

as myself must soon be to the mansions of rest.

Relying on its kindness in this as in other things, and actuated by that fervent love towards it which is so natural to a man who views in it the native soil of himself and his progenitors for several generations, I anticipate with pleasing expectation that retreat, in which I promise myself to realize without alloy the sweet enjoyment of partaking in the midst of my fellow citizens the benign influence of good laws under a free government—the ever favorite object of my heart, and the happy reward, as I trust, of our mutual cares, labors and dangers.

GEO. WASHINGTON.
UNITED STATES, 19th September 1796.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BANKS). The Senator from Washington.

SAVE AMERICA ACT

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I rise today because I think the President tonight is going to continue to talk about his radical changes to our electoral system. He has tried by Executive order, just as he tried to impose tariffs by Executive order, and he found out that he didn't have that authority, according to the Supreme Court. We know now that article I, section 4 of the Constitution says that the States administer elections, that Congress can regulate, but there is no role for the President. I say this because I am very concerned about the President's proposal, and I am very concerned about the SAVE Act.

Greg Kimsey, who is the Clark County auditor of a part of Washington where I guarantee you, we have real election issues—basically, the other day, in trying to fight against the SAVE America Act said this: "Voting is a constitutional right, a barrier to the exercise of constitutional right should only be enacted if the government's compelling interest is greater than the citizen's individual constitutional right, the government's interest in ensuring that only U.S. citizens vote would not be significantly enhanced by the SAVE [America] Act."

So here is a Republican auditor who is basically saying in my State that this is a constitutional right by the citizenry of our State and that the SAVE America Act is basically putting too much of a burden on it.

Have States been failing in election administration? Is there a public outcry from Republicans or Democrats who observe the elections every year or the League of Women Voters that the Federal Government should overturn our Constitution and give this power to the President?

State systems right now are working, and they are not finding significant voter fraud. States have ways of finding out fraud. That is how the system works—because it is based on your signature and saying who you are. King County in my State, the largest county by population, only had 12 instances of voter fraud in the 2024 election that were referred to the prosecutor's office for investigation. Now, we are talking out of millions of votes. None were related to a non-citizen casting a vote, according to King County elections director Julie Wise. Nationally, the conservative Heritage Foundation found 1,620 cases of fraud between 1982 and the year 2025, so that is 1,000 cases of voter fraud, basically over a 40-year period of time. In Texas, they only found 113 cases in those 43 years and, in Georgia, 36 cases.

So again, by comparison, if you are looking at these numbers from a national number, 154 million Americans voted in 2024. The Cato Institute, another conservative group, found similar results in places like Utah, Louisiana, Idaho, Michigan, and Montana. The League of Women Voters is also citing their opposition to the SAVE America Act in saying that only one ten-thousandth of 1 percent is the case of voter fraud.

I wish I had a chart up here, is where I could put the zeros—.0001 percent, so one ten-thousandth of a percent of voter fraud. That is what we found. But somehow, people are saying we should disenfranchise millions of Americans—some have estimated as high as 9 percent of the voting public—to somehow improve that one ten-thousandth of 1 percent. Somehow, that is what we should do.

The League of Women Voters opposes the SAVE America Act because it argues: "By creating a 'show your papers' requirement to not only register but also to cast a ballot, lawmakers seek to suppress millions of eligible Americans from voting."

I also had a letter from the former Republican secretary of state in my State, Sam Reed, who said: "I oppose the SAVE [America] Act. Neither the President nor Congress should be in the business of micromanaging elections. As a longtime Republican election administration official, I adamantly support our nation's constitutional framers' decision that the election process be decentralized to states."

I issued a snapshot report last week detailing the impacts of the SAVE America Act on the voters, and believe me, it is going to cost them time and money. A replacement for a birth certificate—because that is what you are going to need to show that you are a

U.S. citizen—costs anywhere from \$23 to \$50; a passport can be as much as \$165. Twenty-one million Americans don't have these documents readily available. Seven percent of Texas voters don't. Ten percent of Georgia voters don't, and you are basically now asking them to go and find them.

And what about the women in our country that maybe have been divorced, don't have the same name; they have paperwork that is messed up? How is she going to get the right documentation in the right period of time, since passing the SAVE America Act and putting it on the President's desk means it is implemented immediately for this election? Election officials are generally open normal working hours, which would mean a voter would have to take time off from work or hire childcare just to go down there and show these papers.

The SAVE America Act puts up barriers, and it gives the President the authority to have Homeland Security reviewing the voter rolls. That is right. They would take voting rolls and voting information and basically start to approve it. Negligible voter fraud, but yet massive disenfranchisement, that is what would be created.

So I am very concerned because our national voting system does depend on you being a U.S. citizen. This is what the ballot actually says—here is one of my old ballots that I took a picture of. It basically says on the outside of your ballot, return as soon as possible by election day. This ballot contains an envelope, and your signature will be compared to your voter registration, and then it asks you to sign.

But since I wanted to make this a little clearer, I put this attestation that is on the top of the ballot that everybody—so you are directed when you see this ballot, you know that that is what you have to do. You have to sign there. You have to read this attestation: I do solemnly swear and affirm, under the penalty of perjury, that I am a U.S. citizen. And it goes on to say that failure of this is a felony punishable by a maximum imprisonment of 5 years in jail or a fine of \$10,000 or both. And then you sign your name.

Now, the notion that somebody thinks illegal immigrants are running around the United States of America signing ballots saying they are a U.S. citizen, when they can read right here that it says, I do solemnly swear under perjury and these fines that I am a U.S. citizen, I don't think so. These people aren't even going to the grocery store right now. They are not even going to the doctor's office. They are scared to pick their kids up from school.

And somehow, somebody is perpetrating this notion that they are signing ballots and basically trying to sway the election when I just said it is one ten-thousandth of 1 percent of voter fraud. And the voter fraud that they are catching isn't even non-citizens; it is probably people who actually have committed felonies or other types

of actions—because, guess what, when you go to vote and you sign this ballot and you register, which also says you have to be a U.S. citizen, and then you have people at the voting place—every signature is checked. Every signature is checked.

In fact, in our State, the Washington State Patrol basically advises the election officials how to compare the signatures. And while they are comparing the signatures, there are Republicans and Democrats and League of Women Voters and observers in every election official office checking to see that that information is correct.

Now, you want to move all of that to the Homeland Security Department and let them be in charge of this and let them say how many people they think should be thrown off the rolls. I don't. This is a constitutional right for our States. It is one that is working. There is negligible fraud, and we shouldn't change it because you think you are going to get one more zero on that one ten-thousandth of 1 percent and disenfranchise millions of voters.

I do not want the Department of Homeland Security acquiring more information on us. I do not want the general post office holding ballots without postmarking them. I want our country to believe in free and fair elections. It is how we move forward. The President of the United States tonight should listen, as my guest tonight is the secretary of state from Washington whose vote-by-mail system is unparalleled in its ability to get the vote out and to be accurate, even in the closest of elections.

And we do catch fraud, and we do match systems against voters and information about them, so the system works. So please, please let us not tonight forget that voting in our country is a constitutional right upheld and pursued by our States. Let's keep that system. Let's turn down the SAVE America Act. Let's move our country forward with more participation in our elections, again by U.S. citizens in the system that has delivered for us today.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip.

TARIFFS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, last Friday, the Supreme Court ruled to strike down most—70 percent—of Trump's tariff taxes.

Tariffs can be useful when used strategically, but President Trump exceeded these authorities, as clearly defined by Congress, and the Supreme Court, by a vote of 6 to 3, told him as much. He defied basic economic sense. Just ask any American business or consumer who suffered under this chaotic policy.

Last year, the average American family paid more than \$1,700 in tariff costs. A tariff tax, as described by the President, sounds like a problem for the exporter to the United States. It is

not. It is paid by the importer. That turns out to be the American consumer.

So, at a time when families are struggling to make ends meet, when the cost of living is going up, the products that they are buying—many of them—are subject to Trump's tariff tax, and they have to pay it, how much does that mean for each American family? It means \$1,700 a year.

A recent report from the New York Fed found that 90 percent of the economic burden of Trump's tariff taxes fell on Americans—not on foreigners but on Americans.

How did the Trump administration respond to it? They said the researchers needed to be "disciplined."

The chaos unleashed by this administration's attacks on American businesses and consumers also resulted in a massive decline in manufacturing jobs last year—jobs the President promised he would be creating and would be booming. In fact, U.S. factories employ 72,000 fewer people than they did in April of 2025, with more declines every single month.

The President has also broken his promise many times over to the farmers in Illinois. His tariffs have made farming in Illinois unprofitable—not just by making the fertilizer, seeds, machinery, and equipment more expensive but also by wrecking export markets like China for years to come.

I have met with these farmers throughout my congressional career. They are proud, hard-working people. They are the backbone of so many communities across our State.

I meet with them, and they say: Senator, all we want the Federal Government to do is get the heck out of the way. We grow the best crops in the world. We can compete with any country on Earth. Just don't make our job more difficult by government action.

The tariffs did make it more difficult for these farmers, and they told me as much.

Last week's decision was a victory for America and a defeat for this President. It was a victory for the rule of law. But the damage has been done to small businesses and balance sheets across this country.

But instead of reconsidering his position after a clear 6-to-3 loss in the Supreme Court, President Trump is whipsawing between new tariffs—new taxes—resulting in the European Union halting a trade deal with us as they consider their next steps.

Chaos, turmoil—the President thrives on it, but American families and the economy do not. It is up to Congress to reject those desperate gambles by the President. Congress must also act to ensure that small businesses across the country get their money back as soon as possible.

And how about the families who paid for these products that have been taxed by the Trump tariff tax? They deserve relief too. If we are concerned about the cost of living as it hits American

families, they need to have some relief, too, and the President, after losing in the Supreme Court, should pay this money back.

REMEMBERING JESSE JACKSON

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, on a completely unrelated topic, the year was 1969. I had just graduated from law school. I was working for the Lieutenant Governor of the State of Illinois, a man named Paul Simon. He sent me on a mission. He wanted me to go to my hometown—East St. Louis, IL—and then to Cairo, IL. Both communities were in desperate need of help.

The reason he asked me to go at that time was the fact that the Reverend Jesse Jackson, in 1969, was launching Operation Breadbasket. He was shining a light on the ravages of poverty and the failure of the government to protect those in need.

He went through these two communities to listen to the desperate, the damned, and the disinherited. Even then, Reverend Jackson exuded a warmth that could put even the most anxious person at ease. He spoke with eloquence that would stir a person's heart—always did.

As he continued his fight against poverty and injustice, Reverend Jackson became one of the founding voices of the civil rights movement in America. He inspired countless politicians, activists, and preachers to fight for the dignity in every person.

In his life, Reverend Jackson contributed to the benefit of so many people. He will continue to be a symbol of hope, endurance, and equality long after his death. I extend my sympathies to his wife, his family, his friends, and followers.

His Operation PUSH on the South Side of Chicago is a legendary venue. Everybody who is anybody in politics makes a stop there. Jesse Jackson for years—for decades—managed to be a leader in our community through Operation PUSH.

I am going to miss him. We had speed dial on one another's phones, and he wouldn't hesitate to call me with advice on a regular basis. Sometimes, I even took it, but I was always glad to hear it because it was always heartfelt and always focused on helping the little guy. That was his life, and he lived it so valuably.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, on a separate subject, last week marked the season 13 premiere of late-night host John Oliver's "Last Week Tonight."

In the 30-minute monologue, John Oliver laid into the Department of Homeland Security which he says "remain[s] a massive agency with unclear checks on its power, boatloads of money, and sweeping surveillance authority."

John Oliver is right, but it is important to remember how we got to this