf—$940 million extracted under threat and all too easily complied with by firms that were unwilling to take a stand. It is a modern protection racket.

What is the cost of this corruption? Well, law firms are silenced from representing clients whose interests may be averse to the President. That might be you one day. Businesses unable to get counsel because these law firms are too scared of crossing a vindictive President—that business may be your business one day.

And the law firms that stood their ground and defied the President? They risk losing business in a corruption of the economy that only favors firms willing to capitulate to the President. It is Putin-style economics, and it doesn't work any better here than it does in Russia.

No. 2, World Liberty Financial and stablecoin reserves: $1.5 billion and counting. We are now in the top two—World Liberty Financial, the Trump family cash cow, a firm in which the Trump family holds an ownership interest of around 75 percent.

The sale of these governance tokens has earned the family well over a billion dollars. A single deal tied to a state-backed fund in the United Arab Emirates funneled $500 million into this venture—a single deal made by a wealthy sheik who is also the head of that country's intelligence service. What could go wrong?

And in return, they just got American-made advanced AI chips, just like they wanted.

Coincidence? I don't think so. If you do, I have a ballroom I would like to sell you.

But the scheme doesn't stop there because the Trump family is also entitled to the interest earned on the reserves backing their stablecoin. This income is ongoing, grows by the day, and is pegged to the U.S. dollar itself. Unlike the meme coin, this is real money, more than $1.5 billion and counting—over $1.5 billion flowing to the President's family through a financial instrument his family controls, launched while he sits in the Oval Office—not a side business, not a blind trust—the President of the United States using the power and prestige of his office to drive money into a venture he owns and from which he profits every single day.

And consider what one of the family's business partners got in return. The world's largest crypto exchange, Binance, helped turn World Liberty's stablecoin from a small venture into one of the largest in the world, first by settling a $2 billion investment from an Abu Dhabi state fund in the Trump coin, then by building it into the exchange's own trading systems. And for that, the Trump family earns interest on every dollar used.

And the founder of Binance, what did he get out of it? Well, he had been convicted of money laundering crimes. He was facing the consequences until last October, when the President pardoned him—a foreign-funded boost to the family business, repaid with a Presidential pardon.

The cost of this corruption? Crooked deals to benefit convicted fraudsters; U.S. foreign policy for sale to the highest Gulf bidder; less time, attention, and resources of our country focused on bringing down your costs, improving your quality of life, bringing back prosperity to America.

Which takes us, ladies and gentlemen, to No. 1, the crown jewel: the President, his IRS settlement, and the $1.7 billion slush fund.

So here is the scheme. And you have to give the President credit for its audacity. The President sues the IRS, an Agency run by one of his employees, one of his appointees, and represented by the Department of Justice, also run by one of his appointees. His lawyers bring the suit, and his lawyers defend the suit. He is functionally suing himself. And he, not surprisingly, settles with himself for a staggering amount. He gets an IRS ''get out of jail free'' card. He faces no audit or investigations for any prior tax fraud or underpayment that he, his kids, his businesses, or his associates have ever made or participated in—a deal estimated to be worth up to $100 million for the Trump family, personally—personally.

It is a sham settlement, castigated by a Federal judge as based on a suit brought wholly for an improper purpose and a settlement that was the product of the worst form of collusion and self-dealing.

But that is just the start—the $100 million tax ''get out of jail free'' card, only a start. The settlement also purports to give the President control over $1.776 billion of taxpayer money, which he gets to use as a personal slush fund to compensate his friends and allies who claim that they have been wronged.

Included among the aggrieved: people who violently attacked law enforcement officers on January 6. Now, these people who attacked police officers on January 6, they already got pardoned by the President on his first day. But that wasn't enough for them or for the President. They want to be paid for their acts of insurrection, and the President is willing to pay them with your tax dollars. Imagine, your tax dollars going to pay cop beaters.

And besides the morally repugnant nature of that slush fund and its beneficiaries, it comes at a huge cost. He wants nearly $2 billion of your money—your tax dollars—to fund this cop-beater program, not to serve the public but as a pot of money he controls to pay out to the people loyal to him, willing to use violence for him.

Congress and the courts have compelled Trump's Acting Attorney General to back off the fund for now, but not the President. He still wants to make the payoffs to his cronies and enablers, and the administration is looking for other ways to loot the Treasury for the same purpose, using other funds of the Department of Justice—taxpayer money converted into personal patronage for the President.

There is a word for governments that take public money and hand it to their friends, and it is not ''republic.''

But the cost of this corruption? Incalculable. Besides misappropriating billions of your money, it is also rewarding people seeking to overturn a free and fair election. If it succeeds in encouraging others to do so in the next election, the cost to you just may be our whole democracy.

So let's add it up. Overseas licensing, $23 million; media lawsuits, $36 million; Big Tech settlements, $60 million; Amazon and Melania, $40 million; the meme coin, $635 million; the White House ballroom, $600 million; the Qatari jet, $400 million; Big Law, $940 million; World Liberty Financial, $1.5 billion and counting; the IRS giveaway and slush fund, $1.7 billion and $100 million—for a grand total of $6 billion.

And that, fellow Americans, is just the top 10. That doesn't include the Trump wine sold at the Coast Guard exchanges. It doesn't include Don Junior's ''Executive Branch'' club. It doesn't include the Trump resort in Qatar or the Trump Hotel in Belgrade. It doesn't include Don Junior's $2.6 million in a drone company that just, coincidentally, landed an Army contract. And it doesn't even include all the stock trades of the President.

The President's own filing shows 3,642 trades in just the first 3 months of the year—58 trades every single market day—up to three-quarters of a billion dollars' worth of trades.

Think about that. The man who is supposed to be running the country—instead, he is running a trading desk.

And what a trader he is. He bought Nvidia stock on January 6 of this year, and, 1 week later, his Commerce Department approved Nvidia's chip sales to China—a $50 billion opportunity for the company. He bought more Nvidia in February. A week later, Nvidia announced the blockbuster deal with Meta.

What are the odds? Trade after trade, perfectly timed to decisions only his government knew were coming. And these are only the deals that we know about.

No one put this historic level of corruption in perspective better than the Vice President, JD VANCE, who recently told a crowd that if Watergate took place today, it would be a 12-hour story.

Think about that for a moment. If the President broke into the Democratic Party headquarters, bugged the place, used hush money to cover it up, used the CIA to thwart the FBI's investigation of it, and lied to the country about it, JD VANCE says that would be a mere blip on the screen for them today. He is telling us—the Vice President is telling us—that the corruption of the Trump regime, his regime, is so pervasive, they have so successfully normalized it, that Nixon's behavior would seem quaint.

Congratulations, JD. You have made the most egregious corruption commonplace. Well done. You should be so very proud.

After Watergate, Congress passed a host of reforms to constrain a future corrupt President. They included limits on campaign finance, safeguards to wall off Presidential misuse of the Justice Department, new oversight mechanisms for the intelligence community, offices of inspectors general to root out fraud, and much more.

It now falls on us, in this generation, to usher in a whole new set of reforms, to address a far broader range of lawlessness and corruption.

During the first Trump administration, I introduced the Protecting our Democracy Act, a package of reforms meant to address the many violations of law and norms by the President at that time. We have reintroduced it in the Senate.

But as the list of laws and guardrails shattered and multiplies, the need for corrective action must multiply with it. Just this week, I have introduced three additional bills meant to attack conflicts of interest, keep convicted fraudsters out of our government, and tighten our laws against the bribery of public officials.

In the weeks and months to come, we must propose the best laws that we can, meant to constrain the worst impulses of human nature. But we must be mindful of this truth as well, and that is: no set of laws no matter how well conceived, no constitution, no matter how brilliantly constructed, can protect our lives, our liberty, our prosperity if elected officials are unwilling to live up to their oaths or to accept the truth or to put their country over their party. None of it will be enough.

We must also return prosperity to America. We must make it possible when people are working hard, they can earn a good living for themselves and their families. When people see the lives their parents had as better, all too many are willing to entertain and put their fate in the hands of any demagogue who promises that they, alone, can fix it.

Our democracy will not be on solid ground until our economy is working again for all Americans.

When the Founders gathered in Philadelphia in the sweltering summer of 1787, they debated a great many things, but one fear united them across every divide—the fear of corruption. They had just thrown off a King. They had risked everything—their lives, their fortunes, their honor—to build something new; a Republic, a government of laws, not men. And they knew with a clarity born of hard experience that a Republic would not long endure if leaders used public power for private gain. That is why they wrote a Constitution of checks and balances, one that set the ambition of one branch of government against the other and included provisions meant to address the personal weaknesses and failings of a President—any President—because they understood human nature.

They understood those in power would be tempted to enrich themselves. They understood that foreign governments would try to buy our leaders with gifts and payments and favors. They imagined something like what we are witnessing today.

But what they may not have imagined, what may have exceeded even their worst fears was a President so brazen, so shameless, so relentless, and so creative in the pursuit of personal profit and a Congress so feckless, so loathe to confront him, so lacking in ambition for its own power and institution, so willing to let him profit at the public expense, with payout after payout after payout.

In 1785, Benjamin Franklin was serving as our Ambassador to France. The King of France gave him a gift—a snuffbox encrusted with diamonds—a gesture of diplomatic friendship. In Paris, such gifts were routine; business as usual. But back home, in America, it sparked a controversy.

Franklin had to ask Congress for permission to keep it, and the Congress, then under the Articles of Confederation, granted it. But the concern that a leader less scrupulous than Franklin would be tempted, would be compromised, lingered.

So when delegates gathered in Philadelphia 2 years later to write our Constitution, they remembered the snuffbox. The first draft said nothing about foreign gifts or emoluments. The final draft did because they remembered the snuffbox.

Edmund Randolph, one of the Constitution's Framers later explained it this way:

> This restriction was provided to prevent corruption . . . A box was presented to our ambassador by the king of our allies. It was thought proper, in order to exclude corruption and foreign influence, to prohibit any one in office from receiving or holding any emoluments from foreign states.

They wrote it into the Constitution because of a snuffbox. Imagine. And now we have a President accepting a $400 million jet. Can you imagine what the Founders would have thought of that? We have a President earning more than a billion dollars from a cryptocurrency company his family controls funded, in large part, by foreign interests.

The Founders understood that once you accept the first gift, the second becomes easier, and the third—and soon, you are not making a decision based on what is right for the country, you are making them based on who has been generous to you as President.

My colleagues, the White House has become a marketplace and the Presidency a crooked family business. Every one of these transactions—the dozens we know about and the many more we surely don't—raises profound questions about the influence of foreign governments and the buying and selling of American policy, American justice, and American democracy itself.

Every single day this continues, our democracy is weakened, our institutions are compromised, the office of the Presidency is degraded, and the costs come out of your pocket—out of your pocket.

But here is the thing: The Founders in their warning to us about corruption also gave us the tools to fight it. They gave us a free press to investigate and expose it. They gave us a separation of powers so that no branch could become too powerful. We have those powers in this body—in this body—to stop it, if only we will use them.

And they gave us, above all, a government of the people, the ultimate authority, the final word. And it will take all of us demanding something better, voting for something better, refusing to accept that this is normal or inevitable or just the way things are; a 12-hour story.

Our story is not 12 hours long but 250 years old. It is the story of a country that began as an improbable experiment where people believed that we had sufficient virtue to be self-governing, that we did not need to be ruled by a despot, a country where what is right matters, where the truth matters, and where decency—basic decency—matters.

That is the story of the birth of this country, and that can be the story of its future, if we are willing to fight for it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HUSTED). The Senator from Oklahoma.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. ARMSTRONG. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Executive Calendar No. 729.

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

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of John Breslow, of Arizona, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Cyprus.