

Trump, when you say it is the greatest economy we have ever had and we have lost over 130,000 jobs in the last few months, you don't know what you are talking about. You are not in reality, and it is cruel and callous to the people who are no longer earning a salary.

Americans are working multiple jobs just so they can feed and house their families. How are Americans supposed to afford Trump's skyrocketing costs if they lose their jobs too?

Last week's news that economic growth is down and costs are up is a one-two gut punch to the American people, and this terrible jobs report is the uppercut that follows.

Every red economic flag is waving; every warning light is flashing; and every alarm bell is ringing about Trump's catastrophic handling of the economy, and he is in la-la land not even paying attention to it and saying we have the greatest economy ever.

RUSSIA SANCTIONS

Mr. President, on Russian sanctions, if we want to stop the bloodshed Russia unleashed on Ukraine, we have to make it clear to Putin that he is fighting a losing battle. The Russia sanctions bill sends an unmistakable message to Moscow that America will back Ukraine to the hilt; that we will look for new ways to back Ukraine. Lindsey Graham was searching for those ways for a long time, and today his wishes—even though he is no longer with us—are likely to achieve fruition. The Russia sanctions bill will make it clear to Moscow that America will back Ukraine to the hilt. The Russian sanctions bill sends an unmistakable message to Putin that we will oppose him for as long as it takes to defeat him.

I have long said that supporting Ukraine and its fight against Russia's illegal invasion is about protecting the United States and our future generations as much as it is about supporting Ukraine. Just this morning, the Wall Street Journal reported that U.S. intelligence is now warning Putin may try a limited assault on NATO in the coming months and years to test our resolve.

Putin's ambitions beyond Ukraine have long been clear to all of us who have fought tooth and nail to support Ukraine. Putin wants to test America's resolve because he doubts Trump's resolve. That is what happens when Trump tries to placate the Russians at every turn. And now Congress, bipartisan, with Lindsey Graham looking down upon us, is saying: Even if Trump doesn't get it, the danger that Putin presents, we do, and we are taking strong action.

We need to show Putin he is dead wrong about questioning our strength, and this bill is an important step in that direction. The legislation is going to help drain Putin's war chest and give Ukraine the tools to defend itself.

So I want to thank Senators Blumenthal and Shaheen for all their work on this bill. They have been dili-

gent, dogged, and unrelenting, and they are about to achieve their goal by passing this legislation.

Thugs like Putin don't care about what we say, only what we do. You can only stop him with actions and not words. Russia is losing momentum in this war every single day, and we will keep helping Ukraine stop the invaders in their tracks for as long as it takes.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. President, and on the CR, finally, for months, Senate Democrats have been clear as day: We want to reach across the aisle and hammer out a budget that delivers for the American people. Today's CR gives us the breathing room necessary to work out a budget that helps make life more affordable to working families and reins in Trump's rampant chaos, his rampant corruption.

Senate Democrats have stood up for the American people at every stage of these negotiations, and that is why Senator MURRAY successfully blocked Trump's scheme to withhold taxpayer-funded grants from States he deems disloyal to MAGA. Americans of every stripe—in blue States, in red States, and States in between—want their government to deliver for them. Senate Democrats won't stop until we get the job done.

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. YOUNG. 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.

Mr. YOUNG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following Senators be permitted to speak prior to the scheduled rollcall votes: YOUNG for up to 5 minutes; WARNOCK for up to 5 minutes; CASSIDY for up to 10 minutes; WYDEN for up to 15 minutes; PAUL for up to 20 minutes; SHAHEEN for up to 5 minutes; BLUMENTHAL for up to 10 minutes; and RISCH for up to 5 minutes.

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

The Senator from Indiana.

RUSSIA SANCTIONS

Mr. YOUNG. Mr. President, Russia has been condemned for years, but what it has not yet faced is a cost high enough to change its course.

Senator Lindsey Graham understood that. The bill he left us, his final legislative legacy, does not stop at symbolic penalties or mere gestures. It is a strategy. It is a strategy to impose real costs on those sustaining Russia's war machine.

Lindsey, who was a friend of mine, understood what it would take. Not another statement of outrage, but a serious plan, a plan to make continuing this war more costly than ending it.

And it starts with an uncomfortable truth: We cannot choke off the war

chest while Russia's largest customers keep replenishing it, even as those same governments insist they want the war to end.

The United States, however, has leverage—enormous leverage. Access to our market carries enormous weight. Our allies know this, our adversaries know it, and the governments buying Russian energy certainly know it.

But we should remember that tariff threats of this magnitude do not stop at the doors of a Foreign Ministry. They have real-world consequences. They can reach factory floors, farms, small businesses, and family budgets here at home.

That doesn't mean we shouldn't act. We should act. But if Americans might absorb some of these costs, they deserve a policy that is transparent, disciplined, and tied to well-defined objectives.

That is why Congress has a responsibility—a responsibility to ensure that these authorities remain focused on their intended purpose, with clear standards governing when additional pressure is warranted and when demonstrated progress should be recognized.

The bipartisan support for this legislation sends a clear and a very important message: The pressure authorized here is directed at the countries financing Russia's war and must remain tied to that mission—full stop.

The goal—and the result Congress should demand—is a race to the bottom among Russia's largest energy buyers, with each country competing to cut its purchases faster than the others.

But a race only works when every participant knows the rules, when every participant understands the objective, and trusts that meaningful action will be recognized.

If countries buy more Russian energy, if they conceal transactions, or if they help Moscow evade sanctions—well, the President has every right to increase pressure, and he will have my encouragement.

At the same time, if countries cut those purchases, stop enabling Russia, and demonstrate the change with real evidence, our policy should respond accordingly—that is how leverage produces action instead of simply imposing costs.

And as this legislation moves forward through the process, I look forward to working with Chairman CRAPO and the administration to keep these tariff authorities focused on the threats Congress intends to confront—the very threats Lindsey Graham worked so hard to confront.

This bill presents a simple proposition: Countries may finance Russia's war or they may enjoy the benefits of access to the U.S. market, but they shouldn't expect to do both without consequences.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. WARNOCK. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in

the RECORD this letter from U.S. Trade Representative Greer.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD as follows:

THE UNITED STATES TRADE
REPRESENTATIVE

Executive Office of the President,

Washington, August 6, 2026.

Hon. RAPHAEL WARNOCK,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR WARNOCK: Regarding our conversation on §113, the legal basis to maintain, modify, or adjust the rate of duty specified in subsection (a) exists only where a country meets the description in subsection (c), including countries identified in subsequent determinations made pursuant to subsection (e). Absent this legal basis, such duties cannot be maintained.

Sincerely,

AMBASSADOR JAMIESON L. GREER,

United States Trade Representative.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Georgia.

TARIFFS

Mr. WARNOCK. Mr. President, this letter restricts the President's tariff authority under the Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act. This is a small but meaningful victory for all Americans who continue to suffer under this President's reckless tariffs.

Let's be clear: Putin is a war criminal, and his war machine must be stopped. But we should not have to choose between putting a check on Putin's aggression and putting a check on this President's tariff regime. That is a false choice, and it is one that I am not willing to accept.

And so I hope, in the coming hours, that we go further during the amendment process. I hope my colleagues will join me in stripping out any new Presidential tariff authorities. These are not normal times. This is not a normal President. If you give him an inch, he will take a mile. We don't have to imagine. We are seeing it in real time. And everyday people, as a result of that, are struggling—struggling to buy groceries, struggling to buy gas, struggling to buy their kids back-to-school supplies. They are the ones who are suffering the consequences of his reckless tariff regime.

But this commitment that we were able to get from Ambassador Greer is meaningful because if the President ignores the law, if he oversteps his power, we will see him in court.

I hope this weeklong process was the first step in Congress reasserting its role and placing guardrails on this President's tariff regime.

I urge my colleagues to go back home and talk to ordinary folks outside of the beltway. They will tell you that while they support any efforts to protect our national security—and that is what this is about. This isn't just about Ukraine. It is about our own national security. But we must do everything to protect our national security, while at the same time bolstering the economic security of everyday Americans.

So as we go back home, ask any parent you meet how much back-to-school shopping cost them this year. I can tell you as the father of two small children, that it is much more than they wanted to spend.

When we come back to Washington, we can fight for those parents and build on this work to check the power of this reckless President.

But I am glad that we have gotten as far as we have on this issue. I would like to thank my friend and brother Senator CASSIDY for your partnership in this amendment process, and I would like to thank Senators SHAHEEN and BLUMENTHAL for their efforts to find a solution and way forward to support Ukraine, to protect our national security and our economic security at the same time.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Louisiana.

NOMINATION OF TODD BLANCHE

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, I rise today to speak to the nomination of Todd Blanche to be Attorney General.

Over the last several days, I have heard from lots of people sharing their views on this nomination, and most of the time it is clear Mr. Blanche has become a referendum on how people feel about President Trump. If you don't like the President, you don't like Mr. Blanche, and if you do like the President, you do.

I have not approached it this way. This process should be about Mr. Blanche and how he will go forward in a difficult job and how the American people can be best served. I have a history with Mr. Trump, but that history does not matter one bit.

On the one hand, Mr. Blanche does not need to be Senate-confirmed. He can continue to serve at the pleasure of the President as Deputy Attorney General or even Acting Attorney General if this vote is pulled. On the other hand, I am told that Senate confirmation is important in interactions with the President, with others in the Cabinet, and is important to DOJ employees, in general. Being Senate-confirmed gives him greater leverage to push for things that should be pushed for.

This does not demean the Senate's role. Important issues have been discussed through this process, and Mr. Blanche has made commitments.

Now on to the specific nomination. Since Mr. Blanche passed out of Judiciary Committee on August 4, I have spoken to Mr. Blanche five or six times. We have texted many more. I just got off the phone with him. I have spoken multiple times to Senators MURKOWSKI, CORNYN, and TILLIS. Senator WHITEHOUSE shared his concerns. Additionally, I spoke with current and past administration officials, including a long conversation with former Attorney General Bill Barr. Late last night, I spoke to two U.S. attorneys from Louisiana: David Courcelle and Kurt Wall. Of course, there has been a lot to read and a lot to consider, and I slept on it overnight.

Let's start with the concerns. Mr. Blanche showed poor judgment in approving the anti-weaponization slush fund and exempting the President from IRS audits. No American should be unfairly targeted by the law, but no American should be above the law. Mr. Blanche said these were mistakes, and he has made efforts to kill the slush fund.

I am particularly concerned about episodes of apparent lawfare—DOJ bringing suits against political enemies. Presidents of both parties have been guilty of this. It must stop. It should stop now. A never-ending cycle of prosecuting political enemies undermines the rule of law, degrades the public's trust in our institutions, and makes our politics more extreme when we need to unite to solve the big problems of our time. I am not entirely satisfied where this is, and I have no doubts that I will have concern in the future. I will note that I have learned that some of the cases that are publicly reported to be under investigation by the Department of Justice have been dismissed or are no longer being pursued.

I am realistic that President Trump can be unrelenting on this, but this would be true no matter who the Attorney General is, and this is the rationale for having a Senate-confirmed Attorney General with more leverage to push back.

I will also note that Mr. Blanche is criticized for things over which he has no control. He points out that he has been criticized for Presidential pardons given to January 6 rioters, some of whom assaulted police officers. Many of us were here then. But this is a Presidential prerogative, and he is not the President.

He also points out that he can advise the President, but the President is not obligated to take his advice. That is the same thing that former Attorney General Barr said in a separate conversation. I can absolutely believe that President Trump, at times, would not take advice.

But even critics admit that Mr. Blanche knows the law and is a hands-on administrator. He has instructed U.S. attorneys to focus on violent crime, human and drug trafficking, and fraud in programs like Medicare and Medicaid. Mr. Courcelle, the U.S. attorney in New Orleans, said that when he needed extra resources, Acting Attorney General Blanche provided them to finish a big drug case.

Both Mr. Courcelle and Mr. Wall said the DOJ has accountability measures for each prosecutor in their office and that there are weekly calls between their offices and DOJ to review the performance of each prosecutor; that morale is high not despite the accountability measures but because of the accountability measures; and more cases were being processed and convictions being obtained. David Courcelle spoke of almost \$1 billion in fraud being recovered for the U.S. taxpayer from healthcare fraud.