

failed economic agenda. Trump has turned the American dream of owning a home into a pipedream.

Let's not forget, when Trump called our bipartisan bill to lower housing costs a joke and refused to sign it, he was belittling the need for housing. The President acts like he is allergic to helping Americans.

What does Trump have to say to the millions of families just trying to make it through the week as they drown in higher gas prices and grocery bills?

Trump said yesterday that Americans are living in the "greatest economy we've ever had by far." Those were his words in Nevada yesterday. In practically the same breath, Trump said:

We may have to send [oil prices] up.

The President has lost any grip on reality. He is so in his own world of creating monuments to himself that he is forgetting the American people all the time. It is not just that he doesn't think of them enough; he hardly thinks of them at all.

The greatest economy we have ever had? Tell that to the family that is deciding between filling up their tank and filling up their fridge. Tell that to the veteran I met who said that he sometimes has to choose between feeding his child and feeding his service dog. Whatever fantasy world Trump is living in sounds a whole lot nicer than the economic hardship Americans are struggling with right now.

Trump's playbook has only one page: Deny reality until the bill comes due, and then send it to you, America.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. President, finally, on nominations, Trump's main priority is his pointless vanity projects, but he has another: packing our government to the rafters with far-right wing extremists.

Senate Republicans are ramming through a nominations package that will put a grab bag of charlatans and MAGA foot soldiers into the highest positions of power. The Senate GOP knows how absurd some of these nominees are, which is why they are trying to flood the zone and push them through with a single vote. They couldn't withstand the spotlight, they couldn't withstand the scrutiny that the individual nominations process would have done to them.

All these nominees will have different jobs, but they share the same qualification: absolute loyalty to Donald Trump no matter how ridiculous his policies are.

The American people expect more from their government than just blind loyalty to Donald Trump.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. RES. 832

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, I have been told that I am a lousy politician but a good Senator. I consider that a compliment. What would happen if everyone in the Senate stopped being a good politician for a moment and strove to be a good Senator when it comes to addressing the issue associated with Social Security?

Over 70 million Americans depend upon Social Security, and ultimately, all Americans will when they reach the age of retirement. Everyone in the Senate and most of the people in the country know that the Social Security System is going insolvent. When that occurs, by law, there will be a cut, if we wait for 6 years, of 22 to 28 percent—a 22- to 28-percent cut in benefits for everyone on Social Security and everyone who will be.

Members of Congress say they care about Social Security. They say they care about the seniors, they care about preserving promised benefits for current retirees and future generations.

We have had a bill before us called the PROMISE Act by Senator DICK DURBIN, my Democratic Senator colleague from Illinois. That would have been a bill that would have set up a Commission, if you will, of the Social Security Advisory Board to put forward a proposal. But the House is out of session. That could not pass. So now I put up a Senate resolution. And we take out the involvement of the Social Security actuaries, and we ask that a group of Senators and Representatives, Republicans and Democrats, come together over the next 2 months in a process to produce a potential idea.

This, what I am about to propose, is not about a particular solution. This, what I am about to propose, is about a process by which a solution can be considered, given to the Senate Finance Committee and House Ways and Means for regular-order consideration, and then with a time agreement so that there will be, after that consideration by the Senate Finance Committee in which any member can replace the bill that is brought to them with an amendment in the nature of a substitute—that "any member" could be BERNIE MORENO; it could be ELIZABETH WARREN; it could be RON WYDEN; it could be BERNIE SANDERS; it could be BILL CASSIDY—putting up their own proposal if they don't like what this bipartisan, bicameral group of elected officials comes up with.

Now, this is merely a process. It does not attempt to point in any direction toward a solution. All it asks is that we be good Senators—putting politics aside and recognizing that if we don't do something sooner than later to fix the problem with Social Security, future Social Security beneficiaries can get as much as a 28.5-percent cut in benefits under current law.

So I am putting it to a test. Will the Senate take up the challenge? Will we

put politics aside and step forward on a bipartisan, bicameral basis to actually work for the American people in a way which can ensure that Social Security exists?

So I ask unanimous consent on a path forward that all colleagues should be able to support. It merely, once more, creates a process to do what the American people sent us here to do: Debate solutions, consider proposals, and vote. It does not predetermine the outcome. It just says that Congress must consider a solution—anyone's solution, Democrat or Republican, left and right. It just asks us to do our job to consider the solution and to then go through regular order on the Senate Finance Committee, to be considered by all.

So will we be good Senators, or will we be good politicians? Will we deny progress for the sake of political success? Let's find out.

Mr. President, I now ask unanimous consent to set up a process—only a process—for Congress to consider solutions. So my script is: As if in legislative session and notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 832, which is at the desk. I further ask that the resolution be agreed to and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, first of all, let me say that, for years now, BILL CASSIDY and I have worked together in the Finance Committee on healthcare, trying to find bipartisan common ground. And I just want him to know how much I have appreciated working with him.

This is an issue we simply disagree on. And that happens. People have differences of opinion.

The Social Security crisis is a freight train barreling toward our Nation. Social Security will be depleted before the end of the next Presidential administration.

The resolution on offer now claims to be a quick solution to addressing the crisis. Instead, the resolution creates a fast track for Republicans to carry out a long-sought goal of slashing Social Security benefits for retirees and helping billionaires avoid paying their fair share. Each time Republicans get their hands on Social Security, it seems that cuts get made and life gets worse for seniors. Establishing this commission would be a fast track to cutting benefits.

The proposal on offer is a Senate-only process. Under the Constitution, bills raising taxes must originate in the House of Representatives. Because of this constitutional requirement, any Senate-only process, like the Cassidy proposal, could not include a tax increase. This means, under the Cassidy proposal, billionaires could not be required to contribute. We couldn't increase the payroll tax cap or include

any other revenue increase. It would mean that the entire burden of Social Security solvency would fall on the backs of retirees and the disabled through benefit cuts. That is not a fair solution for the vast majority of Americans.

Here is the bottom line. Since my days as codirector of the Oregon Gray Panthers, I have a long record of working on a bipartisan basis to fix this problem and protect retired people from missing out on their hard-earned benefits. We can do that by updating Social Security to reflect the economy of America today, by ensuring that billionaires pay into Social Security with each paycheck, like teachers, nurses, and firefighters.

Supporting a scheme like this—a fast track to rip away Americans' hard-earned benefits while shutting them out of the debate—is just plain wrong in my judgment.

If Republicans had any real interest in wanting to shore up Social Security, they would be putting forth their own ideas and working with Democrats to protect the program rather than to undermine it. Democrats have several concrete proposals to protect and strengthen Americans' earned benefits without raising the retirement age, cost-of-living haircuts, or means-testing benefits. It all starts by finally requiring billionaires to pay what they owe, just like the rest of us.

Billionaire wealth has skyrocketed to over \$9 trillion this year while working people struggle to scrape enough money together to pay for rent, gas, and groceries. This proposal, in my view, is effectively a wolf in sheep's clothing. It does nothing to protect Social Security and, instead, hands Republicans the key to the castle to start their work of ripping away Americans' hard-earned benefits.

For these reasons, I object.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, it grieves my soul that once again politics and political rhetoric trumps that which we need to do for the country. Let me address the nature of the objection.

Actually, this is a Senate resolution, but it invites the House to participate; and the Constitution requires that anything raising taxes originates in Ways and Means in the House. And so, therefore, they would have to participate. That is the protection of our Constitution.

It is a bipartisan—by the way, this is a bipartisan proposal to set up this process. There is nothing partisan about it. DICK DURBIN set up the PROMISE Act.

The House, unfortunately, left July 23 so we could not pass it. This is the best we could do with the House out of session in a bipartisan-initiated process.

DICK DURBIN who is a senior Member of the Democratic caucus is the one who is my collaborator.

There is nothing in here to cut benefits. That is absurd. It sets up a process by which a solution can be considered. It does not dictate an outcome. And to suggest that what this does today is dictate an outcome is not telling the truth to the American people.

There is no fast track here. There is 2 months of open dialogue with the American people, and then it goes to the Senate Finance Committee and to Ways and Means for it to then be considered in regular order.

This is basically a time agreement, and time agreements are what we do all the time around here.

I agree with updating Social Security, but we are not going to get there if we say every time one side offers it: Oh, we can't do it because the other side is angling for advantage. Let's be good Senators, not be good politicians.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, just to respond just for a brief minute. You can't originate taxes in the Senate. So what that means is this proposal gives the billionaires a free ride.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, one more time. The resolution invites the House to participate. The resolution says: Please Speaker, please, minority leader, appoint people to participate.

We recognize that Ways and Means have to originate this bill. I wish we could have passed the PROMISE Act, but there were objections to passing the PROMISE Act which would have had to have been passed by the House as well.

So in this, working as well as we can, knowing that Social Security is getting worse and worse by the day, we invite them to participate with the understanding that they could put in whatever they want.

The argument of my colleague from Oregon is that we somehow have a solution baked in. That is not true. This is only a process bill. And if the House wants to advance a bill which taxes billionaires, by golly, they can do it. They can do it under this bill.

Right now, they can't, because there is no mechanism for that bill to advance. We are creating a mechanism by which it can advance. And so, if you want to tax the billionaires, we create the opportunity. If you want to do nothing, you vote against this bill.

I have got limited time left, and I don't feel like sitting back and being a good politician when I should be a good Senator, working to fix Social Security because every day it gets worse and every day the law-required cut-in benefits to beneficiaries increases.

It doesn't get better by waiting 2 years; it gets worse. And opposing this resolution is like basically turning a blind eye to that deterioration.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New Hampshire.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 5345

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I want to thank Senator CASSIDY and Senator WYDEN for the colloquy we just heard because we do need to tackle a number of challenges in the Social Security system.

The most important job of government is, of course, to keep people safe. And increasingly, some of the most constant threats that Americans face are scams and identity theft.

There has been a sharp rise in identity theft and online scams, including the theft of Social Security numbers. Identity theft is more than an annoyance; it can cost people their savings, jeopardize their credit, and more.

This is a danger that we need to take seriously, just as we stopped highwaymen from menacing people on our streets, we similarly must stop the outlaws of the digital age from preying on our people.

Unfortunately, even as criminals steal Social Security numbers, their victims, ordinary Americans, feel as if they have no one to turn to for help. It is not as simple as finding a police officer on the corner to retrieve a stolen wallet or purse.

Criminals have modernized their methods. So the U.S. Government must modernize its response too. That is why I have introduced a bipartisan bill with Senator GRASSLEY. Our bill would streamline the process for victims of identity theft to get help when their Social Security number is stolen, giving Americans a single point of contact at the Social Security Administration so that they can get the help that they need.

When someone's Social Security number is stolen, when they are at risk of losing their hard-earned Social Security benefits, they deserve better than to have to navigate a never-ending maze of hold times and transfers as they try to find someone within the government who can help.

This bill is only one step in the work we have to do to fight scammers, but it does mark a commonsense step that Americans from across the political spectrum can certainly get behind. This legislation will help keep more Americans safe, combat fraud and abuse, and makes our government work better for the American people.

Families are already struggling enough right now with high costs. They deserve to be able to keep the money and benefits that they have earned without being threatened by online criminals. And when they are threatened, they should have access to a straightforward and prompt process to get help.

Now, the House has already passed this bill on a strong bipartisan basis. So I hope that we can send this legislation to the President today.

Mr. President, therefore, as if in legislative session and notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be discharged from further consideration of