Companies at the frontier of this emerging technology have the resources to pay for the infrastructure and the costs associated to run these facilities. Importantly, these costs should not be borne by American families nor by American businesses.

My colleague from Ohio has worked incredibly hard to get this bill across the finish line and deliver basic protections for the American people.

The public is overwhelmingly in favor of the protections it would provide. Many States have already embraced it, including my home State of Tennessee. Tennessee adopted President Trump's Ratepayer Protection Pledge while preserving the ability of local communities to make decisions about data center development.

The communities that have chosen to welcome innovation have seen incredibly positive impacts: more jobs, new investment, and an increase in their tax base that can allow for a full range of options from lower property taxes to greater investment in local public resources.

Importantly, we are doing so while ensuring that the cost for addressing the energy demands of data centers aren't passed along to Tennessee families nor Tennessee businesses.

What is the only thing standing in the way of enacting these protections? What is standing in the way? It is my colleagues on the other side of the aisle.

In the House, the Ratepayer Protection Pledge passed on an overwhelmingly bipartisan basis with a vote of 417 to 3. You almost never see that level of consensus in Washington, and yet, last week, Senate Democrats blocked it from passing right here on the Senate floor. Unbelievable. Unbelievable.

Instead of comprehensive measures that put the decision-making power in the hands of State and local communities, my colleagues across the aisle want Washington to decide, making sweeping decisions for our Nation without input from the towns and the cities it would directly impact.

I can't stress this enough: Removing local choice and imposing blanket data center moratoriums are not the answer to responsible innovation. In fact, it is precisely what will kill innovation and put America underwater in the technological race against our adversaries.

When it comes to investing in this new future, communities should be in the driver's seat. Localities should be able to decide when, where, and whether they should permit these facilities, especially when they have so much to gain from the investment.

Sadly, we have seen a massive amount of misinformation circulating about data centers: their costs, their energy consumption, their wastewater usage, their noise levels.

The truth is, we can find solutions to the concerns of Tennesseans and Americans, while putting the United States in the best possible position to succeed.

We need to speak out against these false claims, put a stop to the fearmongering that is jeopardizing America's opportunity to lead in this critical area for our economy and for our national security, and we must clearly communicate the advantages that communities can have when they embrace American energy and American technological ingenuity—all the while protecting, and even bettering, the lives of Americans. It is time to pass the Ratepayer Protection Act.

But here we are in an election season. Fearmongering is taking precedence over responsible and thoughtful action. False claims abound while America's technology leadership hangs in the balance. We should move responsibly, protect American communities, and support our Nation's economic and national security.

The House of Representatives has seized this opportunity. It is time for the Senate to set partisan politics aside and pass the Ratepayer Protection Act.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

STOP INSIDER TRADING ACT

Mr. RICKETTS. Mr. President, I rise today to urge my colleagues to vote for the Stop Insider Trading Act that will be voted on a little bit later today.

Eighty percent of Americans believe that we do a poor job of separating the inside information that we get from our financial situation, and Congress' approval rating is only 15 percent.

Why do Americans have such a lack of faith in our institutions? Well, in part, because of what has happened with trading in Congress.

A former Democrat Speaker of the House was publishing her trades and people were using that as a trading strategy and they were making money off of it.

Just the appearance of impropriety leads people to a lack of faith in our institutions. My Stop Insider Trading Act would help address that. It would prevent anybody who comes into the House or Senate from owning any stock—or rather from buying any stock. You would not be allowed to buy any stock once you come into the House or the Senate.

And for the stock you already own, if you are going to sell it, you have to give 7 to 14 days' notice so the market would know that ahead of time and be able to take action, if they thought that that Member had inside information.

This bill also has penalties to make it stick: a minimum of a $2,000 fine, but 10 percent of the proceeds—or 10 percent of the transaction. So, for example, say somebody sold a million dollars' worth of stock without giving the proper notice, that would be a $100,000 fine. On top of that, they would have to give up all of the profits.

We need to restore the faith of the American people in the House and in the Senate. My Stop Insider Trading Act will help to be able to do this, by letting Americans know that their elected representatives are not using this position for profit but for public service.

I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense legislation, and especially my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who have blocked this in the past. Let's work together to restore Americans' faith, which is to vote for the Stop Insider Trading Act.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. BUDD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following Members be permitted to speak prior to the scheduled vote: BUDD and MARKEY for up to 10 minutes total; SULLIVAN and HEINRICH for up to 20 minutes total.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 4238

Mr. BUDD. Mr. President, the most basic responsibility of Congress is to identify problems and deliver policy solutions that better serve the American people. That means cutting unnecessary redtape, eliminating confusion, and fixing gaps in the Federal Government that prevent it from doing its job effectively.

And that responsibility is often put to the test when disaster strikes. In Western North Carolina, Hurricane Helene did more than devastate our communities—it exposed weaknesses in our Federal disaster response that we, here in Congress, have a responsibility to fix.

Any Senator who has served their State in the wake of a natural disaster knows that bureaucratic failures are not just problems on paper—they have real consequences for real people. Every unnecessary delay, outdated process, or a gap in our response can stand between a devastated community and the Federal assistance that it needs to recover and to rebuild.

I understand that reality all too well, having walked the road to recovery with the people of Western North Carolina who lost everything in a once-in-a-century—hopefully, more than a century—storm.

In this rural part of our State, small businesses drive local economies, and many were destroyed and shuttered after Helene. For many, their only hope of getting back on their feet was by accessing disaster loan assistance through the SBA, or the Small Business Administration.

But in 2024, when these small businesses were trying to secure a fighting chance, the Biden administration—they dropped the ball by gravely mismanaging the SBA's Disaster Loan Program.

By issuing irresponsible rules, drastically increasing the costs of making and administering these disaster loans, and failing to notify Congress that funding to administer these loans was running low, the Biden administration allowed for a 66-day shortfall that impacted 97 percent of North Carolina residents. We can't allow this to happen again.

So I am bringing a commonsense solution to the table that has received bipartisan support in the Small Business Committee. My Disaster Loan Accountability and Reform Act will create more safeguards against a future shortfall by requiring annual appropriations to the SBA's Disaster Loan Program and informing Congress when these funds are running low.

The bill has one clear goal, and that is to make sure our Nation's small businesses are never left without the disaster assistance that they were promised.

The next major disaster should not expose the same failures as the last. It is our responsibility to mend broken systems and to coordinate the Federal Government and its agencies so that we are ready to manage the aftermath of the next major disaster.

So I ask my colleagues to join me in taking a necessary step forward in improving our Federal disaster response by voting to pass this bill.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 448, H.R. 4238; further, I ask that the bill be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Let me just begin by saying I agree with Senator BUDD about the importance of transparency and of accountability in our disaster programs.

But I cannot support this legislation while the Trump administration politicizes and withholds aid from disaster victims in blue States, including my own home State of Massachusetts.

Recent reporting revealed that Trump overrode the recommendation of his own Agency and prevented four Democratic States—including Massachusetts—from receiving disaster assistance related to blizzards earlier this year. So parts of my own home State got nearly 41 inches of snow in 24 hours, costing our State over $45 million in blizzard-related expenses.

And according to this report, the States easily met FEMA's internal qualifications for disaster aid. But for Trump, the only qualification is blind loyalty.

And this is not an isolated incident. While red States' FEMA disaster applications have been approved 89 percent of the time, those from blue States receive signoff from the Trump administration only 23 percent of the time.

But don't think you are safe just because you are in a State that voted for the President. Earlier this month, at a rally in North Carolina for Michael Whatley—Trump's hand-picked MAGA Senate candidate—President Trump told a community devastated by Hurricane Helene—here's what the President said this month in North Carolina: You know you're waiting for some additional funding. Now, if Michael loses, I'm not sending it to North Carolina.

What? The people of North Carolina should get the help. It shouldn't depend upon whether the Senator is a Democrat or Republican, whether it is blue or red. It is about Americans who have suffered a disaster.

And the numbers are incredible. This is the history, since Ronald Reagan, of disaster relief in the United States. And you can see that it tracks pretty much red and blue the whole way—Reagan, George Bush 1, Clinton, Bush 2, Obama, Trump 1—stayed the same. Money went out in equal amounts to red and blue States, Democrat and Republican States.

But then Trump won again, and you can see what is happening. In the blue States, it looks like the 1929 stock market crash. We go from being equal with Republican States to falling off the table, and you can't really treat disasters that way. They are Americans. It could be a flood; it could be a hurricane, a tornado. It doesn't make any difference. They are all our American neighbors. They deserve the Federal assistance.

The President, again as recently as this month, is saying in North Carolina: If you elect a Democratic Senator, you won't get the help.

That is just not right, and we all know that is not right. So that has to get rectified because that is really not cooperation; that is just corruption, right? That is just saying: We're going to take this Federal program and turn it into something where he gets arbitrarily to determine whether or not he dishes out the money.

And it doesn't really make any difference to me if it is Oklahoma or North Carolina or Massachusetts or California; everyone who suffers a disaster should get the Federal help they need.

The President just cannot be allowed to use essential disaster aid as a tool for political extortion. Yet there he is, he is making it plain as day that if you don't vote for a Republican Senator, you don't get any money in your State for a disaster which has devastated your people.

We just have to make sure that we stand up and, if we are serious about transparency and accountability in the disaster recovery process, we should hold hearings, demand answers from this administration about why blue States are denied help at such a disproportionate rate.

And if the Trump administration insists on putting MAGA before the many, Congress must force the administration to treat disaster victims fairly, regardless of the State where they live or who they voted for.

I want to work with the Senator from North Carolina to address the administration's unacceptable treatment of disaster victims in Massachusetts and other blue States. We just have to get it back to the historic norm. The Senator has identified a problem, and I have worked with him in the committee to help to move that legislation.

But this is in many ways an even bigger problem. We cannot have this disparate treatment to continue any longer. So because of that, but with my request that I work with the gentleman as we head into the lameduck session, that we can work to talk to the Trump administration about rectifying this historic injustice.

So, at this time, as a result, I must object to the Senator's request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BUDD. Mr. President, I understand my colleague is having an issue with disaster relief reaching his State. On that, I can certainly relate.

And by the way, this is a colleague who has worked to pass this unanimously, I believe, out of committee—so much appreciated there—but now seeks to block the bill.

But I worked with the Trump administration to cut through the bureaucratic hurdles that had slowed down aid. I held a number of the administration's nominees to put a stop to them, put a pause on them, to ensure that my message was heard.

But what I did not do was hold my fellow Senator's legislation from potential passage or hinder efforts to make our disaster program run more smoothly.

I hope my colleague can now see how this bill would positively impact both my State and his State and do what is right for the American people by passing this bill in which he voted for, again, out of committee.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 5438

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, today, I urge my colleagues to vote for Alaska's Right to Produce Act 2.0, which would provide greater certainty for responsible resource development on the North Slope of Alaska. It would benefit Alaskans, and it would benefit our great working Alaskans, but it would benefit America.

As a little bit of background here—and you have heard me talk about this—for years, Alaska, as a resource development powerhouse for America, has been recognized by Congress to be so important for our country because of our extraordinary abundance of natural resources that we have legislated many times about our State's getting