

parts of our country, it helps on air-conditioning, which is vital. And as the Presiding Officer knows, the number of people who are dying of heat exposure has been increasing, alarmingly. So this is the call to the Trump administration: Do your job.

Now, Secretary Kennedy has a legal responsibility to disburse the current LIHEAP funding, and it is illegal for him to withhold those funds as well as really pretty cruel.

The reality is that this summer we in Congress came together, on a bipartisan basis, to increase and to pass the \$4 billion in funding for the program. And, again, I emphasize, it is not a red State, blue State deal. It is not a Republican, Democratic deal. It is a person who is in a home, doesn't have money, and is cold. That is what it is about.

So I am calling on President Trump and Secretary Kennedy to stop stalling and to act with alacrity and release the LIHEAP funding for the benefit of the people in the State of Vermont and in every State in this country who depend on it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUESTS

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, last week, Republicans in Congress passed a government funding bill that denies affordable healthcare to millions of Americans. But what most people don't know is that they also voted to provide millions of dollars to a few Republican Senators in a blatant, taxpayer-funded cash grab.

Here is what happened. In the process of passing government funding legislation, Senate Republicans airdropped a provision into the bill at the last minute. This provision allows eight Republican Senators to collect millions of dollars from the U.S. Government, when what the Department of Justice did was to lawfully subpoena those phone records during a grand jury investigation. But now these eight Senators can sue the government for at least half a million dollars for each individual instance of a lawful access to those phone records. That means that each Senator could actually pocket millions of dollars, and that money would be paid from your hard-earned tax dollars—and that is even though the law was followed by the government at the time.

Frankly, this is just outrageous to me. This is at the exact same time as 22 million Americans could see their health insurance premiums skyrocket because Republicans refuse to extend the ACA tax credits. This is at the exact same time as millions of seniors and veterans and families are learning that they will lose their SNAP food assistance altogether because of President Trump's "Big Bad Bill." It is at the exact same time as families across my home State of New Mexico and

across America are wondering how they will put Thanksgiving food on the table or how they will put presents under the tree in a month, how they will fuel their car to get to the job that is in jeopardy now because of President Trump's cancellation of Federal grants, exorbitant tariff taxes, and overall recklessness.

But instead of fixing all of that, instead of tackling the affordability crisis in this country, instead of blocking President Trump's tariffs and undoing his war on American jobs, instead of fighting to protect the 41 million people whose SNAP benefits were in jeopardy during Trump's shutdown, Republicans made time to insert this payoff. It is unprecedented in American history.

Let's put it another way. Everyday people are struggling. While one TikTok account called Dollar Tree Dinners—an account that teaches low-income folks how to make filling meals from Dollar Tree ingredients—has over 3 million followers, U.S. Senators could receive over \$3 million from your wallet.

There are no existing records of Congress creating a taxpayer-funded cash pipeline for Senators to sue the government for doing its job. That is probably because it is so patently wrong.

Even House Speaker MIKE JOHNSON agrees with me, and when Speaker JOHNSON and I agree something is bad, you know it is really, really bad.

As ranking member of the U.S. Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch, where this provision was inserted, I can tell you that the process to include it was not normal. It was not in our markup. Normally, we have the opportunity to review new language, provide edits, and negotiate. None of that happened. This was slipped in at the eleventh hour, and now the American people are expected to pony up.

I am furious that the Senate majority leader chose to airdrop this provision into that bill in particular with zero negotiation with the subcommittee that actually oversees this work. It is why this week, I introduced a bill with U.S. Senator MARK KELLY to shut down this taxpayer-funded payoff. We must reverse this last-minute giveaway that lets a few Senators pocket millions of dollars of taxpayer money while millions of Americans are revisiting their budgets to figure out how to make it to the end of the month.

Like my Anti-Cash Grab Act, H.R. 6019 will eliminate the retroactive \$500,000-per-instance cash claims for Senators. It will block millions in taxpayer-funded kickbacks to politicians. And it still keeps the door open for legitimate reforms to notification requirements without any of the self-enriching loopholes.

Now, I disagree with the title of H.R. 6019, but I agree on the substance, and that is what matters here.

The truth is that a country where a sitting elected official can get half a

million dollars or more in one go while people around the country see their monthly costs rise by hundreds or thousands of dollars—that is a country that is not serving the people. This is not the America I know, and it is not the America we should be.

This is a test. This is a test of whether Congress works for hard-working families across America or for DC insiders. It is, to put it clearly, a test of our accountability, our transparency, and most of all, our integrity. I know which side I am on.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 6019, which was received from the House and is at the desk, and I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read three times and passed and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I object to a lot of stuff being said, but let's just start with sort of the facts.

You said this was a lawful subpoena. What did I do wrong? What did I do to allow the government to seize my personal phone and my official phone when I was Senate Judiciary chairman? What did I do?

There was an order issued that said if I was notified of this breach of my privacy, I am likely to intimidate witnesses or destroy evidence. Based on what?

There are 10 of us involved here. What did we do to justify having Jack Smith issue a subpoena for the phone records of a branch of government—the Senate—where all of us had to decide whether or not to certify the election?

So, no, it wasn't lawful. You have determined it was. You don't get to decide; a court does. We are not going to let the Democratic Party decide my fate; we are going to let a judge decide my fate. But I have to get in court and prove my case.

To the majority leader, was this provision socialized with the minority leader?

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUESTS

Mr. THUNE. I would say to the Senator from South Carolina the answer to that is yes.

Mr. GRAHAM. Was this provision socialized with committees of relevant jurisdiction?

Mr. THUNE. The answer is yes.

Mr. GRAHAM. Was this issue sent to the Ethics Committee?

Mr. THUNE. Yes.

Mr. GRAHAM. OK. So this wasn't Republicans doing this; this was people in