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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Friday, January 31, 2025, at 10 a.m.

Senate

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2025

The Senate met at 12 noon and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Immortal God, Your Name is great throughout the Earth. We thank You for the undeserved blessings You give us each day. Lord, You bless us with life, health, faith, hope, and love. You give us Your peace. Great and marvelous are Your works.

Today, guide the Members of this body with Your wisdom. Help them to resolve to become part of the solutions to our Nation's problems. Make clear to them the path of duty, and lead them in the doing of Your will. Lord, provide them with counsel to deal with complex challenges and infuse them with divine discernment to accomplish Your purposes.

We pray in Your strong Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RICKETTS). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Lee Zeldin, of New York, to be Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, yesterday afternoon, my Democratic colleagues—and when I say “my Democratic colleagues,” I mean all of my Democratic colleagues, with one exception—chose to block legislation to sanction individuals at the International Criminal Court who participated in investigations or prosecutions of American or Israeli citizens.

In the wake of the vote, a number of my Democratic colleagues put out a statement expressing their concern at the ICC's decision to issue arrest warrants for Israeli leaders. I suppose it is nice that they are concerned. They should be concerned. But it would be even nicer if they had done something about it.

It is hard for me to fathom how Democrats could vote against this commonsense measure. In fact, they wouldn't even vote to have a debate. I am not sure if they are afraid of antagonizing the anti-Israel wing of their party or if they are simply too beholden to Big Tech, which lodged some tenuous concerns about this legislation.

But whatever their reason, Democrats chose to vote no—no to standing up for our ally Israel and, even worse, no to standing up for our own citizens. Apparently the “America last” playbook is alive and well in the Democratic Party.

Mr. President, Republicans tried to the very end to accommodate Democrats in hopes of finally getting this legislation over the finish line, nearly 8 months after the Republican-controlled House first passed the bill. But Democrats kept moving the goalpost, and Republicans were not going to just gut the legislation to get Democrat votes.

If Democrats decide that they want to take real action to address the targeting of our allies and prevent future targeting of American citizens, Republicans are here. Until then, we will continue to do what we can without Democrats to defend our allies and our Nation.

NOMINATION OF LEE ZELDIN

Mr. President, over the last 4 years, the Biden administration set our energy security on a dangerous path. Administration policies created serious uncertainty for energy producers. The administration sharply restricted oil and gas development. New government

● This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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regulations threatened to close existing powerplants, even as our electric grid struggled to keep up with demand. The President attempted to force the widespread adoption of electric cars—again, despite the incredible strain that would place on our already shaky power grid. And the list goes on.

Mr. President, a recent report from the North American Electric Reliability Corporation warns of “mounting resource adequacy challenges” in the next decade. One reason is the retirement of conventional energy generators—in some cases, because of regulation. Another is increased demand—like increasing demand for electricity being driven by artificial intelligence data centers.

It takes roughly 10 times as much electricity to run a ChatGPT query as it takes to run a Google search. Think about that. Imagine the energy demands of AI at scale. Anyone who thinks we can be on the leading edge of new technology with less—or less reliable—energy should think again.

We need more energy, and the good news is: We have it. In fact, we have the resources to be energy dominant. But we need to start saying yes to American energy.

On his first day in office, President Trump took the first steps toward restoring American energy dominance. He declared a national energy emergency, which will allow him to cut through some of the redtape that stifles energy production, as we continue to work toward broader regulatory relief.

He also reversed the Biden administration’s pause on new exports of liquefied natural gas, a decision that threatened American jobs and left our allies looking elsewhere for their energy. President Trump also reopened parts of Alaska to energy development that the Biden administration had previously closed off. He spared the American people from the Biden electric vehicle mandate. And he put the brakes on spending from the Democrats’ so-called Inflation Reduction Act—in reality, a climate bill whose actual cost has skyrocketed since it passed.

Mr. President, energy is an asset, and producing our own energy means we don’t have to rely on other nations for a critical resource, including countries that don’t share our values. Energy dominance is a deterrent to our adversaries, and it is literally the engine of our economy. But if we want to restore our energy dominance, we have to start saying yes to American energy—yes to an “all of the above” energy strategy that includes everything from oil and gas to hydropower and biofuels—everything. We need all of it.

I have come to the floor many times to discuss the negative effects of burdensome regulations, and for the last 4 years the EPA has put forward some of the Biden administration’s most harmful regulations. There was the WOTUS rule that would have been a disaster for farmers and ranchers; the Good

Neighbor rule that would have shuttered powerplants in several of our States; the Clean Power Plan 2.0, which would have jeopardized our future energy security; overly strict emissions rules for vehicles that would have forced Americans into electric vehicles that they don’t want and, in most cases, can’t afford; costly standards for medium- and heavy-duty trucks that would have harmed small trucking operations. The list goes on.

Regulations like these, drawn up in Washington, DC, have real-world impacts, and I am pleased that President Trump has committed to giving Americans relief from excessive regulations and that his EPA nominee will help him implement that vision.

Lee Zeldin, whose nomination we will vote on later today, is a former four-term Congressman representing a district almost completely surrounded by water.

He understands the stakes of environmental protection. His record in Congress speaks to this. But Mr. Zeldin also recognizes that the EPA can’t be a hammer in search of nails and that EPA rules have to be balanced with the needs of our economy, our national security, and the American people.

He also understands the importance of collaboration with stakeholders—something that was too often lacking in the Biden administration. I know farmers and ranchers in my State would have appreciated a seat at the table before the Biden administration resurrected the harmful WOTUS rule, and I am pleased that Mr. Zeldin is focused on bringing that collaborative approach to the EPA.

I am also grateful that Mr. Zeldin committed to timely release of the renewable volume obligations, as is required by the renewable fuel standard. In years past, the Biden EPA has been late in releasing its renewable volume obligations, which were often below industry production levels, creating instability for producers.

Biofuels are an important asset in America’s energy portfolio, so I am pleased that Mr. Zeldin will ensure that biofuel producers have the certainty that has been lacking in recent years, and I am encouraged that Mr. Zeldin is willing to work with Congress on President Trump’s promise of year-round E15 sales.

Restoring energy dominance will require an “all of the above” approach. It will require a smarter approach from regulators, and I look forward to working with Mr. Zeldin in carrying out this important work.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I am here to back the nomination of Lee Zeldin of New York to be Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, so my vote will be yes in a few hours from now when we vote on that nomination.

The EPA plays a very important regulatory role in the United States. Not

only does it regulate pollution, like many Americans already know, but it also regulates many areas that impact Americans every day.

As many farmers in Iowa know, the previous administration’s EPA put out a regulation that would overregulate what we know in this town as waters of the United States or, as the leader just put it, WOTUS. This would have regulated 96 percent of the land in the State of Iowa, and that would subject that land to Federal water regulations. It would almost be impossible to do regular farming operations without wondering whether you were violating some regulation. That is what the leader just said. This regulation is not common sense.

The EPA also oversees issues critical to agriculture, such as the approval and labeling of pesticides and other important tools for farmers.

The EPA also oversees the renewable fuel standard and protects its integrity. The renewable fuel standard provides an important framework for biofuels, which benefits farmers by sustaining an additional market for their commodities.

Besides, biofuels, or in Iowa because we are No. 1 in the production of ethanol, we like to say it is good for agriculture; it is good for good-paying jobs in rural America that we would never have without the ethanol industry; it is good for the environment because it is clean-burning; it is good for our national security—less reliance upon foreign sources of energy. There is everything about biofuels that is good, good, good. There is not a negative that you can come up with about them.

In our meeting earlier this month in my office—Mr. Zeldin came there—I impressed upon him the far-reaching impact that his Agency has over the lives of farmers and all Americans.

Mr. Zeldin assured me that he would be responsive to Congress and that he would provide ample time to provide transparency and market stability before regulations from his Agency are promulgated. Mr. Zeldin’s assurance about making decisions on time is important because previously the required volume obligations dealing with biofuels and the small refinery exemptions have not been finalized in time to make the RVOs whole. This leads to less ethanol blending, which goes against President Trump’s commitment to farmers and the ethanol industry, which Mr. Zeldin assured me that he supports. For the sake of Iowa farmers, I am hopeful that Mr. Zeldin stays true to his word.

Just in case you wonder whether or not we have anything to fear from EPA in agriculture, I want to give you a little history that is now history, but it just shows you how, in this town, which I call an island surrounded by reality—the real America is outside of this island here—a few years ago, they were going to promote a rule that you would say is just unbelievable. You have to be telling us a story. They wouldn’t be proposing this rule.

It was called the fugitive dust rule. OK. The theory of the fugitive dust rule from EPA is that if you are farming and you create dust in the normal operations that go into a farming operation—plowing, disking, planting, spraying, whatever it might be, combining the harvest—that you are supposed to keep that dust within your property lines.

Now, that is what EPA tried to promulgate. In fact, I think one time we thought we had it killed, and a couple of years later, it came up again. Now I think it is dead forever because it doesn't meet the commonsense test that a farmer working his fields can keep the dust within his property lines.

So I tried to explain it to EPA Administrators this way in regard to the harvesting of soybeans, which leaves a lot of dust. I said that when soybeans are 13 percent moisture, it is very necessary that you very quickly harvest them because 13 percent is the most ideal time with that amount of moisture in soybeans.

Do you know, to these Administrators, only God determines when the wind blows, and whether the wind is blowing or not, your soybeans are 13 percent, you have to get in there and combine them and not worry about where the dust goes, and you have about 2 weeks during the harvest season to accomplish the same goal.

But, no kidding, that is what EPA was trying to do to agriculture a few years ago.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

JANUARY 6 PARDONS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, all of us can remember that when the Biden administration took office, one of the first issues facing them was the evacuation of American forces from Afghanistan. That effort had started under President Trump in the previous administration, but it was up to Joe Biden to execute the plan for that to happen.

The sad reality is that during the course of that evacuation, American troops lost their lives. I am sure that haunted President Biden every day he served as President, that the moment when he was being tested, he did not come through for those men in uniform who risked their lives and gave their lives in that effort. Those deaths haunted him, I am sure, during the 4 years of his Presidency.

I would say to the new President, Donald Trump, serving his second term, he has an issue that is going to haunt him. I can't tell you for how long, and I don't know exactly how it will affect our country, but it has already started. It started when he decided about 10 days ago to grant clemency to the January 6 offenders, those men who were engaged in an insurrectionist mob activity that overran the U.S. Capitol on January 6.

I know something about this because I was here. I was in this chair when the

mob that you have seen on television and in videos over and over again were taking control of this Capitol.

Presiding over the U.S. Senate—we were all in our seats—was the Vice President of the United States, Vice President Pence. We were counting the electoral votes in each State to decide who was the official winner of the Presidential election. It was happening right after President Trump had his rally not far from here and told his supporters and demonstrators to come up to the Capitol Building, which they did in vast numbers. And they didn't just come here for a casual visit; they came to break down the doors and break down the windows and to invade this building.

I am not exaggerating. You have seen it on the videos; you know what happened.

The net result of it is a lot of brave men and women who were part of the Capitol Hill Police force and the DC Police force stood in their way and tried to stop them and were beaten back. Over 140 of these officers were seriously injured by the demonstrators and the insurrectionists who were coming into this building. Several lost their lives. That was the reality of what happened.

The net result of it was one of the largest prosecutions in the history of the United States. Ultimately, hundreds of them paid a price for that violent activity on January 6 and what they did to our policemen.

The same policemen who are standing in the hallway now and protecting you—they are the people who were assaulted on that day. In fact, on the floor at this moment, I notice across the way one of the officers who stood before us that day and gave us instructions as to what to do. After Vice President Pence was removed, this officer of the Capitol Police told us: Stay in this Chamber. Stay in your seats. This is going to be a safe room.

That lasted about 10 minutes, and he came back in and said: We have changed the plan. Evacuate this room as fast as possible.

We all went outside the door.

It was a dangerous moment. It took hours before we could take the Capitol back from these demonstrators and marauders.

The men and women who were dedicated to their cause did things that were outrageous in terms of desecrating this building, the U.S. Capitol Building, this symbol of America. They desecrated it, and they had to be stopped. A lot of brave men and women in uniform risked their lives and some gave their lives as a consequence of it.

Many of them went to jail after they had been charged with crimes on that day of January 6, and it wasn't until the first day of the Trump Presidency that they finally had a chance for a pardon, and President Trump gave them that opportunity by releasing them from jail.

It is important to know what happened afterwards. You would think

these men—largely men—who had served time in jail, some of them for lengthy sentences—up to 20 years—when they were released with this pardon by President Trump, would go about their business and resume a normal, law-abiding life. That is not the fact.

Let me tell you what happened in the 10 days since President Trump granted these pardons, just so far as we know of those who were released from jail for their violence on the U.S. Capitol of January 6. I am going to do it by name.

Matthew Huttie, released by President Trump by pardon, was shot and killed by the Indiana State Police earlier this week after a traffic stop, when he resisted arrest while in possession of a firearm.

Daniel Ball has already been re-arrested, since he was released with the Trump pardon, on gun charges related to past convictions for domestic violence by strangulation and battery against a law enforcement officer.

These two individuals not only assaulted the law enforcement officers protecting us in the Capitol, when they were released by pardon from President Trump, they did it again in the week that has transpired since that happened.

Andrew Taake assaulted police at the Capitol with bear spray and a metal weapon. He is now wanted in the State of Texas for soliciting a minor for sex and a felony carrying a charge of up to 10 years in prison.

Enrique Tarrio, the head of the Proud Boys organization, a domestic terrorist group which has been identified for many years—he was convicted of seditious conspiracy on January 6 for his role in planning that riot. Here is what he said after his release:

Success is going to be retribution. Now it's our turn.

Stewart Rhodes, head of the Oath Keepers, another domestic terrorist group, convicted of seditious conspiracy for his role in planning the riot, said after his pardon by Trump and release:

The people who did this, they need to feel the heat. They need to be put behind bars and they need to be prosecuted.

He said January 6 should be remembered as "Patriot's Day." He said he had no regrets "because we did the right thing."

Jacob Chansley, the so-called QAnon Shaman, posted on X after his pardon—and I have to leave some of the words out now:

I AM GONNA BUY SOME [MF] GUNS . . . and EVERYTHING done in the dark WILL come to light.

Let's be clear. President Biden's acts of clemency are far more defensible than President Trump's pardons on January 6. Sadly—sadly—for law enforcement officers across the country, they are going to face many of these people again.

NOMINATION OF KASHYAP PATEL

Mr. President, on an unrelated issue, tomorrow the Senate Judiciary Committee will hold a confirmation hearing for Kash Patel, President Trump's nominee for FBI Director.

What is the Federal Bureau of Investigation? We all have an image of it from television and from life experience. But it is 38,000 men and women, some of the best law enforcement professionals in not just in the United States but in the world, who are charged with keeping America safe.

I witnessed 9/11 in this building, looking down the Mall, watching billowing smoke coming in from the plane that crashed into the Pentagon. And we thought to ourselves immediately: Who is doing this to the United States? Whom should we ask? The Federal Bureau of Investigation. And that is what we did.

Time and again, we have gone to the FBI when the most serious law enforcement issues came up, and we still do. It is a critical Agency—38,000 employees and investigators, 400 offices all around the world. The person who heads the FBI has an awesome responsibility and an awesome authority.

Kash Patel is the nominee of President Trump to head up this Agency. Let me tell you about him.

I met with him, and I reviewed his record. I am deeply concerned about his fitness to serve as FBI Director. He has neither the experience, the judgment, nor the temperament to head this critical Agency.

As the lead investigative Agency of the Federal Government, the FBI plays a crucial role in keeping America safe from terrorism, violent crime, and other major threats. Our Nation needs a Director of the FBI who is ready on day one and who understands the importance of maintaining the integrity and independence of the Agency.

Unfortunately, Mr. Patel's record of service to the government demonstrates the opposite. He has pledged his loyalty to President Trump and promised to weaponize the FBI on President Trump's behalf. Mr. Patel has published an enemy's list of 60 people whom he called "government gangsters." He told far-right extremist Steve Bannon that "these people need to go to prison." I am not going to go through all the names, but Mr. Patel has published it in his book, which I had an opportunity to read, not once but twice.

"Government Gangsters," it is called. It spells out in detail his enemies list—his hit list—that he would have. This list includes many distinguished public servants who dedicated their lives to our Nation. Among them are Democrats and Republicans, including former Trump administration officials like Secretary of Defense Esper.

And then there is Mr. Patel's plan to "shut down the FBI Hoover Building on day one and reopen it the next day as a museum of the 'deep state.'" This

man wants to head the FBI and calls for closing down its headquarters the day after he would have that authority—for goodness' sakes.

Mr. Patel has peddled debunked conspiracy theories throughout his adult life that benefit President Trump. Patel claims that January 6 was "never an insurrection" and the FBI—get this now; this is what Patel says: The FBI "was planning January 6 for a year."

Can you imagine that? He has even coproduced and sold recordings of a song performed by January 6 rioters who violently assaulted our police officers.

During tomorrow's confirmation hearing, I will continue to press Mr. Patel on his many statements and positions. Will he focus on keeping the public safe from terrorism, drug trafficking, and violent crime, or will he focus on his trail of grievances and President Trump's agenda?

I fear Mr. Patel's record demonstrates the latter.

President Trump came into office promising to shake up the government. What he has done is wreak havoc.

Late Monday, President Trump, through a bureaucrat I never heard of, Matthew Vaeth, the Acting Director of the Office of Budget Management, ordered a freeze of Federal funding, which was set to begin at 5 p.m. last night. Thankfully, a Federal judge stepped in and temporarily blocked the sweeping, unconstitutional order until February 3.

Should this order be allowed to take effect, it will have devastating consequences, ranging from preventing communities from accessing natural disaster relief to halting food assistance.

Today, I want to speak specifically about how this action would harm the National Institutes of Health and medical research.

The National Institutes of Health is the premiere medical research Agency in the world—the premiere medical research Agency in the world. The \$38 billion they spend each year makes America and the world better by finding new drugs and cures for serious diseases. They support more than 400,000 jobs nationwide in medical research—jobs focused on conducting that research that leads to these cures and treatments that save lives.

Can you think of any more important Federal responsibility other than perhaps national defense?

Because of the work funded by NIH with taxpayer dollars, people with cancer are living longer and even being cured. HIV/AIDS is no longer a death sentence, and groundbreaking treatments exist to slow the progression of neurological disorders such as ALS and dementia.

Chances are, if you or a loved one takes any medication, you have NIH to thank, because 99 percent of the drugs approved over the past decade benefited from NIH research—99 percent.

Chances are, if you or a loved one ever get sick and wonder what options exist to save your life, the doctors will suggest a treatment developed by NIH.

Late last week, President Trump ordered NIH to stop all grant reviews and advisory council meetings, which allow researchers to decide what are the new research proposals we are funding.

Monday night, President Trump went a step further with his order coming down from the Office of Management and Budget—an order to stop all Federal grant funding, including at the National Institutes of Health.

I know this happened because the major universities in the Chicagoland area, which I respect so much, called me in a panic and said: We are supposed to stop all of our research. We are in the middle of some critical things.

I had to say: That is exactly what this temporary pause or temporary freeze would do.

Each year, NIH awards nearly \$38 billion in research grants to all 50 States and the District of Columbia. They support hundreds of thousands of jobs, generate \$92 billion in economic activity, and facilitate lifesaving medical research.

Do you know what the leading cause of death is in the United States? The No. 1 cause of death is heart disease, but there are others—cancer, unintentional injury, drug overdose, stroke, respiratory disease, Alzheimer's, and diabetes. NIH researchers work every day to find breakthroughs to save lives in America from these leading causes of death.

So when you freeze this Agency's work, when you tell their researchers to stay home, when you tell them not to spend a penny because they can't be compensated, it means you are putting a stop to the research that critically is trying to keep us alive. You handicap our Nation's efforts to develop new cures and treatments that address the top causes of death.

NIH is considered the world's leader in biomedical research, providing treatments and cures that other people in the world just dream of. President Trump's proposed freeze on NIH work is cruel and will have life-or-death consequences.

If your parent has dementia, you want the NIH work to continue. If your husband or wife has been diagnosed with glioblastoma, ALS, or Parkinson's, you need NIH work to continue. If you have a child diagnosed with a rare childhood cancer or heart condition, you are desperate for NIH work to continue.

This should not be a partisan issue. Over the past decade, Congress has, on a bipartisan basis, increased the NIH budget by 60 percent. We believe in their work.

A Federal freeze must not be allowed to take effect. I would hope my Republican colleagues would join me in calling President Trump to reconsider this harmful policy. Lives depend on it.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

TRUMP EXECUTIVE ORDERS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, 2 nights ago, the Trump administration committed a breathtaking act of economic sabotage. In the blink of an eye, OMB announced a near-universal freeze on all Federal grant funding. Donald Trump's actions can be summarized with three C's: chaotic, careless, cruel. It is a gross overreach by Republicans, and it is no surprise that the American people are furious.

Last night, a Federal judge issued an administrative stay of OMB's announcement, but the danger is not over, not by any means. Donald Trump and his ultraright puppet Russell Vought will keep trying to make this freeze happen.

Today, I will speak to Democratic Governors around the country to discuss how this freeze is hurting their States and talk about coordinating our responses against this gross abuse of Presidential power.

The blast radius of OMB's announcement was seemingly limitless—States, cities, towns, schools, small businesses, local law enforcement, nutrition services, elderly care, and so much more were impacted. It is as if OMB designed their announcement to maximize chaos and confusion and suffering for the American people.

Make no mistake, this decision from OMB is Project 2025 in action—Project 2025 by another name.

Donald Trump's lawless behavior fits a pattern. First, he pardoned insurrectionists. Then, he fired independent watchdogs and labor commissioners. And now he is freezing—freezing—congressionally approved funding.

Before our eyes, Donald Trump is rigging the system and breaking the law to help his billionaire friends at the expense of working families.

I got calls yesterday from Republican town supervisors and mayors in panic about flood prevention and sewer projects, who told me they had shovel-ready projects to go but now those projects were in limbo. I got calls from food banks, like FeedMore in Western New York, fearful that suddenly they won't be able to make deliveries to hungry people. I got calls from groups like Rochester Head Start, worried sick they are not going to be able to pay rent or pay their staff. I got calls from the Roswell Park Cancer Center in Buffalo and Northwell Hospital on Long Island, asking if funding was suddenly going to vanish.

How is freezing all of this funding going to help families pay for groceries or make neighborhoods safer or create new jobs? Of course, it won't. In fact, it is going to do the opposite.

One week ago, OMB nominee Russell Vought refused to answer in testimony questions about the impoundment of congressional funds. Now we know why. He did not want to alert Congress

about this freeze on funding. Mr. Vought clearly withheld information that Senators were entitled to know, and he needs to give us more answers.

The Senate Budget Committee should not proceed with Mr. Vought's confirmation until we get answers. I join my fellow Democrats in calling for a 2-week delay of Mr. Vought's markup.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION FIRINGS

Mr. President, yesterday, President Trump showed his true, hostile colors to working people and union members in America. Without cause, the President took the unprecedented step of firing a duly appointed Commissioner of the National Labor Relations Board 2 years before her term was set to expire. Then, last night, President Trump fired two Democratic members of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, leaving that body frozen without a quorum.

Let's be very clear. These unlawful firings are a direct assault on working people. The President's decision will increase workplace discrimination, worsen unfair hiring practices, and erode workers' ability to push for better wages and safer working conditions. What these firings will do is stack the deck against employees trying to organize or join a union to get better benefits and better pay.

Donald Trump says he wants to help working families. This is no way to do it. And these firings are clearly unlawful—unlawful.

These purges are another example of Donald Trump's lawless Presidency, like his pardoning of insurrectionists, eliminating independent watchdogs, and illegally freezing congressionally approved funding. Everything Donald Trump is doing fits a pattern. He is abusing the Office of the Presidency and is breaking the law to rig the system to help his billionaire friends—all at the expense of working families.

NOMINATION OF ROBERT F. KENNEDY, JR.

Mr. President, today, Robert Kennedy begins testifying before the Senate Finance Committee.

To state the obvious, having a very wealthy anti-vaxxer running America's public health would put every single American in danger. Mr. Kennedy is a walking public health crisis waiting to happen.

Of course, he is doing exactly what everyone thought he would do in his hearing. He is suddenly saying what people want to hear about vaccines. He is claiming he was never against vaccines or that his words have been twisted. We need to look at Kennedy's record. He has spent years making millions peddling conspiracy theories and outright lies. His nomination should go no further.

NOMINATION OF KASHYAP PATEL

Mr. President, on Mr. Patel, tomorrow, the Senate Judiciary Committee will hear testimony from Kash Patel, President Trump's nominee to be the next FBI Director.

Mr. Patel is not remotely prepared to serve as FBI Director. In fact, he has a long history of spreading lies about the FBI and of smearing the public servants who work there to keep us safe. He is a conspiracy theorist, a hard-right ideologue, and openly hostile to the free press.

During tomorrow's hearing, the most important questions for Senators is, How on Earth will Mr. Patel's confirmation make Americans safer? How will Americans be safer if the FBI is led by a darling of the QAnon movement? How does it serve America's public safety to elevate a January 6 sympathizer to the highest level of enforcement in the land? How can Americans trust that Donald Trump will drain the swamp if he puts one of his most loyal political fixers as chief law enforcer?

It is written you can't serve two masters, and that is sure true of Mr. Patel. He either serves the interests of the American people or he serves the interests of Donald Trump. Given Patel's history, it is very clear who he will choose—Donald Trump.

NOMINATION OF TULSI GABBARD

Mr. President, on Tulsi Gabbard, tomorrow, the Senate Intelligence Committee will hold a hearing for President Trump's nominee for DNI, the Director of National Intelligence, Tulsi Gabbard.

Of all the people President Trump could have nominated for the job of DNI, few could be worse for our national security than Tulsi Gabbard. If confirmed, Ms. Gabbard would be a walking liability to our intelligence community and our national security. She has a long and troubled history of spreading falsities and sympathizing with the likes of Vladimir Putin and Assad. Given her history, it is not unreasonable to ask if Ms. Gabbard would use the DNI job to push false intelligence for political ends.

Is Ms. Gabbard really the best Republicans have to offer for the job—someone who is known to make things up out of thin air? Is this really who Republicans want managing our intelligence community, which is fact-based? Our intelligence Agencies and the people who work there rely on truthfulness and facts to keep our country safe. Ms. Gabbard is deficient in both qualities and clearly does not merit elevation to the position of DNI.

TRIBUTE TO MARK GAZELLE

Mr. President, on Officer Mark Gazelle on his retirement, I want to honor a longtime officer with the U.S. Capitol Police who is retiring this month after 34 years, Officer Mark Gazelle.

For the last 34 years, Officer Gazelle has carried out his duty to protect and defend this great citadel of democracy with supreme excellence, courage, and professionalism. No matter his assignment—from the first responders specialty unit, to the mountain bike unit, to the Senate Chamber as a plainclothes officer—Officer Gazelle kept the Capitol Complex safe, and he was

instrumental as the floor officer in making sure the body could carry out the work of the American people day in and day out.

We all owe Officer Gazelle our deepest gratitude for his service to the Capitol Police, to the Congress, and to the Nation. We say to him thank you and wish his family the very best.

Thank you, Mark.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 6 minutes, followed by Senator WHITEHOUSE for up to 6 minutes, prior to the scheduled rollcall vote.

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

NOMINATION OF LEE ZELDIN

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I strongly support Congressman Lee Zeldin as the nominee to be the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. We are blessed in America with enormous natural resources. I support using our resources responsibly; I support sensible environmental stewardship; and that is what we will have with Mr. Zeldin.

Americans deserve clean water and clean air. They deserve good jobs and economic strength. Environmental protection and economic growth should go hand in hand; they are not mutually exclusive. As the head of the EPA, Lee will return the Agency to its original mission of protecting America's air, water, and land without, as he puts it, suffocating the economy.

Nearly 2 weeks ago, the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works held a hearing on Lee Zeldin, and as the former chairman of the committee, I was honored to introduce him. He is highly qualified, and his support is bipartisan. He is a lifelong public servant, and he is a seasoned lawyer and has a sharp legal mind.

He has over 20 years of military service and currently serve as lieutenant colonel in our U.S. Army Reserve.

Lee also served 8 years in Congress, in the House of Representatives, as a Representative from New York. In that role, he worked to strengthen our economy as well as protect his district's unique ecosystem. He worked across party lines to accomplish his goals.

For the last 4 years, the so-called experts at the Environmental Protection Agency went on a reckless regulatory rampage. They saddled American families and businesses with higher costs and with heavyhanded restrictions. They bowed to climate extremism while ignoring common sense.

In 2024, the EPA introduced one of the most expensive regulations in American history. It is called the electric vehicle mandate. The EV mandate was truly leftwing lunacy at its worst. According to the Competitive Enterprise Institute, the total cost of compliance is over \$760 billion—with a "b." To put this in perspective, the cost of this one regulation coming out of the Biden administration was equal to the

entire pricetag of 8 years of regulations under the Presidency of Barack Obama. The EV mandate would also cost hundreds of thousands of jobs.

Americans rejected the EV mandate and other costly climate policies this past November at the ballot box.

President Trump revoked the EV mandate on his first day in office. Here in the Senate, repealing the Biden EV subsidies is one of my top priorities. These subsidies alone are estimated to cost taxpayers more than \$393 billion.

Americans shouldn't have their taxpayer dollars pay for vehicles that most Americans don't want, can't afford, and actually don't work for them and their families. Americans shouldn't be dependent on communist China like we are today with electric vehicles.

Lee Zeldin will continue President Trump's mission to roll back these punishing political regulations.

The EPA does important work. It does that work in States and in local communities. Lee will be a fantastic partner to my home State of Wyoming. He is not going to impose one-size-fits-all mandates on American consumers and American businesses. Instead, he is going to cut redtape. We will see a new wave of creativity and innovation. Lee knows that innovation, not government intervention, is the best solution to lower prices, to grow the economy, and to protect our environment.

Many Americans are confident that Lee will right the ship and restore the balance needed at the EPA. One of these organizations is the National Association of Clean Water Agencies. In a letter to the committee, the association said that Lee has "shown a willingness to engage with a broad spectrum of stakeholders to address pressing issues."

Lee also impressed our colleagues here in the Senate. That is why my Democrat colleague from Arizona said about Lee:

He's a qualified candidate for this job.

I share America's confidence in Lee.

Through 3 hours of tough questions, Lee Zeldin provided quality answers and proved that he is well qualified. He showed he is committed to strong environmental protection and to energy production. He is the right nominee to lead the EPA. The Senate should confirm him quickly.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am a friend of the distinguished Senator from Wyoming, but on this matter, we disagree quite a lot. I think, clearly, everybody likes clean air and clean water. My opposition to Lee Zeldin is founded on where he is likely to be on a different issue—climate change.

Climate change is coming at us, and the context for Lee Zeldin's nomination, I believe, is this: We went through a long period of science on climate change, starting with the early days of

Dr. Hansen and NASA's work, work by Exxon and other Big Oil majors themselves, lots of work at universities and in U.S. and State government. And the science pretty well nailed it. They pretty much got it right. They warned what was going to happen, and it began to happen, and it has continued to happen.

Based on those warnings, we moved into phase 2, which was the political era of climate, where it was our job here in this building to listen to those warnings and figure out what the best and smartest thing was to do about them. The problem was that the fossil fuel industry got involved with Citizens United climate money in the hundreds of millions behind it, and they squelched that conversation. As a result, Congress has failed to address the looming climate crisis purely from fossil fuel-funded Republican opposition.

That takes us now into era 3, the era of the "forewarned but not prevented" consequences, and the place in which those consequences are most saliently making themselves felt is in the homeowners insurance industry.

Homeowners insurance is in crisis in this country and is in near meltdown in various States and counties in this country because the risk that the insurers have to bear is now unpredictable to them. So what we are seeing is homeowners insurance prices skyrocketing. We are seeing homeowners insurance companies going bankrupt, leaving States, firing their long-time clients because they don't want to provide coverage in these danger areas, which include coastal areas—Florida, as a result, is kind of first and worst in the home insurance meltdown—and wildfire-adjacent areas second, which puts California and a lot of other Western States very much in harm's way.

Now, the problem with that is it doesn't just end with an insurance crisis. When you get a sufficient number of properties that cannot get affordable home insurance or cannot get home insurance at all, those properties become un-mortgageable.

If you are a billionaire living in Palm Beach, you can find another billionaire to buy your property who can write a check, but if you are a real-life person—a plumber in Orlando, living in a development, who paid for their home with a mortgage—you are going to want to sell that home to somebody who can get a mortgage. When your home can't be mortgaged any longer, that will crash its property value. In fact, if your homeowners insurance goes from \$4,000 to \$16,000—a case we heard of—then that crashes your property value, too, because a \$16,000 carrying cost on a piece of property knocks its value way down.

So not from the "greenies," not from the environmental community, but from Freddie Mac, the mortgage giant, we heard the warning that an insurance crash turns into a mortgage crash, turns into a coastal property values crash, which is serious enough

that it redoes 2008: We have another national recession.

It is in that context that we need to understand that we need an EPA Administrator who will take climate change seriously, treat the science honestly, and stand up where necessary to the political pressure that will be coming from the White House, where we have a President who actually thinks it is a hoax, and from the huge fossil fuel forces that propelled him into office with enormous amounts of political money and who now think they own the place.

The fossil fuel industry has done nothing but lie about this and use their power for evil. President Trump is completely mistaken and under the thumb of the fossil fuel industry. And against that will stand the EPA Administrator who has to be truthful and factual and support and defend our environment and our safety from climate change.

In that context, I have nothing against Lee Zeldin personally, but the likelihood of him standing against that fossil fuel bulldozer that is coming at him is, essentially, zero. And that fossil fuel bulldozer is also going to be bulldozing their way into American homes in the form of an insurance crisis that is looming. So this is going to become very real very fast. And in that context, this is very much the wrong guy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). The majority whip.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call with respect to the Zeldin nomination be waived.

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

CLOTURE MOTION

Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 8, Lee Zeldin, of New York, to be Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

John Thune, Markwayne Mullin, James C. Justice, Tom Cotton, John Barrasso, David McCormick, Steve Daines, Joni Ernst, Roger Marshall, Deb Fischer, Chuck Grassley, Bernie Moreno, Ted Budd, John Kennedy, John Boozman, Tommy Tuberville, Cindy Hyde-Smith.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Lee Zeldin of New York to be Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. OSSOFF) are necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 56, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 23 Ex.]

YEAS—56

Banks	Gallego	Moran
Barrasso	Graham	Moreno
Blackburn	Grassley	Mullin
Boozman	Hagerty	Murkowski
Britt	Hawley	Paul
Budd	Hoeven	Ricketts
Capito	Husted	Risch
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Collins	Johnson	Schmitt
Cornyn	Justice	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Kelly	Scott (SC)
Cramer	Kennedy	Sheehy
Crapo	Lankford	Sullivan
Cruz	Lee	Thune
Curtis	Lummis	Tillis
Daines	Marshall	Tuberville
Ernst	McConnell	Wicker
Fetterman	McCormick	Young
Fischer	Moody	

NAYS—42

Alsobrooks	Hirono	Sanders
Baldwin	Kaine	Schatz
Bennet	Kim	Schiff
Blumenthal	King	Schumer
Blunt Rochester	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Cantwell	Lujan	Slotkin
Cooms	Markey	Smith
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Murphy	Warner
Durbin	Murray	Warnock
Gillibrand	Padilla	Warren
Hassan	Peters	Welch
Heinrich	Reed	Whitehouse
Hickenlooper	Rosen	Wyden

NOT VOTING—2

Booker Ossoff

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On the vote, the yeas are 56, the nays are 42.

The motion is agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

ILLEGITIMATE COURT COUNTERACTION ACT

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, 480. That is the number of days since terror shook the Middle East. It has been 480 days since Hamas's unprovoked attack; 480 days since Hamas brought brutal terror on Israel and the citizens of more than 30 countries; 480 days since American family members and friends were kidnapped.

Last year, the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and his former defense minister. The illegitimate court—which acts as prosecutor, jury, and judge—brought politically motivated charges for alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Since when did self-defense in the face of terrorist attacks and atrocities become a war crime?

The ICC has forgotten too quickly who started this war, who turned a music festival into a graveyard, who attacked unprovoked, bringing devastating carnage on defenseless victims.

The ICC has forgotten the seven Americans still in Gaza, our fellow country men and women. They have forgotten the remains of the innocent Hamas victims that Hamas keeps—the

hostages even in death. They have forgotten the corpses in the streets, the babies and the soldiers beheaded, the people burned alive in their cars. They have forgotten the doors riddled with bullet holes, the ground stained with blood, the smell of decaying flesh.

The ICC has forgotten the hell Hamas inflicted on Israel and many other nations. And, instead, it vilifies a nation seeking justice and the chance to live in peace. This is not surprising. From the beginning, the United States has rejected this body.

From President Clinton to President Trump, every President—Democratic and Republican—has never recognized the ICC's jurisdiction over our Nation. In fact, no President has even submitted the Rome Statute establishing the ICC to the Senate for advice and consent. We have never ratified it.

And why? Because entrusting an international governing body with authority over U.S. citizens risks undermining the very freedoms and sovereignty that define this Nation.

The ICC has repeatedly sought to impose its authority over the United States and over our allies. And now, it has alleged that Israel has committed war crimes.

Meanwhile, the tribunal conveniently turns a blind eye to atrocities in China, hiding behind the excuse of nonmembership, despite the fact that neither the United States nor Israel are members. The hypocrisy of the ICC is breathtaking.

Well, enough is enough. Earlier this month, the House passed the Illegitimate Court Counteraction Act on a bipartisan basis. I am deeply—deeply—disappointed that my Democratic colleagues who voted against moving forward on this legislation did that here in the U.S. Senate. I sincerely hope that they reconsider. Our sovereignty is non-negotiable. Allowing the ICC to operate unchecked and without consequence grants them authority where they should have none. Worse, it sets a standard that encourages repetition.

We have a responsibility to protect the sovereignty of our Nation and our allies. This moment demands courage, and it demands conviction. And we must rise to meet it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The other Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. RICKETTS. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about the Illegitimate Court Counteraction Act that we voted on earlier in this Chamber.

The International Criminal Court was created to hold accountable war criminals, for example, in countries that did not have a system of justice, did not have the rule of law, and were incapable of holding those people accountable.

In 2020, the International Criminal Court started investigating American soldiers' actions. This, despite the fact that we have a system of justice. We are governed by the rule of law. As my senior Senator from Nebraska just

pointed out, we are not a signatory to the ICC. We are not a part of that international organization.

Last year, the International Criminal Court indicted Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu. Israel has a rule of law. Israel has a system of justice. And Israel is not a signatory to the ICC; and yet they indicted him.

The International Criminal Court is out of control. It is a rogue international organization. And when they indicted Prime Minister Netanyahu, what they did is they put a moral equivalency between Israel's actions to defend itself and the barbaric attacks Hamas perpetrated on October 7.

Let's be clear here: When Hamas launched their terror attack on Israel, they were targeted civilians. That is a war crime. When Israel responds back to defend itself, civilians are going to get hurt in war, but that is not who Israel was targeting. They were targeting the terrorists who attacked them. That is legitimate.

The International Criminal Court destroyed whatever shred of credibility they had when they made that indictment. And if they are coming after the Israeli Prime Minister, it won't be long before they start coming after American troops.

In fact, the Wall Street Journal had an article that said "if the International Criminal Court issues arrest warrants for Israelis, Americans are likely to follow."

This organization is a failure despite its \$187 million budget. It has not been able to bring to justice dictators around the world. They have done very little. My senior Senator mentioned China. They haven't done anything to stop Vladimir Putin. They haven't done anything against Iran's Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. They haven't done anything against North Korea's Kim Jong-un. Yet they are targeting countries that have a system of justice and rule of law. That is not why this organization was supposed to have been created.

The ICC is a lawless, politicalized international organization that is threatening our sovereignty. This requires a strong response on our part.

The Illegitimate Court Counteraction Act was that response. It would have directed the President within 60 days to launch sanctions against foreign nationals who are involved with the malign activities of the ICC to target our American troops or our allies, for example. We need to have a strong response back to protect our sovereignty. When we are talking about, for example, sanctions, we are talking about assets, freezing assets of those foreign nationals or travel bans. It would have sent a strong message to all of those foreigners who were trying to target us or our allies.

Sadly, the Democrats voted down this important bill that would have sent a strong message. Their arguments were speeches, frivolous, meaningless. The Democrats said: Well, this bill targets our allies.

No, what this bill did was target people who were outside the United States trying to target our soldiers or those of our allies. It was targeting individuals.

Democrats said: Well, this bill imposes draconian sanctions.

Actually, if you look at the sanctions that this bill was proposing, the same sort of sanctions were done under both Obama and Biden 49 times. They said: Oh. Well, some companies could be held responsible.

Again, no. This was about individuals. It was not about companies.

They said: Well, the bill was poorly written, poorly drafted.

Yet this same bill had passed the House of Representatives twice—the first time with 42 Democrats voting for it and the second time with 45 Democrats voting for it, including 2 of our colleagues who are in the Chamber now who voted for it when they were in the House, except that when they came to the Senate, they voted against it.

This was important legislation.

Now, when the minority leader got up, he talked about the ICC being anti-Semitic, and he is right. The U.N. in general is another one of those international organizations that are anti-Semitic.

He says that he stands with Israel, against the ICC, but his actions speak louder than words. When he had the opportunity, he stood on this floor earlier and said that Israel should have new elections to replace the Prime Minister.

Well, folks, that action was with the same logic that the ICC was using when they indicted Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu. It seems hypocritical that he can stand up here and say "I stand with Israel, yet they should have new elections" and somehow have the moral authority to defend Israel against the ICC.

In blocking this bill, Democrats were voting to not protect our soldiers; they were voting to not stand up for our allies, not stand up for our sovereignty. They were not supporting specifically Israel.

The appeasement-first policy of the Biden administration is alive and well in the Democrats in the U.S. Senate today. Americans, take note.

I yield the floor.

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

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I want to add to what my colleagues have been saying here.

It is a big disappointment for us on this side of the aisle that our Democratic colleagues blocked this bill to do what needs to happen with regard to the ICC.

Senator RICKETTS was just making a really good point with regard to the blatant anti-Semitism at that organization, and it is not new. We all know this is happening, which is why it was a disappointment we couldn't move forward. It is also something we know that has been happening at the U.N.

I had a Wall Street Journal op-ed a couple of months ago when President

Biden was getting ready to go to make his last major speech at the U.N. I strongly but respectfully requested the President make his speech about focusing on the systemic anti-Semitism that has existed at the United Nations for years and to call out the true terrorist in the world, which is Iran. President Biden didn't make that speech.

I had a meeting with the U.N. Secretary General and now former Senator Ben Cardin, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. It was a bipartisan meeting with the U.N. Secretary General. You know, we pressed him. We pressed him hard on his leadership of the U.N. and the systemic anti-Semitism that exists in these international bodies, in these international organizations.

The U.N. is going to have a wake-up call with our new Ambassador, ELISE STEFANIK. I think she is going to really raise these issues, really press these issues. She is going to be a modern-day Jeane Kirkpatrick, who, in my view, was the best U.N. Ambassador ever under President Reagan. She is going to bring it.

So, to the U.N. Secretary General, stand by. You are going to hear a lot more of this from our incoming U.N. Ambassador. She is going to do a great job.

ANTI-SEMITISM

Finally, Mr. President, I just want to mention—we are focused on the ICC, and we are focused on the U.N., appropriately. This bill should have moved forward, and we are disappointed. But, you know what, we also need to focus at home.

Since the October 7 attacks in 2023, the explosion of anti-Semitism that we have seen at our so-called elite universities—I don't call them elite; I just call them expensive universities—on the campuses of the top universities in America, has been nothing short of astonishing and disgusting. I don't know what other adjective I can use but "horrible."

These are the statistics from the Anti-Defamation League: From 2023 to 2024, their annual report on anti-Israel activism on U.S. campuses tallied over 2,000 incidents. Anti-Israel incidents of assault, vandalism, harassment, protest actions, and divestment resolutions between June of 2023 and May of 2024 increased a staggering 477 percent—477 percent—at the top universities in America. This marks the highest number ever documented by the ADL.

I witnessed this at my alma mater, Harvard. My wife and I went there. I don't always talk about it because I am not proud of it. This university has huge problems. I was there about a little over a year ago, walking the campus. I went to Widener Library. That is the big, famous library in the middle of Harvard Yard. I went to the reading room—during finals—of Widener Library, and there was a giant anti-Israel protest in this reading room. It was

shocking, what was going on at Harvard. As I wrote then, I couldn't believe this was happening.

I took a picture. That is a picture from my camera of this giant anti-Israel protest in the middle of one of the biggest libraries in America, the reading room at Harvard. It was a pure anti-Semitism protest. And I wrote then, in another op-ed in the *Wall Street Journal*, and talked about my experience.

My thoughts then turned to Harvard undergrads. Imagine if you were an 18-year-old Jewish or Israeli student or even a pro-Israel Catholic like me, and you wanted to study for your chemistry final in the Widener Library Reading Room on a Sunday morning. This was on a Sunday morning. Imagine being confronted by this protest—obviously condoned by Harvard's leadership and commandeered by the Palestine Solidarity Committee, which is the anti-Semitic group behind the notorious statement that held Israel entirely responsible for all of the unfolding violence in the immediate aftermath of October 7. Would you feel welcomed at Harvard's most famous library? Would you feel rattled and intimidated and harassed by the anti-Israel banner streaming "Stop the Genocide in Gaza"?

As Jason Riley has written, "If accusing Israel of genocide isn't defamation of Jewish people, I don't know what is."

If you were that 18-year-old student, would you believe the vacuous statement that had been put out a couple of days before by the Harvard Corporation, after it decided not to fire Claudine Gay, Harvard's president, that "disruptions of the classroom experience will not be tolerated"? That was a giant disruption.

So I ended that op-ed by saying this: Not all university leadership is so craven, morally bankrupt and afraid of the most radical, vocal sects of their own student bodies. As a member of the Naval Academy board, the contrast with the Naval Academy and Harvard couldn't be starker on issues like civil discourse, so-called safe spaces, trigger warnings, American history, and our unique and, yes, exceptional place in the world.

I know we are talking about the ICC, and we should be, but our universities in our great Nation need a huge wake-up call because as we look at anti-Semitism at the ICC and the U.N., we need to be staring at it in places like Harvard and other universities where it has reached disturbing and sickening levels, and I think it is this body's responsibility to do something about it.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

MR. LANKFORD. Mr. President, this week, we observe International Holocaust Remembrance Day. We honor the 6 million Jews whose lives were lost during the Holocaust, their families,

and the scar that has left on the world. The term "We will never forget" still rings eight decades later.

The end of that atrocity did not bring the end of anti-Semitism, unfortunately. On October 7, 2023, Hamas terrorists brutally attacked Israel with the intent to wipe Israel off the map. Hamas killed 1,200 people simply because they were Jewish.

People marched in the streets even in sections of America and on university campuses, screaming "from the river to the sea," meaning the obliteration of the Jewish people and the Jewish nation.

A few months ago, I stood at the Nova Music Festival site, literally within sight of Gaza. I walked through that area with a family. I talked to one of the survivors who was there that day. She is still reliving the emotion of being there, just doing an all-night music festival. As the Sun came up, terrorists came in to kill as many people as possible at that music festival.

In the immediate aftermath of that attack, it was clarifying for the United States that we needed to continue to stand with Israel. Terrorism is not done. Anti-Semitism has not ended in the world. We should continue to speak out.

In my State of Oklahoma, it is extremely personal. We have a lot of Oklahomans who are very pro-Israel because they love freedom and they love a functioning democracy. With Israel being the only democracy in all of the Middle East and having a thriving economy, we have a lot of economic connections to Israel. We have a lot of family connections. We have a lot of individuals who travel to Israel for both vacation and for moments to be able to reflect on their own faith. It is a common connection.

In fact, after October 7, my office and I were personally connected with trying to be able to help some families and individuals who were touring in Israel at that time find a way to be able to escape from the fighting and to be able to get out.

This is a very, very difficult moment, and it continues to be a very difficult moment for the people of Israel because all they want to do is to be able to live in peace with the people around them.

Within days, Israel is not just facing a war with Gaza, Hezbollah began to attack them from the north from Lebanon. The Houthis began to fire missiles at them from the south. And then within a few months, Iran itself began to fire missiles and rockets and one-way attack drones toward Israel, literally facing a war with individuals attacking them from the north, south, east, and west. Israel just wants to live in peace.

In the middle of a war, when a group of terrorists crossed the border and began to slaughter Israelis, the International Criminal Court determined it was going to jump in and make a clear statement. Great. Make a clear state-

ment about terrorism. Call out those who are attacking civilians and slaughtering people as they sleep on that morning.

But instead, the International Criminal Court released arrest warrants for Binyamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister of Israel, and for Yoav Gallant, the now former Defense Minister, for trying to defend their country from terrorism.

Myself and my other colleagues remembered immediately that during the war in Afghanistan, this same International Criminal Court was filing charges against American soldiers trying to defend the United States while they were fighting in Afghanistan. This is the very definition of a rogue court.

By the way, they are in the process of trying to be able to figure out how to be able to fix their image. So just within the past few days, the International Criminal Court has filed an arrest warrant for some of the Taliban leaders. Welcome to the 2000s. The International Criminal Court has now figured out that the Taliban are back, something the rest of the world has known and recognized for more than two decades.

This body had the opportunity to do something pretty common sense: Speak out and say we are not a party to the International Criminal Court. The United States has never participated in that. In fact, no President has ever even requested—Republican or Democrat—to join that agreement for the International Criminal Court. No one wants to be a part of that in the United States. I know of no Oklahoman who would say we want our troops to be under the authority of an international court. We are not going to do that.

Israel, by the way, has also not joined the International Criminal Court. They have no desire to also be under the authority of a foreign court. They have seen full well the U.N. anti-Semitism, and they have no interest to the international bodies trying to be able to tell them right from wrong, so they are not a party to it either. But the International Criminal Court has seen fit to be able to challenge and try to call out American soldiers and to be able to call out the leaders of Israel, even after they have been attacked.

So this body in the U.S. Senate had an opportunity yesterday to be able to speak out on that and to actually sanction and to allow further sanctions of individuals from the International Criminal Court and entities that cooperate with them to say you cannot come after the United States or after our allies.

It is a very simple, straightforward bill. It is a bill that passed with a very large bipartisan majority through the House of Representatives. In fact, it has passed twice now with a large bipartisan majority in the House of Representatives. But when it came here to the U.S. Senate, my Democratic colleagues shrugged and said no.

The Trump administration, I am confident, will speak out with sanctions against the International Criminal Court. They did during the first Trump Presidency. I am confident they will again. What I am not confident of is every future President after President Trump, if they will hold the same high standard to be able to protect American citizens, our soldiers, and to be able to stand alongside with Israel.

I have come to this body over and over and over again, and I have said we should speak out in these areas. We should speak out against anti-Semitism. For instance, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, that definition of what anti-Semitism is, that is a definition the United States was a party to more than three decades ago. Our State Department so recognizes what it means to be anti-Semitic and makes it very clear on that. But this body has failed to actually impose that same definition of anti-Semitism in our Department of Justice—for instance, the FBI—or the Department of Education.

Some may say, well, why is that even an issue? Well, ask the Jewish students at Columbia University, and they will tell you why that is important. This week, at Columbia University, masked students burst into a modern history of Israel class chanting anti-Semitic tropes and calling out to crush Zionism, in their class at Columbia University this week, during Holocaust Remembrance Week.

I think having a clear definition of what anti-Semitism is and calling out universities that would allow that kind of oppression on their own students, I think, is important. I think for this body to be able to speak out with one voice to say we are not going to allow American soldiers nor our allies to be called in by a kangaroo international court, I think, is important to us.

And this week, of all weeks, on Holocaust Remembrance Week, we should speak with one voice. To say “never again” means never again. And we will continue to stand with our friends and allies in Israel, and we will continue to stand against anti-Semitism here, there, anywhere.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

JANUARY 6 PARDONS

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to share a little bit of maybe a reflection on the pardons of last week.

Part of the reason why I do, after the President issued the pardons for all of the January 6 protesters, I had a friend of mine call me up because I had said that some of the protesters probably got swept up in the events of the day. But some of those protesters harmed police officers, and I can't support that. I said, when I say I wear this pin almost every day and when I say I back the blue, I back the blue, period.

I back them when they are beaten by people who came into this Capitol on

January 6. I back the blue because I am endlessly—over the last 10 years, I have been to this floor numerous times to mourn the loss of more than 80 police officers in North Carolina alone who died in the line of duty. I do this time after time after time.

The Republican Party is the party that stands for law and order and law enforcement, in my opinion. I have seen people excuse the protests in Kenosha and Portland as just mostly peaceful protests. The amazing thing was, when you see this on TV or you see it in the papers, they are saying mostly peaceful protests in Portland and Kenosha, and there is a building on fire in the background in and around a police precinct.

And in Washington, Federal agents were injured by law enforcement officials during the Biden administration. Every single one of us said that is inappropriate and those people need to be brought to justice.

Now, on January 6 of 2021, I was standing right over there in the middle of that aisle. My seat was right there. So when we were doing the certification of the election, you could hear people had breached the building. They were running around the Capitol. They were banging on doors. And, finally, my chair being right next to that door, we heard a loud crash. And I saw Capitol Police officers say, “Secure that building,” and run up there to protect the Members who were in the Chamber. And we were all here.

I saw some people immediately go to the Capitol Police so that they could take them to safe refuge, and they are the same people who have fundraised on a website that is called ActBlue. Fortunately, it has been taken down because I ranted enough. After a year, they finally did it. But they had a run for justice, 13.12. The alphabetic analog is ACAB, which translates into their slogan: “All Cops Are Bastards.”

How does this relate? They raised money on it. In fact, they even encouraged people to do their 13-mile run around police stations to disrupt and intimidate police officers.

Now, how does this relate to everything that is going on here? I was the last Senate Member out of this Chamber on that day. In fact, it was one of the Vice President's details whom I happen to know that came back to me and said, Now you have really got to go. I walked through that hallway, down the stairwell that is over there, into the train tunnel, and what I saw were police officers who were bleeding; they were bruised; and they were beaten down.

The people who did that were pardoned last week. To those people—and I will give the President the benefit of the doubt. I support pardons for people who should have never come into the building. I don't know if I were President, if I would have pardoned them. But I can actually, at least, understand the rationale for those. But I think if you back the blue, there can be no

equivocation on any exception for someone who assaults or murders a police officer.

The funny—not funny thing. The tragic thing is I just filed two bills that would increase the penalties for assaulting a police officer and increase the penalty for murdering a police officer as a Federal crime up to and including the death penalty. I want to send a message to those folks in blue that I, as an elected official and Member of the U.S. Senate, will never equivocate when it comes to backing the blue.

I would argue that if anybody has a problem with them, then call 911 and tell them you never want them to show up to your door when you are in trouble because most people know that the police officers who serve us and protect us in this building are great people.

I have this ask to those who have been pardoned—the QAnon Shaman who sat in that chair that the gentleman from Indiana is sitting in now and boasting over how he came into this Chamber, do you know what his social media tweet was when President Trump gave him a chance and gave him a pardon? Now I am going to go buy me some F'ing guns.

For the others who have been pardoned, be like a handful of some who have refused the pardon because they felt like they deserved the punishment.

For those who have received a pardon, view it as the gift that it is. Apologize to these police officers for what you did to them. If you do that, then I will feel like maybe President Trump gave you a chance to redeem yourself.

But if you come and spike the football in this Capitol Building and you pretend like what you did was right, righteous, or justified, please do not come anywhere near me.

It is important, for the past week I have told the police officers when I entered the building, I thought the pardons of those who assaulted police officers were wrong. I told every one of them. I said, I know you shouldn't react to it because you have to be apologetic. But I am a political person. I can say whatever I want to and then answer to the people of North Carolina.

But I thought it was important for me to come to the floor and record this in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD: Particularly, the challenge to the people who assaulted police officers, show that you are remorseful. Demonstrate that you were wrong. Don't pretend that that pardon means that what you did was right.

For that reason, I felt compelled to come to the floor and make this statement because where I come from and where I have been my entire public service career, I will never stop backing the blue.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

TRUMP EXECUTIVE ORDERS

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise today because, over the last 2 days, I

have been hearing from officials and organizations throughout Rhode Island that have been concerned about losing access to essential Federal funding. In fact, Rhode Island officials told my office that, for several hours yesterday, they could not access the Federal portal that allows them to draw down funding from the Medicaid Program. Other agencies and organizations have reported that they, too, were locked out of funding portals for critical grant programs.

And why is this?

Well, Monday night, the Office of Management and Budget, or OMB, issued a memorandum instructing Federal Agencies to freeze funding that had been authorized and appropriated by Congress until it can be determined that the program comports with President Trump's ideological views, as judged by the White House. Just a little over an hour ago, OMB rescinded this memo. But then the White House Press Secretary has tweeted that the freeze is still in effect. This illustrates the uncertainty and the lack of calculation that went into this process.

Now, as my colleague Senator MURRAY, the ranking member of the Appropriations Committee, has noted, the list of programs being put under the microscope was dramatic: grants for law enforcement; veterans care; disaster relief and mitigation; funding for the 9-8-8 suicide prevention lifeline; homeless and housing funding; childcare and public schools, including IDEA, funding; community health centers; food access programs, including Meals on Wheels and school lunch programs; funding for preventing violence against women; and much more. And all of these programs affect families throughout my State of Rhode Island—working families in particular—because in many respects, we all depend upon some support at some time.

The Trump administration, a little over a week on the job, decided to violate the law, to withhold that funding previously approved by Congress on a bipartisan basis, and has sowed chaos and fear throughout the Nation in the process.

Last night, the Federal district court issued a 1-week stay on the administration's memorandum regarding not-for-profit agencies receiving Federal funds. But we are again in this dilemma because the President apparently has rescinded the order but his Press Secretary is still tweeting something different.

It demonstrates how, frankly, incompetent the administration is—putting out directives with little to no thought or coordination, without anticipating—or, more importantly, caring about—the negative ramifications that an order like this can have on families throughout this country.

What President Trump was really doing, I believe, is testing how far he can go before he is stopped.

When President Trump tries to ignore the law, ignore the Congress, and

there is no response, what is the point of checks and balances? Why are we here in the Senate? If we pass, along with the House, authorizations and appropriations and the President of the United States can ignore our actions, we have to speak up.

Indeed, my Republican colleagues were excoriating the Biden administration for executive “overreach” but now are relatively mute when it comes to a defiance of law and indeed, I believe, a defiance of the Constitution.

This attack should be alarming to all my colleagues who consider the Congress a coequal branch of government, and it will be instructive to the American people to see how all of my colleagues—in the majority and in the minority—choose to respond to President Trump's continued attacks on this institution, as well as the Constitution and, most damaging, families throughout this country.

One of the programs that was shut off yesterday is Medicaid. Now, a lot of people think Medicaid is just something for those poor people who can't afford healthcare, but, indeed, it is a major source of funding for nursing homes throughout this country. And many of the recipients come from working families, come from families that have worked their entire lives and now they have a senior—a mother or a father—who needs the kind of care a nursing home provides, but they could not afford it without Medicaid. That, I think, is one of the most graphic examples of the indifference or the ignorance of the administration when it comes to what they are doing.

But let me return, finally, to the point. We have a role to do in the Constitution. We advise and consent on nominees. We are doing that as we go forward. But, also, we have to act as a check on the President. We have to act as a force for good that supports the Constitution. And that is a role I believe we have to take much more seriously today than at any other time in my tenure in the U.S. Senate.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the quorum call be rescinded.

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

NOMINATION OF DOUGLAS BURGUM

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, Americans are paying more and getting less for just about everything—more for energy, more for housing, more for the most basic necessities—and, frankly, they are tired of it.

Across the country, businesses are struggling with higher costs. Families are burdened by rising prices, and entire industries are stalling under the weight of heavyhanded regulations handed down from unelected bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

The Department of the Interior could and should be part of the solution. Instead, it has been part of the problem. In fact, in many instances, in countless respects, it is the problem. The worst part is that it didn't have to be this way.

Under Secretary Deb Haaland, the Biden administration had a choice. They had the tools at their disposal to alleviate the struggles of millions of Americans and to ensure affordable, reliable energy. Instead, it chose to abandon them. Instead, it chose to surrender to ideological zealotry and foreign powers that do not have our best interests at heart. Now Americans are paying the price.

The Department of the Interior is not an Agency of limited consequence. It governs nearly one-fifth of the land mass of the entire United States. It wields the power to dictate the fate of energy production, water rights, wildlife conservation, and the livelihoods of millions of Americans, especially in public land-rich States like my home State of Utah. And yet, for the last 4 years, Secretary Haaland stood idly by, doubling down on policies that throttled domestic production while begging foreign adversaries to fill the gap.

Governor Doug Burgum understands what Secretary Haaland apparently forgot—that abundant, affordable energy is a fundamental pillar of our national security as Americans. But Secretary Haaland's failures don't stop at energy. The Department of the Interior touches nearly every aspect of life in the West, from land management to water rights, often to the detriment of those who depend on it.

Now, for States like Utah, where two-thirds of the land is owned by the Federal Government, Washington's mismanagement is not an abstract or a theoretical debate. The consequences that we face as a result of decisions made at Interior affect us in a real and profound way. Expanding national monuments without local input and contrary to what local input was given, imposing suffocating land use restrictions, and burying—quite deliberately—resource development under an avalanche of redtape are not the actions of a government that serves them. They are the actions of a government that rules and lords over them.

The consequences of that mismanagement stretch higher than elevated prices at the pump. As wildfires ravaged the West, reducing homes to ash and livelihoods to memory, Secretary Haaland and President Biden condescendingly lectured the American people that climate change was to blame. Unfortunately, for them, the reality is far less convenient. Decades of Federal neglect have transformed our forests into kindling. Their refusal to engage in responsible forest management to clear the dead wood and to thin the overgrowth has created a

veritable tinderbox of catastrophic proportions. And still, they offered nothing but platitudes and punitive regulations that all but ensured that the cycle of destruction would continue.

The West faces another government-made crisis—housing. Entire generations are locked out of homeownership as Federal mismanagement hoards vast swaths of land that could be used to alleviate the crisis. The Department of the Interior could be an instrument of relief, identifying underutilized Federal lands and unlocking them for development.

My bill, the HOUSES Act, shows how we can do this. But for the past 4 years, the government has lamented housing shortages while ensuring their permanence. It has drawn near to the plight of the American people with its lips, but its heart has been shown to be far from those they are supposed to serve.

Then, of course, there is water. The Colorado River, a lifeline of the West, is withering, strangled by indecision and regulatory paralysis. States plead for coordination to create a coherent strategy to preserve this resource for millions. What they receive, instead, are ditherings from an administration more interested in virtue-signaling than problem-solving.

DOI desperately needs a leader who will act. Governor Burgum is that leader. We need a leader who grasps that our national parks—America's crown jewels—have great potential to be economic engines, drawing millions and sustaining, in some cases, entire communities. Yet infrastructure crumbles, visitor access is restricted, and the Federal Government's response is as lethargic as it is incompetent.

Governor Burgum understands what is at stake. He has spent his entire career bringing people together to solve problems. He has earned the trust of Tribes, of businesses, conservationists, and working families alike. He understands that we cannot regulate our way into prosperity, nor can we regulate our way into abundance.

He understands that it is not just numbers on a balance sheet or reports gathering dust in Washington. It is real; and for many of us, it is deeply, deeply personal.

A rancher in Utah is watching his grazing rights disappear under arbitrary Federal decrees. A miner in West Virginia sees his livelihood strangled by regulations written by people who have never even set foot in a coal town. A small business in Arizona is struggling with soaring energy costs that make it harder to keep the lights on. A farmer in Wyoming is fighting for water that once flowed freely but is now trapped.

These are the people who suffer when the Department of the Interior forgets its mission. These are the families who pay the price when Washington prioritizes leftist ideology over reality.

Governor Doug Burgum's leadership offers a clear alternative: a future where the Department of the Interior

serves the people rather than ruling over them; a future where energy abundance strengthens our economy and our national security; a future where public lands are managed with the input of those who depend on them, not dictated by unelected, unaccountable bureaucrats far off in Washington, DC; a future where housing is within reach, water is safeguarded, and natural resources are used responsibly to support the communities that rely on them; a future where Americans can depend on more than just serendipity; they can rely on sound policies designed to benefit them.

Americans can and should be getting more for their dollar. Governor Burgum understands that and has the experience and vision to make it happen.

It is time for us to confirm Governor Doug Burgum as the next Secretary of the Interior. It is time for us to move forward. It is time to accept that freedom is the destiny and birthright of the American people; that government exists to serve us, not the other way around.

I urge my colleagues, with all the urgency I am capable of communicating, to swiftly and resoundingly confirm Governor Doug Burgum.

NOMINATION OF LEE ZELDIN

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the nomination of Lee M. Zeldin to serve as the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. I have confidence that Congressman Zeldin's experience as a veteran of the War on Terror, as an officer in the U.S. Army Reserve, and as an elected official on both the State and Federal level has prepared him to aptly serve as the EPA's leader.

As a Member of the House of Representatives, Congressman Zeldin championed environmental policies that helped his Long Island district. During his testimony in front of the Environment and Public Works Committee, Congressman Zeldin proficiently demonstrated his understanding of what it will take to lead the Agency and the scope and importance of the authorities he will be required to faithfully implement. Congressman Zeldin is committed to adhering to the laws Congress passed that direct the EPA to protect our air, land, and water. He recognizes that the EPA's work must take into consideration the Agency's impacts on our constituents' pocketbooks and Main Street's success in addition to their health and welfare.

Congressman Zeldin understands that the Agency must act on issues that the American people support, providing reliable, affordable, and clean American energy while also assisting communities that suffer from legacy pollution. This will provide a welcome change from the last 4 years of the Biden EPA. As a result of the previous administration's ideologically driven regulatory overreach, families paid more to fill up their car to drop their

kids off at school and get to work, paid more to heat their homes, and paid more at the grocery store due to increased energy costs.

American energy producers were hit with regulation after regulation, intended to shut down reliable and affordable electric generation, strangling the very innovation and economic growth that led to decreasing emissions and pollutants, and America's energy dominance during President Trump's first term in office. I saw these impacts directly in communities across my home State of West Virginia. The Biden EPA set unscientific and unachievable regulatory requirements that would bankrupt rural communities. The process of approving new, safer chemicals was ground to a halt, and environmental cleanup programs were layered with bureaucracy and redtape.

Thankfully in November, the American people spoke and rejected the previous administration's activist environmental agenda that promoted scarcity, inflation, and stagnation. With the confirmation of Congressman Zeldin, we have the opportunity to get the EPA back to meeting its core mission, protecting human health and the environment, and get Washington, DC, out of the way.

In turn, this will empower States and communities to permit and fund the projects we need to protect our environment and grow our economy. The United States is facing a critical moment where the decisions made today will set the direction of our country for years to come. Our Nation's electric reliability experts are telling policymakers that the lights are blinking red, as major parts of the country are at risk of electricity shortages.

Energy demand is sharply increasing as we strive to bolster America's energy security, bring manufacturing back to our shores, and compete with China to win the artificial intelligence race. This all requires more energy, of all types, rather than less. With Congressman Zeldin's leadership, the actions that EPA will take can set America up to thrive in an era with a cleaner environment, energy abundance, lower costs, and economic prosperity. This path will be a win-win for the American people.

It is time to get to work, and that starts with confirming Congressman Zeldin. I urge my colleagues to support Lee Zeldin to serve as the EPA Administrator.

VOTE ON ZELDIN NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All postcloture time has expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Zeldin nomination?

Mr. BARRASSO. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. OSSOFF) are necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 56, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 24 Ex.]

YEAS—56

Banks	Gallego	Moran
Barrasso	Graham	Moreno
Blackburn	Grassley	Mullin
Boozman	Hagerty	Murkowski
Britt	Hawley	Paul
Budd	Hoeben	Ricketts
Capito	Husted	Risch
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Collins	Johnson	Schmitt
Cornyn	Justice	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Kelly	Scott (SC)
Cramer	Kennedy	Sheehy
Crapo	Lankford	Sullivan
Cruz	Lee	Thune
Curtis	Lummis	Tillis
Daines	Marshall	Tuberville
Ernst	McConnell	Wicker
Fetterman	McCormick	Young
Fischer	Moody	

NAYS—42

Alsobrooks	Hirono	Sanders
Baldwin	Kaine	Schatz
Bennet	Kim	Schiff
Blumenthal	King	Schumer
Blunt Rochester	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Cantwell	Lujan	Slotkin
Coons	Markley	Smith
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Murphy	Warner
Durbin	Murray	Warnock
Gillibrand	Padilla	Warren
Hassan	Peters	Welch
Heinrich	Reed	Whitehouse
Hickenlooper	Rosen	Wyden

NOT VOTING—2

Booker Ossoff

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHMITT). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's actions.

Mr. THUNE. I ask unanimous consent the mandatory quorum call with respect to the Burgum nomination be waived.

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

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The assistant bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 9, Douglas Burgum, of North Dakota, to be Secretary of the Interior.

John Thune, Markwayne Mullin, Jim Justice, Tom Cotton, John Barrasso, David McCormick, Steve Daines, Joni Ernst, Roger Marshall, Deb Fischer, Chuck Grassley, Bernie Moreno, Ted Budd, John Kennedy, John Boozman, Tommy Tuberville, Cindy Hyde-Smith.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Douglas Burgum, of North Dakota, to be Secretary of the Interior, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. Booker) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. Ossoff) are necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 78, nays 20, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 25 Ex.]

YEAS—78

Alsobrooks	Graham	Moreno
Baldwin	Grassley	Mullin
Banks	Hagerty	Murkowski
Barrasso	Hassan	Padilla
Bennet	Hawley	Paul
Blackburn	Heinrich	Ricketts
Boozman	Hickenlooper	Risch
Britt	Hoeben	Rosen
Budd	Husted	Rounds
Cantwell	Hyde-Smith	Schmitt
Capito	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Justice	Scott (SC)
Collins	Kaine	Shaheen
Cornyn	Kelly	Sheehy
Cortez Masto	Kennedy	Slotkin
Cotton	King	Smith
Cramer	Klobuchar	Sullivan
Crapo	Lankford	Thune
Cruz	Lee	Tillis
Curtis	Lujan	Tuberville
Daines	Lummis	Warner
Ernst	Marshall	Warnock
Fetterman	McConnell	Welch
Fischer	McCormick	Whitehouse
Gallego	Moody	Wicker
Gillibrand	Moran	Young

NAYS—20

Blumenthal	Markley	Schatz
Blunt Rochester	Merkley	Schiff
Coons	Murphy	Schumer
Duckworth	Murray	Van Hollen
Durbin	Peters	Warren
Hirono	Reed	Wyden
Kim	Sanders	

NOT VOTING—2

Booker Ossoff

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MORENO). On this vote, the yeas are 78, the nays are 20.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Douglas Burgum, of North Dakota, to be Secretary of the Interior.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

TRUMP PARDONS

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I rise briefly to just draw my colleagues' attention to two items that, although seemingly unconnected, happened last week that I think are deeply connected.

On Inauguration Day, January 20, President Trump declared a national emergency at the southern border of the United States. I just want to read two sentences from that declaration, January 20, 2025:

Hundreds of thousands of Americans have tragically died from drug overdoses because

of the illicit narcotics that have flowed across the southern border.

I think 100 people in this Chamber would acknowledge that to be true.

The second sentence in the same order:

As Commander in Chief, I have no more solemn duty than to protect the American people.

I think 100 people in this Chamber would agree that is the most solemn duty of the Commander in Chief.

Those two sentences are why I was so surprised at an action the President took the next day, January 21, 2025: the pardon of drug kingpin Ross Ulbricht.

I want to read a summary of the crimes for which Mr. Ulbricht was imprisoned and raise the question of why the President, who had expressed concern about drug running and said that his top goal was to protect the American people, would choose to do this on the second day of his Presidency.

Mr. Ulbricht launched Silk Road in 2011 and turned it into one of the most popular outposts of the so-called Dark Web, a hidden corner of the internet that people can access only through a special browser. Silk Road facilitated over 1.5 million transactions, generating more than \$200 million in revenue from the sale of heroin, methamphetamine, cocaine and other drugs.

Two hundred million dollars.

Users transacted anonymously with Bitcoin, then a nascent cryptocurrency, and could post Amazon-style product ratings.

In 2013, the F.B.I. arrested Mr. Ulbricht at a San Francisco library and charged him with running Silk Road. In court, prosecutors presented evidence that Mr. Ulbricht had also solicited the murders of people he considered threats to his business, though he was never tried on murder-for-hire charges and there was no indication that any killings took place.

At least six deaths were attributed to drugs bought on Silk Road, prosecutors said in court. A federal judge in the Southern District of New York, where the case was tried, called Mr. Ulbricht "the kingpin of a worldwide digital drug-trafficking enterprise" whose actions were "terribly destructive to our social fabric." In 2015, he received a life sentence for drug distribution, money laundering and other charges, and was eventually moved to a federal prison in Arizona.

That account is from one of the many news articles describing the prosecution of Mr. Ulbricht and the pardon that was issued by President Trump on January 21.

I just want to raise the obvious question: If illicit narcotics trafficking is sufficient to declare a national emergency, then why, 1 day later, was it a justifiable, appropriate, laudable use of Presidential power to give a pardon to somebody who had set up an online, global, digital drug trafficking network that had generated \$200 million in revenue, 1.5 million transactions of sales of illicit drugs, 6 overdose deaths of individuals, and other challenges?

One of the problems with the surplus of Executive orders in the first few days is that sometimes the sheer number can cause you to lose sight of some of what is happening. And I would assert that the pardon of Mr. Ulbricht undercuts the legitimacy of the claim

that what President Trump is worried about is drug trafficking because if drug trafficking is bad, it is not only bad at the southern border; it is bad when somebody sets up an online drug trafficking market generating \$200 million in revenue from illicit drugs and leading to overdose deaths of individuals.

This is an action that is water under the bridge. There is nothing that can be done about it now. But if the only thing that can be done is to put it on the public record so that people can be aware that less than 24 hours after this emergency declaration, this drug trafficker was pardoned, I feel like that is an important thing that needs to be made visible to the American public.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

ISRAEL

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, like all of us, I was enormously relieved by the announcement of a ceasefire in Gaza, the gradual release of hostages, and a surge in humanitarian aid for the 2 million desperate Palestinians who are trapped inside Gaza.

Despite the daunting challenges ahead and the many factors that could derail negotiations to implement stage 2 of the agreement, I am cautiously hopeful that this could be the beginning of the end of a war that has traumatized millions of Palestinians and Israelis for more than 16 months.

There will come a time for the accounting of the conduct of the war, which has caused such appalling loss of Palestinian and Israeli lives, including tens of thousands of children, of health workers, aid workers, and journalists, and massive destruction of property, including practically every hospital and every school and university in Gaza. These things must not be forgotten, and that means investigating and holding people accountable under the laws of war.

But today I want to speak briefly on an issue that is key to the lasting peace between Palestinians and Israelis that we seek, and that is the creation of a viable, secure, independent, and demilitarized Palestinian state.

The war in Gaza was triggered, of course, by the merciless slaughter on October 7, 2023, of 1,200 innocent Israelis, Americans, and others and the abduction of some 250 hostages, many of whom have died. But, as we all know, the Middle East conflict began many decades earlier and some would say centuries ago. Ethnic hatred and religious intolerance passed down from one generation to the next have fueled seemingly endless violence perpetrated by extremists on both sides, and it has created a chronic state of insecurity for Israelis and insecurity, humiliation, poverty, and hopelessness for Palestinians.

In the West Bank, Israel's ever-expanding settlement construction, in violation of U.N. resolutions and contrary to U.S. policy, has created a

patchwork of separate and unequal enclaves and illegal outposts, provoking frequent acts of deadly violence by Israeli settlers and also by Palestinian extremists.

Gaza, with the overt support of the Netanyahu government, became an open-air prison for 2 million impoverished Palestinians dependent on international aid and under the ruthless control of Hamas.

Throughout this period, the wealthy Arab states have called for a Palestinian state, but they have expended minimal political capital or resources in furtherance of that goal—a lot of talk, very little action.

Successive Palestinian leaders have squandered opportunities to make necessary political and economic reforms, while Mr. Netanyahu has worked to create conditions on the ground that would actually make a Palestinian state impossible.

Despite this grim reality—and it is a grim reality—the attention focused on the remarkable life of President Jimmy Carter after his death on December 29 reminded us that even in the most difficult circumstances, peace is possible between longstanding enemies. It happened. But that possibility depends on the quality of the leadership.

If there were ever a time when the leaders of Israel, the Palestinian Authority, their Arab neighbors, and the United States should put the interests of regional peace and economic cooperation and development—including an independent Palestinian state—over personal and political ambition, it is now. It is now.

Gaza is in ruins. Hamas and Hezbollah, still a threat, pose less of a threat than at any time in recent history, and the horrific Assad regime is gone. Iran is also weaker. Most Israelis, Palestinians, Lebanese, and Syrians want peace. But given the absence of visionary and courageous leaders in Israel and the Palestinian Authority, the possibility that a path to a Palestinian state will emerge really does depend on the Trump administration using its diplomatic influence far more forcefully and effectively than previous U.S. administrations, including the first Trump administration, were willing to do. We have got to act.

And it will require the same of Congress, which in the past has restricted itself to enacting tighter and tighter sanctions on the Palestinians, causing increasing desperation and resentment for innocent Palestinians, while at the same time, opposing any incentives on Israel to stop settlement construction and settler violence.

There are those who believe that because of Israel's construction of settlements, walls, fences, separate highways, factories, and farms in the West Bank, that the West Bank and Gaza can never be reconfigured into a viable Palestinian State. And having seen a current map of the West Bank, I can certainly understand that.

But others reject the very idea of a Palestinian State as incompatible with

Israel's security, without proposing any alternative that would preserve Israel as a democracy in which all its citizens, regardless of ethnicity or religion, have equal rights. Given Hamas's horrific attack on October 7, I can also easily understand that.

Then, on January 25, President Trump called for the "cleaning out" of Gaza, suggesting that a million and a half Palestinians should be resettled in Jordan and Egypt. And, you know, seriously, there are just so many things wrong and unrealistic with that reprehensible and unworkable idea, that it barely deserves a response beyond the predictable and immediate repudiation by all those who would be impacted. It is not serious.

But to me, as elusive as it may seem, there really is no solution that offers lasting peace and continued U.S. support other than two independent states: Israel and Palestine, side by side.

The Palestinian State will only be possible if both sides are pressured to make the difficult compromises both sides have so far refused to make. And only the United States and our heretofore reluctant Arab allies can exert the kind of pressure that is necessary to bring people to an agreement.

There have been far too many missed opportunities and disappointments since the Oslo and Camp David Accords, and far too much needless death and destruction resulting from the unchecked ambitions of leaders motivated by their worst instincts.

And history will judge us, whether we seize this moment to finally chart a different course—a course that does enable Israelis and Palestinians to finally accept that there is no turning back the clock, that both are here to stay, and that as many Palestinian and Israeli neighbors have shown throughout the years of conflict and loss, they have far more in common than their differences.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Maryland.

TRUMP EXECUTIVE ORDERS

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I think that Americans following what is happening over the last 48 hours recognize that we are seeing a great deal of chaos and turmoil around the country, and it is having a harmful impact across communities, across my State of Maryland, across the country.

On Monday night, the Trump administration issued an order to all Federal Agencies to freeze the disbursement of Federal funds until there was a review period, with the threat that much of those funds would be withheld. And what that did was trigger a lot of understandable panic across the country.

In my office, we heard from firefighters in many different parts of our State. These are firefighters who receive grants to help purchase equipment that they need to run into burning buildings to help save people in emergency circumstances and to hire more staff.

We have heard from people who work in Head Start programs to try to make sure that kids get an early help and lift up in life. We heard from folks in law enforcement, including people who were involved in preventing human trafficking and sex trafficking of minors. We heard from small businesses worried about their grants. We heard from people in all different walks of life and different communities who were very worried that the important Federal initiatives that they rely on to help provide support for people in their communities were being turned off.

And I want to make something crystal clear: This was avoidable. This did not happen by accident.

I did see comments by the President's deputy policy director, Steve Miller, saying: This was a very clear directive, and there has been a lot of fake news about it.

I would just urge people to take a look at that directive. It is extremely broad, and it is very ambiguous. And it was very foreseeable that Federal Agencies would essentially put an immediate halt to funds going to everybody from firefighters to those who are fighting sex trafficking.

So how did this happen? It happened because this is an administration—that this Trump administration—that believes that it has the power to cherry-pick the law, to decide what parts of the laws that have been duly enacted by this Congress they like and want to implement and which ones they want to reject.

That is an unconstitutional power grab—pure and simple—because under article I, the Congress has the power of the purse, and when we pass a law, including an appropriations bill, to provide funding for important national and local priorities, and that is signed into law, that becomes the law of the land.

And Presidents can't treat that like it is an "a la carte" menu. They can't say: Well, I am going to implement this priority because I like that one, and I am going to reject this provision of the law because I don't like it. That is not how it works.

The Framers created checks and balances in our system to prevent Presidents from acting like Kings and ignoring laws that they don't like and only implementing the ones that they do.

This all came to a head many, many decades ago, when President Nixon exercised what was called the line item veto.

So Congress passes legislation, the product of back and forth and negotiation and compromise, signed by the President of the United States. That makes it law. That is the law of the land.

So what President Nixon said was: Well, I am going to sign this, but there are certain provisions here that I don't like. I don't want to be spending any money on Head Start, for example, or I don't want to spend money on law enforcement and police, for example. And

so I am going to veto those provisions, but I am going to accept the rest of the law, even though Congress passed all of it in totality.

And the Supreme Court said: You can't do that. Presidents are not Kings. They don't have the power to selectively implement parts of the law they like and reject the others.

And then Congress passed what is known as the Impoundment Control Act. This is legislation that says Presidents cannot impound. In other words, they can't withdraw or put aside funds that have been duly enacted by Congress, just because they don't like the purposes for which Congress passed those provisions.

But this President and this administration believe that the Impoundment Control Act doesn't apply to them. And we don't have to guess at this question. All we have to do is look at the testimony of somebody called Russ Vought.

So who is Russ Vought? Russ Vought is President Trump's nominee to head the Office of Management and Budget.

What is the Office of Management and Budget? It is an office within the White House that directs the budget control over all the other Federal Agencies. They are like the central command center for all of the other Agencies, whether it is Health and Human Services or EPA. Whatever Federal Agency it is, they all feed their budget requests up to the Office of Management and Budget in the Executive Office of the President. And Russ Vought was nominated to head that position.

In fact, tomorrow, in the Senate Budget Committee, we will have a vote on Russ Vought. We had his hearing a little while ago. At that hearing, I asked him point-blank, as did Senator MURRAY, whether he and the Trump administration would comply with the Impoundment Control Act. You have to look at the videotape. He refused to confirm that he would apply the law. He wouldn't say yes. In fact, what he said was that President Trump has issues with the Impoundment Control Act; he doesn't think it is constitutional. So he refused to commit to applying the law here. He said that they may want to change that.

The obvious answer is: OK, President Trump, if you want to change the Impoundment Control Act, let's seek an amendment to it. It will go through the congressional process, and you can try to amend the law. But for now, the law is as it is written, and you can't ignore it. Yet Russ Vought said: We refuse to commit to comply to this thing.

We have actually seen this movie before in the first Trump administration because Russ Vought was in charge of OMB for part of that first Trump term. People may recall that we had quite a discussion when President Trump, in his first term, wanted to withhold military assistance from Ukraine, even though Congress—the House and the Senate—had passed that into law and

it had been signed into law. But President Trump just decided he didn't want to implement that policy, so they withheld funds.

I wrote to the GAO—that is Congress's watchdog—and I asked them a very simple question. I asked them whether this withholding of military assistance to Ukraine constituted an illegal withholding. In other words, could President Trump hold onto and not disburse those funds that had been enacted by Congress to help the people of Ukraine? GAO looked into it, and they sent me back a letter, crystal clear, that the Trump administration had violated the Impoundment Control Act and Russ Vought, as the head of OMB at the time, violated the Impoundment Control Act.

Now we are here today. Russ Vought is up again, nominated to be in charge of OMB. At the hearing the other day, as I said, he refused to commit to complying with the Impoundment Control Act. That is what we are seeing here in this freeze on the funds and the claim that they can look at these and decide: Congress may have passed this, it may have been signed into law, but we are not going to disburse them because we disagree with the purposes.

You can't do that.

Now, the President is going to submit the President's budget to Congress, and we will have an opportunity to look at his proposals, and we will act on it. But the President can't take a law that has already been put into effect and decide: I am only going to help the people I want and not the other people that I don't want to help.

The real concern just—what—10 days into this administration is this is part and parcel of a much larger effort and strategy. I can tell you for certain this is not about making the Federal Government more efficient. If my colleagues on the other side of the aisle want to sit down and seriously find ways to make the Federal Government more efficient, I am all in.

But that is not what this DOGE committee headed by Elon Musk is all about, at least none of the early indications suggest that is what it is about. And the reason we know that is because one of the main initiatives being taken on by this new administration is something called Schedule F.

Schedule F, that is sort of an innocuous-sounding thing. What could that mean? Schedule F is a concerted effort to throw out the merit-based civil service structure that we have in this country, the merit-based system where people are hired based on their qualifications and their experience and their knowledge, and replace it with a political cronyism-based system.

I want to pause here for a moment just to make sure everybody understands the way things work now. Obviously, when you have a new President elected, the President can bring in lots of new people. We are debating right now advice and consent on some Cabinet officials. The President also can

hire the top echelon of people in Agencies across the Federal Government. In fact, there are about 4,000 political appointees today, people that the President puts into these positions. That is fine.

But what Schedule F would do and what President Trump and his nominee to be head of OMB want to do is to take about 50,000 to 60,000 additional Federal positions and convert them from merit-based systems to political cronyism systems.

So instead of being hired on the merits instead of being hired based on your qualifications and your experience and what you know, they want you to be hired based on who you know—a political test. And you can see, if you place about 50,000 to 60,000 political cronies across the Federal Government in these positions, you can get them to overlook the law, like the Impoundment Control Act; you can get them to overlook the Constitution. And I dare say, the American people don't want political hacks to be the people who are doing food safety inspections or are responsible for the air traffic control system or, really, any other part of our government where we rely on experience and qualifications, not a political test.

So this is a really important moment because the Trump administration is claiming this power, not only to violate the Impoundment Control Act and withhold funds from whatever they don't like and reward those who do, but they want to create a whole structure within the Federal Government to replace these merit-based civil servants with political cronies.

And what is another thing you would do if you were President to try to make sure you knocked down all the provisions we have for accountability? Hey, you would fire all the inspectors general. What are inspectors general? They are people in various Federal Departments whose job it is to root out fraud, waste, and abuse. Their job is to make sure that people in these Agencies don't ignore the law, don't waste taxpayer money. Yet President Trump fired the inspectors general in these Agencies. In other words, he fired the people who are supposed to provide accountability to protect the public against waste, fraud, and abuse.

So don't tell me you are for more government efficiency when you are firing the people whose job it is to keep a look out for fraud, waste, and abuse. What is really happening is you are firing the people who would be responsible for calling out any wrongdoing by these 60,000 additional political cronies that the President wants to put in place in these Departments to do his bidding.

I would hope colleagues on both sides of the aisle would see that this is really fraught with danger because when you open the door to this kind of political cronyism, you also open the door to corruption. And when you get rid of the inspectors general, that means more

people think that they can get away with that kind of corruption.

Schedule F is not the only ongoing effort, apparently, the President has to get rid of merit-based Federal employees. They just sent out this note within the last couple of days offering "early retirement to Federal employees." I think the idea is if you agree to retire in the next couple of weeks that you can continue to get your paycheck through September or something without working.

I have no idea if that is even legal.

What we do know is the memo that was sent out to these Federal employees was remarkably similar to something that Elon Musk sent out to employees in his company at one point. In fact, the title of the memo, "Fork in the Road," was exactly what was on Elon Musk's memo. And, in fact, apparently, Elon Musk is bringing in some computer systems and other things to the executive office buildings over there at the White House.

I would caution Federal employees that we don't even know if this is legal, and don't count on you getting the benefit of whatever bargain the President is, apparently, promising you because what this really is is an effort just to clear out more people from the merit-based system to create vacancies to bring in political cronies. That is what this is all about.

You implement a hiring freeze, which is what they have done. Then you get current Federal employees to retire early through something that could end up being a scam. I don't know. And then you implement Schedule F and bring in 50,000 to 60,000 people.

This is a really important consequential moment for all of us who care about a merit-based civil service.

And by the way, we have had a merit-based system since the late 1800s. We adopted this merit-based system after President James Garfield was assassinated by a disappointed job seeker—someone who had worked on his campaign and didn't get a job. At that point, the American people said: This spoil system where people are getting jobs just based on who they know, not what they know, this isn't delivering quality services for the American people. So they passed the Pendleton Act. What is happening now is a direct attack on that merit-based civil service.

What is the ultimate goal here? The ultimate goal is for President Trump to put in place these political loyalists who will do his bidding.

Bidding for who? In the last campaign, I think, many people who supported Candidate Trump believed that he was there to look out for working people, to look out for the forgotten Americans. That was sort of what he said on the campaign. But on Inauguration Day, just down the hall here a little bit, I think we got a better idea of exactly who it was and who it is that President Trump is looking out for, because he gave a speech talking about the "new golden age" for America. And

the people who had the best seats in the House, better than his Cabinet nominees, were the billionaire tech titans—Elon Musk and others. They were right there, right behind the President.

We also know that one of the President's major goals is to put in place another big tax cut. Tax cut for who? A tax cut for the very wealthiest people in the country who will get a disproportionate share of any proposed tax cuts. We can expect to see that in round 2 because we saw that in Trump administration round 1. And big tax breaks for corporations who promised they would use the proceeds, by the way, to expand plant and equipment, to raise wages of their employees—that is not what happened. They used the extra money for stock buybacks that benefited very wealthy stockholders disproportionately. And the CEOs got bonuses. We didn't see wages for other employees.

So it is not just that the tax plan will benefit the very wealthy; it is that it will do that at the expense of working Americans.

Just take a peek at some of the proposals that are being put forward in the House Budget Committee by Republican leaders on that committee. They are going after very important programs that benefit the American people, whether in healthcare or nutrition. We will have to see when it finally comes out of there, but we know that most of the cuts they are proposing are going to be harmful to working Americans, to the people Candidate Trump claimed he wanted to help.

So this is a moment when everybody needs to focus very clearly on what their expectations were because it is shaping up to be a great betrayal. It is shaping up to be a situation where this new administration wants to get rid of merit-based civil servants, bring in a lot of political cronies, and then implement these huge tax cuts for very wealthy Americans and the biggest corporations at the expense of everybody else in America. I don't think that is what the people bargained for in this last election.

So I come to the floor today because we are seeing the Trump administration put in place some of these pieces that would be necessary in achieving these big tax breaks and benefits to the very wealthy. Whenever a President decides that he gets to cherry-pick the law and just provide resources to his political benefactors and ignore the rest of the law, that is a big danger signal. When the nominee to be the head of OMB refuses to commit to following the law, that is a big danger signal.

So I would just ask all of our colleagues to do our jobs as Members of Congress in the article I branch and make sure that we don't see this flagrant attack on the Constitution be successful.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JUSTICE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRUMP EXECUTIVE ORDERS

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, it is good to see you sitting up there.

As a recent former Governor—I say that as a former Governor myself—I won't ask you what you are hearing in West Virginia, but I have to tell you, I rise to the floor today amongst a huge amount of confusion.

Two days ago, the Trump administration, without warning to any States, to any Governors, without warning to Congress, late at night, put out an order freezing all Federal spending for 90 days.

Earlier today, less than 48 hours later, that order was formally rescinded. But hold it. The good news—entirely good news—lasted about 30 minutes, 45 minutes, because 45 minutes later, the Press Secretary in the White House says: No, the freeze will actually stay in place and be rigorously enforced.

So—I don't know—as a Governor, which one do you follow? Because, as the Presiding Officer knows, an awful lot of our State programs are actually Federal dollars passing through our capitals into these programs. So I ask, which one is it?

Unfortunately, I am not the only one asking the question, and I have an awful lot of stressed Virginians to prove it.

In Virginia, as in West Virginia or any other State, Federal funding supports countless programs that serve kids, seniors, community infrastructure, and a whole lot more. Yesterday alone, my office was literally flooded with outreach from organizations and local governments.

I heard from firefighters from Southwest Virginia. They are worried they won't be able to replace their tanker truck with Federal funding that was supposed to be coming pretty soon.

I heard from an affordable housing organization in Northern Virginia that if they go 90 days without Federal dollars, they might have to shut down their organization. People would have to find different jobs. That organization—you can't turn on or off the flow of these resources.

I heard from law enforcement in the Shenandoah Valley and from the greater Richmond area that a lot of these localities depend on Federal dollars to pay police officers. If they don't have those funds for the next 90 days, this will take cops off the street.

I heard from a number—not just one but a number—of domestic violence shelters across the Commonwealth that without this funding, because they don't have huge reserves, they will have to leave women and children without housing support.

Listen to this one. We have a little town called West Point, VA. It was an old mill town. They have a very good Head Start Program. Head Start gets funded by the Federal Government. Their Head Start funding runs out on Friday, January 31. They had been told—they can't get any answer—that their next round of funding was in process and there would be no break in the action. What do the Head Start moms and dads who have kids in that program in West Point, VA, do starting next Monday?

Senator KAINE and I probably had 8 to 10 Head Start Programs here. As a matter of fact, there is a gag order put in place right now so that people can't talk about these things inside the administration, and the Head Start directors were trying to call their contact, kind of their resource person, and they got no response.

So whether you care about meals for low-income seniors, whether you care about Head Start for vulnerable kids, whether you care about teens who need that mental health support oftentimes coming from Federal dollars, that all is up in the air at this point. What do we tell these folks?

Many of these folks voted for President Trump because they thought he was going to bring grocery prices down.

Like the Presiding Officer, I have not only been a Governor, but I was a business guy. I can claim still that I was in business longer than in politics. This is not the way you run an operation. The truth is, this is unbelievable. I was so proud when I was Governor of Virginia. We got named the best managed State. This is management malpractice 101.

The most important enterprise in the world is the American Government, not only in terms of safety and security but in terms of how we treat our people.

The truth is, rescinded or not, these chaotic antics have real consequences. I know of an organization in Virginia that had to call an emergency board meeting yesterday to see if they should go out of business. I have heard from folks who are worried that they will have to lay off their employees. Without this Federal funding, they are just not going to be able to make payroll. One Virginian wrote to me and said that “the mental and physical damage is already immense.” It is not right to play with people's lives in such a grossly irresponsible way.

I have been doing this for a while. I have never heard of some kind of arbitrary freeze on all Federal spending. It was bad enough what happened when they put a freeze on Federal assistance to folks around the world.

I commend Secretary Rubio. One of the reasons why I was proud to support him was that he has actually tried to back off from that order, making sure that humanitarian aid is not going to disappear.

The story has been out. I have been very interested in the conflict in Sudan. There is a ship in Port Sudan

right now with American medicine on it. The aid group was going to take that out—the medicine—to save people's lives. That medicine will go to rot if those funds are not flowing.

It is bad enough, this issue of how we are treating Americans who depend on these Federal funds—these are real programs with real people—you take that and layer on the other whammy. In Virginia, we have a disproportionate number of Federal workers. You have quite a few in West Virginia I know as well due to great former West Virginia Senators. Suddenly, in an, again, unprecedented and I believe potentially illegal move, every Federal employee is offered this chance to quit and get paid for 6 months, until September 30, if you quit.

Now, nothing like this has ever been done before. Maybe this is the way you do business in the tech world, and I used to be in the tech world, but if you manage a good company, you don't go out and basically say to all your workers: Quit.

Of course, the problem is—and I urge my Federal workers to think about this—unfortunately, this President has a record of not only sticking it to Federal workers, but he has a record of sticking it to all the business contractors he did business with by not paying the bills.

So I worry because not only is there very much a legal question of whether the President can offer this buyout offer to all these Federal workers, but I can assure you, there is nothing in the budget—there is nothing in the budget—that we still haven't negotiated for the balance of this fiscal year that has got this X-billion-dollar number next to it that is going to pay for all of these buyouts.

We know where this comes from. It comes from the fellow that is being put up to be head of the OMB, Russell Vought, who wrote Project 2025, the very project that President Trump as a candidate said: Don't worry. I didn't read it. I don't know anything about it.

In that document, it goes on at length about how the goal of Project 2025 and Mr. Vought, who wants to be head of OMB, which kind of controls the management and budget of the Federal Government, was that he wanted to traumatize Federal workers. He wanted them not to go to work. He wanted to classify them as villains—his words, not mine.

I can tell you this: For a whole lot of Federal workers, they have already hit that goal. They are traumatized. And I worry like heck.

You say: Gosh, I don't know what I should do. Maybe I will take the offer.

But before you sign that and send it back—what may be an illegal offer that is not funded, that chances are you are not going to get paid—think a little bit about it. If this becomes another kind of passing fad where there is not any enforcement and not a payment, if you sign that and send it back, chances are you have made an indication that you

are going to be the first person that gets RIFed, maybe without that 6-month severance.

I also have to wonder. You know, we are a couple thousand air traffic controllers short right now. If air traffic controllers—who, by the way, take about a year to get trained—if 5,000 of them say “You know what, I am going to take that offer,” what happens to air traffic safety? We don’t have a fallback. We don’t have a reserve of air traffic controllers to make sure that when you climb on an airplane, it is safe. Yet we have made that offer, to my understanding, to all the air traffic controllers in America: Sign here. We are going to pay you. You don’t have to work for the next 6 months.

Again, how many Americans are going to be happy with the fact that we are paying folks without them working for 6 months?

What happens as well—are we going to really say to all the folks who do bird flu research and are trying to seek it out—we have a lot of poultry and turkeys and chickens both in the Shenandoah Valley and on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. One of the things people are experiencing most now is the rising cost of eggs. If suddenly all the folks who are working on bird flu quit, maybe people won’t buy eggs, but I actually think it will drive up the already high cost of eggs two, three times. I thought President Trump was hired to try to bring down grocery prices.

What happens as well with the folks who are the food inspectors—salmonella? Are you going to really feel all right about going to the grocery store and buying something if a whole lot of folks have taken this buyout offer? This is not the way to run an operation.

I think about earlier today. I asked a question of Mr. Kennedy, who wants to be head of HHS. He had told me in his earlier comments in my office that he wanted to get rid of 2,200 people in HHS. I asked him: What is your plan? Who are those 2,200?

No answer.

I know he has got strong feelings about NIH, where, candidly, we have the best researchers in the world that have taken years for us to recruit. If suddenly, based on President Trump’s offer, all these NIH researchers quit because they can make two, three, four, five times as much in the private sector, but all that basic research is done at NIH, who are we going to fill those back in with? Not with as qualified people.

The list goes on and on and on.

Again, I would say this is management malpractice 101. You want to change your workforce. You want to make them more effective, more efficient. You don’t try to traumatize them. But that is what has happened so far.

To Americans across the country and to my fellow Virginians, if there are ways to find more efficiency, if there

are ways to logically—business-minded—think through the efficiency of our Federal Departments and maybe save some money and maybe cut back staff in a rational way, sign me up. But don’t sign me up for something that looks like it is a flimflam con job where people are being potentially suckered into sending an email back when there is no assurance that that email or that whole offer is legal in the first place. There is no money in the till. And if you go back to the case of the current President, look at his record from when he was in the private sector. Did anybody get paid 100 cents on the dollar?

So I know other Senators are going to be coming up. But I just think that, in many ways, President Trump got hired because they thought we could bring down consumer prices; they thought we could bring down grocery prices. None of this is bringing down grocery prices. None of this is bringing down consumer prices.

None of this, I think, is going to make our Federal Government more efficient or effective or, in the long term, save money. If our most talented people quit, it is going to cost more to rehire them. Anybody knows that who has been in the private sector. And we are not going to get people with the same experience.

What it feels like, and I know what I have been thinking, is one of the things that was the most troubling about the first Trump administration was this sense of chaos that people kind of got exhausted with. My goodness gracious, this is day 10—day 10—of the Trump administration. We have chaos on steroids.

What I would hope is that my Republican colleagues in Virginia, in the legislature, in statewide elected office, and I would hope my Republican colleagues in the Senate and in the House would say: Hey, better efficiency, count me in. Across-the-board freezes of programs without regard to the people’s lives that are going to be changed or affected, that doesn’t make sense.

State budgets—all the State legislatures are in right now doing their budgets. How do you plan with those Federal dollars that are maybe going to be suspended for 90 days or then maybe arbitrarily suspended forever? How do you plan that?

And to the Federal workforce: I tell you, the idea of what potentially is illegal—a nonfunded buyout offer with no guarantee and, if anything, the opposite being true—I would urge people to think long and hard and not take this offer, not set you up for being fired, rifled, or eliminated.

And I would appeal again: There is a better way to do all of this. And I say this as somebody who has now voted for five of President Trump’s nominees for Cabinet positions. I have gotten a lot of grief from that already. From somebody who was a chief executive, I feel like a Governor or the President ought to get most of their choices but

for people that I think fall outside the norm and don’t have the credibility or judgment, and I will make those decisions.

I have a very important hearing tomorrow, as the former chairman of the Intelligence Committee and now the vice chairman, on TULSI GABBARD.

But I want to reach out and work with this administration. Let’s get back to lowering costs. Let’s get back to driving grocery prices down. Let’s not put people in fear not just for their jobs but for their lives, if you are that victim of domestic abuse, if you are that kid who needs Head Start, if you are that senior that is dependent upon Meals on Wheels.

Those programs don’t last for 90 days. And if they suddenly shut down and we decide after 90 days, “Oh, we want to start them again,” the cost is going to be double or triple.

There is a better way to do this. So I appeal to my Republican friends. Maybe we need a gang on this to try to think about this in a more bipartisan way. But in the meantime, I implore the administration: Get your act together. Don’t put out two separate statements totally contradicting each other on the same day about your intentions—two totally opposite. It just makes chaos and the stress go up, and, ultimately, later in this week, the services disappear.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, on Monday night, President Trump threw America into chaos when he abruptly announced a freeze on trillions of dollars in Federal grants and loans that so many communities, States, and Americans depend on.

The reaction across the Nation has been uniform. We have a phone ringing off the hook, computers busy and buzzing. Everybody wants to know: What does this mean? What has happened?

Even members of the press were confused. Members of Congress were confused. Members of the American public were confused. And even members of the President’s own administration were confused about the intent and scope of the freeze.

Rightly so, Americans from across the country took to calling our offices and the offices of their Congressmen and asked what was going on. They needed clarity, and they wanted to know what the freeze on funds would mean to them—in agency after agency across the State of Illinois and the Nation.

Toni is a woman from Woodstock, IL. She shared with my office that her

brother has Down syndrome, and the care he receives is funded by a Federal grant. His health and safety would be at risk if this freeze is allowed to be implemented.

Or take Dr. Kay, a professor and scientist at the University of Chicago. Her work depends on funding from the National Institutes of Health and other Federal grants. She shared that the freeze would “interrupt crucial biomedical research, stopping progress, destroying sometimes years’ worth of research that cannot be undone.” And it could hurt the retention of our Nation’s future scientists.

Or Sarah, a supporter of community-based organizations that serve youth experiencing homelessness in the city of Chicago. If this freeze, in fact, takes place, the organization will not be able to access the Federal funding it needs to provide services for youth, help them escape violence, or help to reunify their families.

Yesterday, Americans across the country faced disruptions in accessing critical funds and services in popular programs like Head Start, Medicaid, and so many more. These are just a few of the many messages my office and others have received from Americans confused, outraged, and impacted by this freeze.

Then, last night, a Federal judge in DC ordered the freeze to be paused from going into effect until Monday, February 3. In response to the backlash from the American public, the organized efforts of many Democratic lawmakers, and the court ruling, President Trump’s Office of Management and Budget today rescinded the memo outlining the funding freeze.

But that isn’t the end of the story. The President’s Press Secretary now claims that while the memo ordering the freeze has been rescinded, the freeze itself still stands.

Who is on first? How does this make sense, you ask? Well, the honest answer is it doesn’t. The policy is as poorly thought out and communicated as can be.

In true Trump fashion, his administration has made clear that it doesn’t intend to abide by the will of the American people, the letter of the law, or the Constitution. It will do whatever it takes to push through this policy, even if it means hurting Americans across the country.

Let me be clear. We are going to continue to fight this unconstitutional, devastating, and grossly unpopular freeze in Federal spending. I want every American to know that your voice and participation in our democracy means more now than ever. The President is betting that you won’t notice when he abuses power or breaks the law; that amidst the chaos that surrounds him, you will be too confused, jaded, or just too tired to fight back.

But I urge America to continue monitoring the actions of this new administration, particularly when they touch

you and your family personally, and to report to our offices—both political parties—any Federal funding that your communities and organizations are unable to access.

This will not be the last time, I am afraid, that this administration defies our Nation’s laws to show a position of power, and we will be watching closely, ready to stop him if he tries again.

Some think this freeze was a mistake, a blunder by the new President’s team. Others think this was exactly what they wanted: chaos, confusion, a show of force. Today, we even don’t know exactly what the motive is or what the status is. The courts have to sort it out because the administration can’t even explain it. The best thing now, at this point, is to watch closely because programs that mean a lot are at stake.

I have a particular affection for the National Institutes of Health, the premier medical research Agency in the world. For their researchers to call in a panic over this decision is to me a litmus test of why it is the wrong thing to do for America.

Want to make America great again? Hook your star to one of the greatest Agencies in our government, the National Institutes of Health. Don’t suspend their funding, don’t stop their research. I watched closely as the story unfolded this afternoon, and with a lot of my friends, I thought, well, the Trump administration has realized they just made a mistake and they put everything back on track.

And then Karoline Leavitt, who is the new Press Secretary, issued a statement, and she said:

This is not a rescission of the Federal funding freeze. It is simply a rescission of the OMB memo. Why? To end any confusion created by the court’s injunction. The President’s [executive orders] on federal funding remain in full force and effect, and will be rigorously implemented.

That was her quote to try to clarify the situation; she couldn’t have made it worse. At this point, America doesn’t know what the future will hold. The judge in the case that is pending is the one who may have the last word, the important word on where this is headed.

I want to commend those who are in the courtroom trying to sort out the mess that has been created here in Washington for the good of this country to make it great again. We certainly need to have some understanding of what the policy of our government is.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. ROSEN. Mr. President, my State of Nevada is unique. We are big in

physical size, but relatively small in population. We are independent people, but have a strong allegiance to our Nation. After all, we are the Battle Born State, born during the Civil War. And while we don’t like Washington telling us what to do, Nevadans depend on Federal resources to help our communities.

Now, it is simple. By coming together to form our Union and paying taxes, Nevadans deserve to receive our fair share of funding from the Federal Government. It is hard not to be affected by what goes on in Washington when more than 80 percent of your State—of our land—is owned by the Federal Government, more than any other State. Think about that. Eighty percent of Nevada is owned by the Federal Government. That is why I take my responsibility as representative of the people of Nevada incredibly seriously. It is why I rise today to speak on behalf of the reckless, cruel, and illegal action that President Trump took to freeze virtually all Federal grants and loans.

While this administration has now rescinded the memo from the Office of Management and Budget that announced the freeze, they have been clear that the funding freeze continues, adding to the chaos and confusion. Lack of clarity as to which programs will be affected and which ones would not be has been having devastating effects in States like my own and so many others. In fact, more than 30 percent of the Governor’s budget for the next 2 years relies on Federal funding, which is why this issue is critical for our State.

Since President Trump’s administration issued the guidance on Monday night, my office has received hundreds of calls and emails from Nevadans who are rightfully concerned just about what this would mean for them, for their families, for their jobs. We also received additional emails and calls from nonprofits, from service providers, from community stakeholders who depend on this funding and support Nevadans.

One of the messages my office received was from the Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth. This partnership helps get young people, kids—kids—off the streets. And while many in this Chamber disagree about a lot of things, I think all of us agree that helping homeless kids is important work.

So I want to read part of their letter because I think it encapsulates what a lot of organizations that provide critical services—well, just what they have been feeling. They said this:

This decision will have an immediate and severe impact on organizations like ours, as well as countless others in Nevada and across the country.

Much of this funding has already been allocated and committed through contracts, and the sudden halt creates chaos and uncertainty for agencies that provide critical services.

Many organizations in our community simply do not have the financial reserves to

operate for more than a few months without these funds.

It is not just the Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth that we heard from. My office also heard from Northern Nevada HOPES, a community health center based in Reno, NV. Northern Nevada HOPES provides affordable, high-quality healthcare services to people in our community, those who need it the most. In fact, 56 percent of their patients live at or below the Federal poverty level, and 10 percent experience homelessness.

This is what Northern Nevada HOPES told my office. I am going to quote again:

At Northern Nevada HOPES, this pause has significant implications for the services we provide to over 17,000 patients . . . many of whom are children and families.

As we assess the situation, we have been forced to take immediate actions, including implementing a hiring freeze and preparing to limit care for patients who rely on our sliding fee scale, including those who are uninsured or underinsured.

Think about that. Think about these children. Think about these families. President Trump's chaos and reckless actions have put the health of Nevada's families in jeopardy. That that means kids who need to go see a doctor, women who need to get a cancer screening—take a point off the script here. My mom passed away from cancer. No one should miss their cancer screenings.

It is impacting older people who need lifesaving medication, and all of them could be affected by this terrible, terrible action.

Many seniors also rely on other vital programs like Meals on Wheels to access the nutrition they need to live independently and with dignity. I have seen this critical work up close.

A few years ago, I joined an organization to deliver meals to seniors in Boulder City, NV. Seeing the joy on the faces of the seniors we visited is something I won't forget. They know the folks who come on their route to deliver to them. It is not just a meal for them, Meals on Wheels. It is a lifeline. They don't just provide nutritious foods for seniors who might be housebound, isolated, or living on a fixed income. These people become their friends, their lifeline.

For thousands of seniors in Nevada, this program is also their primary source of nutrition. In 1 year alone, Federal funding allowed Meals on Wheels to serve more than 2.5 million meals to seniors across Nevada.

In Nevada—I am sure in your State, too, Mr. President—we take care of our seniors. President Trump's proposed freeze on Federal funding threatens them all—threatens them all. Pausing the funding to this critical program means denying our seniors, our elderly, their access to something so essential, so comforting, a meal—a meal.

And the possibility of an interruption to this service, even temporarily, means seniors in Nevada and across the country lose the certainty of knowing

where their next meal will come from and the comfort of the visit of the person who brings it to them and oftentimes sits with them, listens to them, and gives them that comfort care that is so important to all of us.

I just want everyone to think about that. Is this who we are, taking meals away from seniors—Meals on Wheels? I hope not.

Another essential service under threat of this Trump funding freeze is public safety, something everybody worries about. And this action will make our communities less safe and stop critically needed Federal funding from reaching law enforcement officers, firefighters, and other first responders who look out for our communities each and every day. These heroic men and women depend on the funding from Federal programs to do their jobs safely and to protect our communities effectively.

And here are just a few examples of how this freeze will impact them.

Nevada, unfortunately, is no stranger to the horrific impact of wildfires and fires in general. Whether it is raging wildfires or the standard fire emergencies that happen in communities, well, they happen every day across our State. And the men and the women who make up our fire departments, they rely in part on Federal grants to purchase that equipment needed to do their job safely and effectively—equipment like emergency vehicles they travel in, the protective suits they put on, the helmets they wear, the oxygen tanks they carry so they can breathe fresh air while they save someone's life, and the tools that they wield to stop those fires from destroying people's lives, homes, and livelihoods. Each and every part of this gear is critical for our firefighters and for their safety.

Our firefighters also rely on Federal funding in order to make sure they have the staffing levels they need. Firefighting, like much of the work of our first responders, goes 24/7, 365 days a year. You never know when the next emergency will happen; it just will. You must always be ready. You must always be prepared. You don't know when it is going to happen. But our firefighters, our first responders stand ready, at a moment's notice, to run in to save the rest of us.

Let me tell you, when there is a fire in our State, our firefighters aren't clocking in at 9 o'clock and clocking out at 5 o'clock. They keep working around the clock until the fire is out and the job is done, until everyone is safe and the emergency is passed. And when we don't have the proper staffing levels, when our communities don't have the numbers of firefighters they need, well, our State suffers, our community suffers, families suffer. The damage is real, like I said, not just lives—lives, livelihood, and communities. It is devastating.

Thankfully, there is Federal funding through the SAFER Program to ad-

dress this issue, to increase and maintain a number of trained firefighters who are serving on the frontlines and are available to respond in our communities when an emergency happens.

The bad news—not just bad; the sad news, the cruel news—is that this kind of funding is the kind that President Trump's order could freeze. This doesn't make us safer. It doesn't save us money. It just puts us and our families and those we love and our communities in greater danger.

Like I said, it is not just firefighters who feel the effects of this freeze. Our law enforcement officers in Nevada could also be affected, and that is going to have a direct impact on public safety.

So make no mistake, like all 50 States, my State relies on funding from the Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, also known as the COPS program. At a time when we are facing a national police shortage, this program allows Nevada to hire more officers who serve in our communities and take part in community policing efforts, building trust, engaging with Nevadans, combating crime.

Who would oppose that?

Well, due to the President's Federal freeze, this money could now be in jeopardy.

As Nevada and the rest of the Nation continue to deal with the deadly impact of the fentanyl crisis, this freeze could rob us of critical tools to combat this dangerous and deadly drug. Over the last few years, fentanyl has fueled a crisis in Nevada. Families across our State have seen loved ones face addiction and overdose. Hundreds of Nevadans are losing their lives each and every year from fentanyl.

This isn't a red State problem or a blue State problem. It is a national problem, and it is a crisis in Nevada. The State's opioid response programs, which do depend on Federal grant funding, are critical to reducing harm and preventing overdoses in our communities.

I have spoken with law enforcement officers in Nevada. I have spoken with parents and family members and friends who lost loved ones to fentanyl. It is clear that we need to be doing more to tackle this issue. And this freeze—this cruel freeze—does nothing to help; it is quite the contrary. If this funding were impacted, again, it would hurt our communities. It would hurt our families, our friends, our neighbors, those we love.

As long as we are talking about programs that are vital to community safety and well-being, we can't forget about the potential impact on our veterans. In Nevada, our veterans have always been top priority. I can tell you, I am so worried about how this funding freeze would jeopardize programs that support veterans' transition back to civilian life, provide them critical services, preserving the legacy of those who served, and so much more.

Take for example, if you will, a program called the Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program, which provided \$17 million to Nevada to help homeless women veterans and veterans with children find secure and stable housing and employment. The Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program is helping women veterans. For many of these veterans, this program provides them with the resources that they need to rebuild their lives.

These men and women signed on the dotted line, and they fought to protect our freedom. And the very least we can do is make sure they have the resources and support when they return home.

There is also the Veterans Legacy Grant Program, which provided more than \$2 million to Nevada to help preserve the history of our men and women in uniform so that we can honor their service and show them how grateful and thankful we are to them and to their families.

A pause in funding for something as critical as the Veterans Legacy Grants Program would threaten a key resource for educating future generations about the legacy and sacrifice of our veterans. The history of our veterans matters, and a pause in this money would be a slap in the face to those who literally, like I said, put their lives on the line to protect all of us—you, me, all of us—every single day.

The Trump administration has said that their pause won't impact programs for the VA, that all of the Agencies' programs pass their so-called review. But the administration also said it was rescinding the memo that started the pause. Then, not an hour later, they sowed confusion and uncertainty by saying the funding freeze is back on. So what is it? How can we believe them? It is one thing until it is not. It is another thing until it is not. It is chaos. Why would we trust them now with critical funding for our veterans? Why would we risk that?

I can keep going on and on about all of the ways that President Trump's freeze would hurt my State of Nevada. I could talk about how this freeze led to a disruption on the Medicaid website, which was down for hours, affecting Nevadans who rely on this critical program to literally stay alive in many cases, and this is precisely—precisely—the problem. The chaos and the disruption that this reckless action has caused is just unnecessary, and it is harmful. It is helping no one.

So I want to ask everyone at home—I want to ask you at home—to think about this: How is any of this actually helping you? Is it helping you at the grocery store? Is it helping you at the gas pump? Is it helping you get an affordable home?

It is not.

That is why I call on President Trump to fully and permanently rescind this harmful Executive order to freeze Federal funds now. Nevada families are watching. Nevada families are

waiting to see if President Trump thinks that they really matter.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I come to the floor this evening to join my colleagues to express my deep concerns about the Trump administration's extreme decision to take away services that millions of families and small businesses rely on. This is a decision that does not lower costs, that does not create jobs, that does not enhance public safety, or keep our communities safe. It is a decision that actually will hurt people in my State of New Hampshire and too many across the country who rely on services that are now in jeopardy.

On Monday night, more than 2,600 Federal programs were ordered to cease activities with less than 24 hours' notice. They were given little guidance on how this should be carried out, and in every State across the country, confusion and panic among too many people followed.

Since that order, I have heard from countless Granite Staters who are worried about what this means for them and their families—from healthcare providers to nonprofit organizations to so many who are doing essential, life-saving work. Many of these organizations are waiting on promised funding for projects that they have already completed, funding for which they went through the process. They were guaranteed they were going to get these awards, and now they are in jeopardy.

The Trump administration claims it wants to lower costs for folks. Well, let me be clear: This unprecedented decision does nothing to bring down the price of food, the price of housing, the price of childcare, the price of medications, or other lifesaving needs that families have. So what we saw this afternoon is that the administration tried to walk back their order; they rescinded the memo. Sadly, uncertainty and confusion remains because the White House says that they rescinded the memo but that the freeze wasn't rescinded.

So like a lot of people in New Hampshire, I am concerned, and I am frustrated. In my State and across much of the country, there is an affordable housing crisis. Because of the administration's action, housing organizations across New Hampshire are not able to use Federal funds. I heard from the executive director of the housing authority in the city of Rochester. They said they have 170 families who are at risk of being homeless if they can't get their operating funding—and that is just one housing authority.

Despite what the administration said about rental assistance not being affected, at no point yesterday did the Department of Housing and Urban Development say that this money would continue to be available. Housing funding that keeps all of these families and hundreds more across New Hampshire in their homes is at risk of being cut off.

Yesterday, we also heard from the Mortgage Bankers Association. They were asking for clarity because they couldn't be sure if they could help families complete the purchases of their homes.

The person we talked to said:

Americans are going to the closing table tomorrow and deserve to know that their loan will close on their home purchase. Without this clear assurance that the Federal Government will ensure new loans or pay claims under these programs, there will be severe harm to borrowers and disruption to the mortgage market.

Well, HUD gave that clarity for single-family mortgage insurance but not for multifamily properties, such as apartment buildings. That affects 20 percent of the multifamily housing construction across the country. Let me just say that again. It affects 20 percent of the multifamily housing construction that is happening right now. We are talking about 130,000 apartments nationally that are jeopardized by this administration's actions.

Now, we know we need to build more housing. We are already millions of units short of what we need. In New Hampshire last year, for the first time, the average price of a house was over \$500,000. And our rental vacancy rate? In a healthy rental market, the vacancy rate is about 5 percent. In New Hampshire, it is 0.6 percent. There is no rental housing. This careless action means higher rents and home prices in the future.

Our housing shortage is much of why the most recent point-in-time count for homelessness found it up 18 percent across the country. We have far too many people in this country who don't have a roof over their heads, and that is especially dangerous during these winter months. Meanwhile, even though 2 weeks ago New Hampshire's nonprofits and State and local governments were awarded more than \$14 million to help shelter people and support them, today, they couldn't access that money. That means they won't have the funding they need for rent or to get reimbursed for supportive services.

I want to be clear: Even after a judge stayed the order, my constituents still cannot access their funding. The Presiding Officer is a former Governor. He knows what that means. People in our States can't get the housing that they are counting on. If they can't get their funding, that means more people are forced to live in their cars, on the streets. It means more people can't get the help they need with substance use disorders or in finding work. It means

more people are stuck without permanent housing. These are veterans; they are families; they are victims of domestic violence. They are all placed at risk because of this order.

I heard from one constituent who has a mortgage from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. She has owned her home for 20 years now. She is almost at the point where she has paid off that mortgage, but without the mortgage assistance that she gets from the USDA, she is worried that she might lose her home entirely.

Another of my constituents, Kathleen, lives in housing for seniors. She has debilitating medical issues that make it hard for her to leave her home. She gets all of her food from a local food bank. She called my office because she is worried, if this funding stops, she will be on the street, and she doesn't know where her meals are going to come from.

That is what this order and these cuts are threatening—leaving seniors without a roof over their heads, not knowing where their next meal is going to come from.

It is not just in housing that people are concerned. The effects on communities are significant. The chaos of this order is hurting communities that have been promised funding for improvements they have made to their water infrastructure, to their energy use, and even to city parks.

We heard from the town of Conway, which is in the heart of the Mt. Washington Valley in the White Mountains. With help from the Environmental Protection Agency, Conway has fixed an aging sewer pipe, their sewer main, to keep sewage from leaking into the groundwater.

New Hampshire is really good at working at the local, State, and Federal level to address critical infrastructure. This week, Conway received word that, at least for now, they can't get paid, thanks to this order from the Trump administration. Conway has already done the work, they have already paid the contractors, and as of today, they are waiting for reimbursement of about \$400,000 from the Federal Government. That is a big deal for a town in a rural area that has fewer than 10,000 people. It affects their tax base. If the Federal Government doesn't come through with the money that has been promised, then taxpayers in Conway are going to have to make up that difference.

It is unacceptable for the administration to suggest that it won't pay this bill, leaving families on the hook for unaffordable rate hikes.

I have also heard from one town administrator who is not yet sure how broad the scope of the administration's order is and how it is going to affect their ongoing wastewater infrastructure project that is using a mix of Federal and non-Federal funds.

Their pump station relies on tarps to keep out the elements. The structure and equipment that keep the sewer sys-

tem functioning face imminent failure. Without the Federal funding—which, just to be clear again, has already been committed—there is no way this town can complete this project. That the whims of an unconfirmed budget director can create this degree of uncertainty is maddening.

I have heard from Kristen Murphy, who is with the town of Exeter. She is very concerned about the pause and the impact it will have on energy efficiency funding.

The Energy Efficiency Community Block Grant Program was poised to host a presentation in February for resident-owned manufactured housing on funding opportunities for energy efficiency. That is particularly important for those people who live in manufactured housing. And I did when my husband and I were in graduate school. We lived in what we called a mobile home; now it is manufactured housing. I know how challenging it is to keep them heated and warm and comfortable for the people who live there.

As Kristen pointed out, support for these manufactured housing communities is essential because a greater percentage of their annual income goes to home heating costs than it does for most people.

The administration's actions also threaten other projects in Exeter, like a landfill solar array that is currently under construction, improvements to critical stormwater infrastructure, and funding for a multigenerational community center.

There are a dozen other small towns in my State—from Gorham in the northern part of New Hampshire to Keene in the west over the Connecticut River Valley along Vermont—that have made improvements to their parks and community spaces through the Land and Water Conservation Fund. These towns have matched Federal funding dollar for dollar to improve quality of life in their communities, and as of today, because of the uncertainty and the way this order is being interpreted, taxpayers are left holding the bag.

In the area of childcare and nutrition, the chaos and confusion from the White House over the past 2 days have created significant uncertainty for early education programs, and it risks further fueling the childcare crisis.

Again, like housing, we have a childcare crisis in New Hampshire. The cost of childcare for the average family, if they have a toddler and an infant, is over \$30,000 a year.

While the administration claimed yesterday afternoon that Head Start Programs wouldn't be affected, Head Start Programs have been frozen out of their payment system. While, hopefully, that should have been made available again, my office is still hearing reports of system delays and reduced availability that is harming programs.

Fortunately, the timing of this uncertainty has not disrupted services in

New Hampshire so far, but I am hearing stories of programs in other States that had to temporarily stop serving families because they were not able to access the funds they needed.

It is unclear what the impacts of these shifting policies will be on child care and development block grants, which working families rely on to be able to afford care for their children while parents are at work.

My office has heard from the Childcare Network Collaborative in New Hampshire with significant concerns that childcare providers may be prevented from accessing community development block grant funding that they have already been awarded. These funds are intended for the purchase of a building that will prevent huge rent increases for childcare providers and help fuel an expansion of childcare in the rural parts of northern New Hampshire.

Childcare programs are also concerned about the potential impacts on other Federal programs that the families they serve rely on. For example, while the administration eventually said yesterday that SNAP payments wouldn't be affected, programs are finding it hard to reassure families about whether they will actually get their monthly payments on time given the disruptions that we have already seen to programs that were not supposed to be affected according to the administration's own words. So more chaos and uncertainty.

That is why so many of my constituents are telling me they simply do not trust what they are hearing from the White House.

Families relying on programs like SNAP for food and WIC for women, infants, and children to keep from going hungry already struggle to make their benefits last until the beginning of the next month. Any payment delays, even if it is just a few days, will cause needless suffering for hungry children. It is cruel to be putting struggling families through this unnecessary anxiety.

When it comes to law and order, the President often speaks about his commitment to law and order. In 2020, he criticized Democrats who supposedly wanted "to defund" and "abolish" the police. Yet here we are with the President stopping Federal funds from going to police and law enforcement agencies. Make no mistake, this stoppage could place lives and livelihoods in jeopardy.

I heard from Strafford County Sheriff Kathryn Mone about how the cutoff of funds will affect them. I live in Strafford County, so I know the sheriff there very well. Strafford County was awarded a \$715,000 COPS technology grant to buy much needed modern and interoperable portable and mobile radios for first responders. The U.S. Department of Justice notified the county on Monday that they are going to withhold these funds, forcing the county to place a hold on the order of new, updated radios.

Now, this may not sound like a big deal to some, but this equipment helps Strafford County first responders protect Granite Staters. If first responders can't communicate effectively, by definition, they can't respond to emergencies and crimes.

When I was Governor, we had a horrible shooting in northern New Hampshire. Two State troopers, a judge, and a newspaper editor were killed. As they were trying to get the perpetrator, our State police couldn't talk to local police, they couldn't talk to the Vermont law enforcement, they couldn't talk to the Canadians, and they couldn't talk to Maine—all of whom were involved in trying to catch the perpetrator—because they didn't have the communication, the radios they needed to keep people safe.

In the same vein, the town of Newington on the seacoast was awarded \$80,000 to replace 20-year-old radios and technology that can't communicate with modern equipment. The town was on the verge of submitting its invoices to be reimbursed for buying this crucial public safety equipment when the Trump administration stopped the flow of Federal funds.

If they are in an emergency, like a natural disaster or a mass shooter, Newington's police and fire departments would not be able to communicate on their current radio equipment to coordinate an effective response with Federal, State, and local partners. This lack of coordination among first responders could result in Newington's police or fire departments not arriving in time to fight a fire or to rescue people in need of help. The lack of modern radio communications could result in people not getting medical care quickly enough.

Again, this is much needed equipment that allows officers to communicate quickly and effectively to not only protect the people they serve but to protect each other.

Thanks to President Trump, Newington is being forced to pause its upgrade of 20-year-old equipment.

It should also be noted that the White House payment freeze means that the businesses who sold Newington the radios and associated equipment are not going to get paid in a timely fashion.

So let's call it what it is: Stopping funds to law enforcement and first responders puts lives and businesses in jeopardy.

It also affects defense contractors. New Hampshire has a strong defense industrial base. We have a lot of companies that do great work to protect our men and women who are serving. The Federal funding freeze is hitting those small businesses and manufacturers that rely on defense contracts to pay their workforce, which is critical to maintaining our national security.

For example, the New Hampshire APEX Accelerator program relies on grants from the Department of Defense to help small businesses navigate Fed-

eral contracting. In New Hampshire, government contracts and sub-contracts totaled \$4 billion last year. Now, that is not just some number that helps fuel our economy. For people from big States, maybe that doesn't sound like a lot of money in your economy, but in New Hampshire's economy, that is a lot of money, and it is an investment in our national defense. It is a manufacturing worker's ability to support their family. So let's not lose sight of what and who we are talking about here.

The freeze blocks funding under the Defense Production Act, which expands the defense industrial base under national security emergencies. Right now, we have a lot of businesses in New Hampshire that are receiving funding under the Defense Production Act to support their operations. These grants strengthen military readiness and capacity.

In the area of health, this pause will also cause real harm to healthcare providers and patients across our State. Everyone from our largest hospitals down to individual patients is reaching out to my office. They are confused, and they are scared.

The most immediate consequences will be felt by safety net providers like community health centers. They are vital to caring for our most vulnerable populations. Their patients are often uninsured for healthcare. Sometimes they are homeless. Some of them suffer from substance use disorders or mental illness. They rely on their community health centers just to get through the day.

As much as 50 percent of community health center funding comes from Federal grants, and their operating margins are slim.

Lamprey Health Care in Newmarket, in the southern part of New Hampshire, tried and failed to draw down Federal funds yesterday. They have another scheduled drawdown for early next week. This means that Lamprey has a limited number of days before the Trump administration's order limits the services they can provide to the community.

Amoskeag Health—another one of our community health centers—provides services in Manchester, our largest city. It would also suffer from a funding pause. Thirty-five percent of their funding comes from Federal grants, and they only have 19 days of cash on hand, which would cover just 1 week of payroll. They are scheduled to get funding on Monday, and that is now in the lurch.

Federal funding to train the healthcare workforce is also being threatened. New Hampshire struggles to retain and recruit healthcare providers, and Federal funding is critical to ensuring we have enough providers in rural and underserved areas.

Last week, Elliot Hospital—one of the largest hospitals in the largest city in Manchester—received notice that \$3 million in funding for its nursing ex-

pansion grant program was put on hold. There are currently 80 potential students enrolled in this program. The program is designed to address the acute nursing workforce shortage by attracting local applicants in the greater Manchester community. The funding freeze now puts that effort in jeopardy.

And Coos County Family Health, the northernmost county in New Hampshire, up along the Canadian border, is another community health center where access to healthcare can be extremely limited. Patients frequently have to drive hours to get access to some of the most basic services.

Coos County Family Health received a planning grant through the Health Resources and Services Administration, HRSA, to establish a rural medical residency program. Just this week, they received their accreditation, which is so exciting. They were so excited. And now the process begins to recruit and retain future doctors. The sole purpose of this program is to train health providers in Coos County, an area that struggles to attract talent. When we train these doctors in rural areas, they are more likely to stay after residency and become core members of the community. Any other week, this would be great news: more doctors to treat patients in need. But, today, their future funding through HRSA is at risk, thanks to the uncertainty created by these Executive orders.

Training doctors to treat sick or injured patients shouldn't be a controversial issue, but according to this administration, it is.

Coos County Family Health also uses Federal funding to support the victims of domestic violence that come into their practice. Specialized staff offer the victims counseling and support services—things like access to shelter. The staff connects victims with law enforcement and even offers prevention programs in local schools. Without Federal funding, they will be forced to lay off these staff members.

I don't know. Does the administration think that domestic violence survivors are unworthy of our support? Does this administration believe that causing chaos is more important than protecting our most vulnerable? Maybe this is what President Trump meant when he said he wanted disrupters. I don't believe this is what the public wanted.

Mental health programs are also at risk. New Hampshire's suicide rate is higher than the national average, and we need every available resource to help address this issue.

Northern Human Services and the National Alliance on Mental Illness use funding from the Garrett Lee Smith Suicide Prevention grant to provide afterschool support to youth experiencing suicidal ideation or those who have recently attempted suicide. We are literally talking about taking away services from children who are thinking about committing suicide. I heard

from the folks at NAMI, the New Hampshire Alliance on Mental Illness. They were almost in tears when they talked about what was going to happen if they couldn't serve these kids who need help.

And there is also Navigating Recovery, offering around-the-clock substance use disorder services in the city of Laconia. They are a small nonprofit, and they make use of every dollar they get by offering 24/7 support for individuals that have just overdosed, and that includes literally going into the hospital to be with the patient as they recover. They offer wraparound services like connecting individuals to housing, job opportunities, and childcare so they can find stability as they go through recovery.

And 53 percent of Navigating Recovery's funding comes from Federal sources, including the State Opioid Response grant program. I have worked for years to get dollars to the State under that SOR program, including last year when New Hampshire was awarded nearly \$30 million.

And I have to say, in the first term of the Trump administration, President Trump was very supportive of these dollars. We worked with his administration to get additional funding to address the fact that New Hampshire was one of the hardest hit States. So I don't know why, suddenly, they are willing to put that funding at risk by this freeze, because it has done more to prevent fatal overdoses and support recovery services than any other Federal program. Navigating Recovery uses those dollars on the ground. Without it, they would only have weeks before they start laying off staff and stop offering services.

Despite what this administration claims, it is the individuals who will pay the price of this uncertainty and chaos. This spending freeze is yet another example of the administration ignoring how their policies affect individuals' peace of mind, the livelihoods and the health of Americans at risk.

And then we are seeing broader attacks by the Office of Management and Budget on Federal employees. The Trump administration didn't stop at ripping funding away from vulnerable Americans this week. While much of the public's focus has been held by that order, they have continued their relentless attack on Federal employees.

Over 2 million civil servants working in thousands of essential fields—from healthcare to law enforcement to national security—who keep our country running, are under attack. And listen, I think we need to be more efficient and more effective, and we may have people who are not doing their jobs the way we want them to, but what this order has done is created confusion over the spending freeze—the hiring freeze instituted by the President's Executive order.

The administration claims this is temporary, but thousands of Americans who had job offers on the table

saw those offers revoked—even those who were ready to fill some of our most urgent vacancies, like at the VA. Even though the Department of Veterans Affairs said it would not apply this hiring freeze to many VA positions dedicated to providing veterans' healthcare and benefits, many crucial programs that veterans depend on will not be able to hire staff to serve our veterans.

For example, the VA will not be hiring caseworkers who help veterans get into permanent housing and related support. They won't be able to hire the personnel that literally keep the lights on and buildings running, such as fire protection, housekeeping, plumbing, boiler plant operation, laundry services, and other essential roles.

And we should remember that, year after year, the VA has had challenges in addressing these critical gaps. Last year, the VA reported almost 3,000 severe occupational staffing shortages. But that didn't stop this administration from pulling every pending job offer the day they took office. And while some have been reinstated, others are still in limbo. In just one example, VA employees at a facility focused on research and care for veterans with late-stage cancer were told their jobs were under review and they may be terminated altogether.

Now, I know everybody in this Chamber believes that we have made a commitment to those who have served this country in uniform, and we don't want to fail our veterans when they return home and enter civilian life. So how does this firing of people who take care of them help us fulfill that commitment?

And then, if we want to talk about jobs that keep Americans safe, let's talk about keeping planes from falling out of the sky or colliding on runways. I worked closely with the National Air Traffic Control Union and the FAA's Collaborative Resource Working Group to adopt a new staffing model in last year's FAA reauthorization bill.

We have a significant number of air traffic controllers in New Hampshire. They do a great job of keeping people in the flying public safe as they enter North America, all the way down to New York, in some of the most congested airspaces in the country. Now, the FAA made good progress in hiring last year as a result. They are still more than 3,500 controllers, however, short of their staffing target, and the controllers we do have work 6-day weeks, 10-hour days on a good week. They are exhausted; they are overworked; and they face severe mental health challenges as a result.

The FAA estimated that 10 percent of the Federal air traffic controller workforce would depart last year as a result of these conditions. And despite this, these air traffic controllers still haven't been told conclusively whether or not air traffic controllers are exempt from the hiring freeze.

Now, if preventing us from filling shortages and taking care of some of

our most vulnerable wasn't enough, OMB is actively trying to get rid of the civil servants we do have. This week, millions of Federal employees received emails offering to pay their salaries for the rest of the fiscal year in exchange for resigning now—and that included every single air traffic controller in the country.

Now, you might be asking yourselves why, when we are short more than 3,500 air traffic controllers, did we offer to pay the ones we have not to work? Well, like the hiring freeze, this order is an irresponsible, reckless, nontargeted effort that could have devastating consequences for critical positions.

What is more, they are trying to convince us that this will save money, making it clear that even if we lose thousands of employees with no plans to replace them, we will be better off.

Well, that is bad news for tourism in New Hampshire, for those who work closely with U.S. Forest Service personnel and depend on sound management of the White Mountain National Forest, and it is bad news for people who value clean air and clean water.

This message was also sent to more than 780,000 civilian employees who work for the Department of Defense. In New Hampshire, we have almost 8,000 civilians who work at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard that we share with the State of Maine. There are four public shipyards in the United States. Our employees in Portsmouth have the best on-time, on-budget record of any of the public shipyards. These employees contribute to the maintenance of our nuclear submarines, an essential tenet of our national security and a crucial capability to deter major conflict. Any impact to their workforce will strain a shipbuilding industrial base that is already saturated with demand to meet the requirements of our Navy.

The bottom line: If the shipyard can't get boats to the fleet on time, our Nation is less safe.

The freeze on Federal assistance also affects critical programs that support men and women in uniform, including DOD's financial assistance and grant programs that support servicemembers and their families.

This administration has said repeatedly that it wants to "restore the warrior ethos" at the Pentagon. I don't know about you, but slashing our defense workforce doesn't help me sleep any better at night. I don't think that restores the warrior ethos.

So in conclusion—I see my other colleagues here, and I know they are waiting to speak—the actions this week have only created confusion, chaos, and stress. That is the best-case scenario, if it ends right now. But if not, if the Trump administration and Elon Musk get their way and cut these programs, working Americans will be the ones to suffer the most.

The need for housing, sewers, and childcare doesn't go away when this administration says they don't want to

pay the bills. These costs just get pushed down to towns and end up coming out of people's paychecks. It ends up being paid on the backs of our local taxpayers.

Now, again, the administration tried to walk this back by rescinding Monday's memo, but then they added confusion by claiming that the underlying funding freeze was still in place. And they are unable to answer basic questions about who and what will be affected.

Maybe it is just me and the hundreds of Granite Staters whom I have heard from, but if you are going to stop all the critical funding that helps seniors, children, and families across this country, you need a better answer than we are hearing from this White House.

Instead, what we heard during the White House briefing—when asked one of these basic questions, Americans were told: We'll check on that and get back to you.

So to Granite Staters who have called my office in distress, wondering what this far-reaching, unprecedented move means for their lives and their livelihoods: Don't worry. The White House is going to get back to you.

That is outrageous—and this, despite not one but two Federal judges who have ordered the White House to stop holding these funds. The administration has made it clear that they intend to move forward with vague, irresponsible Executive orders that jeopardize billions in infrastructure, energy, healthcare, workforce, and educational investments.

Hard-working families, businesses, and nonprofits have been calling my office asking for clarity, and this administration hasn't been willing to provide any.

Common sense calls for all of us to work on a bipartisan basis to help our constituents to put an end to the chaos and uncertainty that has been created by this administration in only its second week.

I hope we can do that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I want to thank my Democratic colleagues: Senators SHAHEEN and BLUMENTHAL, Senators KIM and PADILLA, and so many others; Senator SCHATZ, Senator DURBIN, so many others who came on the floor tonight. And why did we all come on the floor? To sound the alarm of the reckless, lawless things Donald Trump is already doing to American families.

Americans need to know what is happening. They need to know what kind of damage people like Russell Vought will do to them. Tonight, we are holding the floor to sound the alarm. And, to augment that, I just got off the phone with a whole bunch of Democratic Governors from across the country, and we talked about Trump's administration's Executive orders, his erratic policies, and, most important, the impact on their States.

In State after State, people are on edge, people are so worried, because of what these executive orders would do: Head Start, rural hospitals, police, firefighters, you name it; schools, local governments. In every one of these States, people are angry and scared because of the damage that President Trump's Executive order would do.

Our group, the Governors and I, discussed paths forward to best respond and fight back. We are going to have a coordinated approach. We talked about how these policies would hurt their States. The amount of Federal money that is needed to support these States—and not just State government, so to speak, but feeding people, building roads, employing people, teaching kids, dealing with mental illness, helping keep us safe in fire and police—these are real things. And every one of these States could not provide the help that people need, provide the decent life that people seek, if this Executive order was fully implemented.

And so we talked about how we could inform them as to what is going on. We talked about how we can coordinate. And I told them that thanks to the Democrats' work here in the Senate, Donald Trump and Russell Vought hit a speed bump today. But I told them, as you will hear from my later remarks, we must keep fighting and working together to make sure they don't succeed, because if they succeed, they are going to hurt millions and millions of average working families. So we are working together to do that.

Now, today, we saw what happens when Americans fight back against disastrous policies. We saw what happens when Americans make their voices heard. A few days ago, President Trump launched his most reckless broadside yet against the American people here in his second term. In the blink of an eye, OMB announced a universal freeze on all Federal funding. The blast radius—the blast radius—of OMB's announcement was seemingly limitless—States, cities, towns, schools, small businesses, law enforcement, nutrition services, elderly care; hospitals, rural and urban and suburban; communities, people helping feed people, people helping people with mental illness, people helping house homeless veterans were all just so, so put on edge by the potential of these cuts.

Donald Trump's freeze can be boiled down to three Cs. You can talk about it in many ways, but the three Cs are apt: chaotic, creating chaos back home because there is chaos here in Trump's government; careless, not even knowing and realizing how badly these cuts would affect people; and cruel—cruel—outright economic sabotage against working families.

Make no mistake, OMB's funding freeze was intended. It is precisely what Project 2025 looks like in action—Project 2025 by another name. When Project 2025 first was announced, it was

during campaign season, and it was amazing the reaction by the American people—Democrats, Republicans, conservatives, liberals, Independents—against it. It was strong, much stronger than I ever imagined. And as a result, it got a very bad name. I think one poll showed 68 percent of Americans opposed it.

So what did Donald Trump do? Typical in his fashion, he said: I never heard of Project 2025. I don't even know what it is.

They were so afraid of it. You think they would have learned a lesson during the campaign, but they didn't.

And, now, within a few weeks of his being inaugurated as President, President Trump seeks to implement Project 2025. Well, Americans were furious. Americans let Donald Trump know about it. They let their Republican Congressmen and Senators know about it. They pushed back, and today, after 24 hours of outrage from one corner of the country to the other, Donald Trump backed off.

He rescinded the OMB memo—for now. Of course, the danger is not over. Rescinding one OMB memo will not nullify all of the Executive orders Donald Trump has issued, which will continue to pose a threat to these funds. And we know damn well that if they can't do it this way because they were caught redhanded, they will try to do it another way. But I can assure the American people, we will be vigilant.

But I want to say to my colleagues and to my constituents in New York and to my fellow citizens—American citizens—the roots of democracy are real. So many of us are worried that Trump will try to upend them—he and his cohorts—but they are real.

And this week was a good example. People heard how bad this was. They raised their voices. And now Trump has backed off.

This won't be his last assay, his last attempt to do this. We know that. But we also know that, when we raise their voices, and we will again, he knows that he will lose ground with the American people in a very severe and bad way, and if we keep fighting, he will back off and back off and back off until he stops. And once and for all, this evil scheme—this scheme that hurt so many American families—will be gone.

It is clear Donald Trump, with this freeze, seeks to violate the law, seeks to help his billionaire buddies, and hurt the American people. Violate the law, help his billionaire buddies, and hurt the American people—that is what he is trying to do. But we won't let him, America. We won't.

Now, let's talk about Mr. Vought, the chief cook and bottle washer of 2025. This episode, what happened today, should be a lesson to President Trump that following Russell Vought and Project 2025 is a loser—a loser, of course, for America, but a loser for him.

Now that Donald Trump has rescinded the OMB order, he should rescind the nomination of Russell Vought as well. If not, Mr. Vought will be the architect of more losses for President Trump because the next time this happens, Russell Vought will be the one calling the shots at OMB, a nightmarish scenario for working people.

I sat down a few days ago with Mr. Vought in my office. Because he is seeking nomination, he came to visit me. He told me, plain as day—plain as day—if he is confirmed, these are the kinds of things he wants to do at OMB.

The Senate must not confirm Mr. Vought to lead OMB. His views are way too fringe for the majority of this country, and I am sure, if you asked in a secret ballot, for a majority of the Republican Senators who sit across the aisle from us.

But, tomorrow, the Senate Budget Committee is scheduled to hold a markup of Mr. Vought's nomination. I join Ranking Member MERKLEY in calling on the chair to delay this markup by at least 2 weeks. Why? First, because of the devastation that these Executive orders will do and that the funding freeze was prepared to do. But, second, because it is clear that Mr. Vought was not honest during his hearings, and we need more answers from him. When something this consequential is launched by an administration, the person behind it all deserves—or America deserves—to hear exactly his thoughts and exactly what he is going to do.

During his testimony, Vought refused to answer direct questions related to the impoundment, for instance, of congressional funds, of which this is a related issue. And we now know why. He didn't want to alert Congress about the incoming decision from OMB to freeze all grant funding. Mr. Vought clearly withheld information that Senators were entitled to know, that the American people were entitled to know, and he needs to give us answers.

In the meantime, the American people also are learning just how fringe Mr. Vought truly is. His North Star is very simple: He wants to eradicate trillions in basic services that help American families so Republicans can give tax cuts to their billionaire buddies.

The last time Vought led OMB, he pushed multiple budget proposals that slashed Social Security and Medicare and public health. During the last default crisis, Mr. Vought was a key adviser to hard-right Republicans who pushed America to the brink of disaster by using a debt ceiling as blackmail to cut trillions in funding for healthcare, for seniors, for hungry kids, and for so many others.

Mr. Vought wants to eliminate the Department of Education, eliminate education funding in many ways.

He has proposed to cut disability payments for retired veterans. He wants to cut SNAP, feeding hungry children. He wants to raise drug prices.

And he is also one of the chief proponents of a truly sinister theory about the powers of the executive branch that calls for the impoundment of congressional funds. That means, basically, that Russell Vought thinks the President gets to pick and choose which laws he wants to follow and which he doesn't.

Why have a Congress? If the President can say, "Well, I will follow this law but not that, and this one and not that," that is so fundamentally against what the Founding Fathers believed, what Americans have believed through centuries, and yet he wants to just toss it away, again, so he can pay for the tax cuts his billionaire buddies desperately want.

If Congress wants to pass legislation investing in infrastructure or tech innovation or national defense, even, Mr. Vought thinks the President can just say nope, an explicit assault on our checks and our balances, which has served this Republic so well for centuries.

And, again, let me repeat so people understand clearly what is the end goal: to cut the daylights out of funding for middle-class families in order to line the pockets of the ultra-ultra-wealthy—tax cuts for Donald Trump's billionaire buddies, funding cuts for parents and kids and seniors in healthcare.

I believe the Budget Committee tomorrow, because the chairman of the Budget Committee has not granted the delay that is so desperately needed, will not go to vote on Mr. Vought, because a vote without him coming clean to the American people, what is it worth? It is not a process that should be. And then they will explain to the American people why this man doesn't deserve a vote in such an unfair hearing practice and setting.

And now let's talk about President Trump's increasing lawlessness. It may be tempting to think everything Donald Trump has been doing, including halting Federal funding, is part of his chaotic, unthinking approach to government, but we should not be so sure that it is just that and nothing else, because beneath the surface, a very clear pattern is emerging from Donald Trump's second term in office, a pattern of sheer lawlessness—a pattern of sheer lawlessness. First, he pardoned over 1,500 insurrectionists on his first day in office, including people convicted of assaulting Capitol Police officers. These were hooligans. I was within 30 feet of them. They were not peaceful. I couldn't believe one Congressman said they were tourists. Give me a break. They had hatred in their eyes, and they sought to stop our government from functioning in its lawful way. Some of them were violent, and Trump pardoned them—over 1,500 insurrectionists—on his first day in office.

Can you image anyone, let alone a President, being proud that he pardoned insurrectionists, some violent,

all trying to overthrow this government, on his first day in office? What does that say about this President?

Then, in the dead of night, he got rid of over 17 independent government watchdogs—people who report abuse and fraud and waste in government—without any notice or justification.

Yesterday, he eliminated Commissioners sitting on the NLRB and the Equal Opportunity Employment Commission. The NLRB, folks—you may not have heard those initials, but it has been in place I believe since Roosevelt's time to make sure workers are treated fairly, to make sure that employers who don't want a union don't go beyond fairness in preventing a union from occurring.

When Donald Trump gets rid of the Democratic Commissioner on the NLRB who has always represented working people, he is saying to working people: I don't care about you. I care about the people who employ you but not you. And if they want to take advantage of you, Donald Trump says when he gets rid of the NLRB member, I don't give a hoot.

Another example. By the way, again, almost certainly against the law. The rule is, there should be a certain number of Democratic Commissioners and a certain number of Republican Commissioners. Whoever is President gets the Chairman, and then there are two Democrats and two Republicans. But Donald Trump didn't fire a Republican member of the Board. Maybe that would be less unfair. He fired the Democrat who stands up for working people.

Then, after all this, he issues his sweeping OMB memo virtually halting Federal grant funding.

These are actions of a lawless President, of a President who wants to erode, eat away at the rule of law and our system of checks and balances. And why? Why is Donald Trump storming right out of the gate so lawlessly? Why is he breaking one law after another? Might be because the Supreme Court said he can't be held accountable. Might be.

But it is simple. What is he trying to do? Before our very eyes, Donald Trump is rigging the system and breaking the law to help his billionaire friends at the expense—at the expense—of working families. That is the goal.

Finally, let's talk about how awful yesterday was for so many people. I heard from people in every corner of my State—frightened, worried, concerned—that they, average New Yorkers, no different than average Americans, were going to really suffer because of this funding freeze.

When I talked to the Governors, as I mentioned a little earlier, on the phone, it was happening in every State. It could be a rural State, it could be an urban State, a State that is large, a State that is small, from one end of America to the other, people are just fearful about what would be done.

The American people did not deserve to endure this 24 hours of panic and confusion, and they won't deserve to have to sit through that again when Donald Trump seeks another way to do the same thing even though we gave a speed bump, even though we thwarted him—not "we." The Democratic Senators didn't thwart Donald Trump. The Democratic Senators, by our advocacy and our strength, alerted the American people, and they thwarted Donald Trump.

So, America, congratulations. Congratulations. Let's keep doing it when he is trying to hurt us.

Did Donald Trump consider for a moment the damage he was unleashing? Did he know he was kneecapping cops and firefighters from purchasing literally lifesaving equipment—bullet-proof vests, breathing gear? Did he know he was essentially shuttering community health centers that so many people depend on for their health, that so many people bring kids to when they have a fever and might get something more damaging, like strep throat or influenza? Did he know that he was hurting rural hospitals that had to turn people away because they didn't know if they would get the funding? Did he know that he was telling food pantries: You are not going to get food next week to feed the hungry.

Yesterday was absolute hell for so many Americans trying to understand how Trump's order was going to hurt them; 24 hours of panic, confusion, deep, visceral frustration—all unnecessary.

All 50 States reported that the Medicaid portal was frozen, and 7½ million New Yorkers were shut out of Medicaid all together. That is just in New York. Nobody knew what would happen next.

My office was smothered by an avalanche of calls from New Yorkers, local leaders from every corner of the State in panic and fury.

I was getting calls from New Yorkers of both parties who were furious that the administration would have the gall to launch this sneak attack on them out of the blue.

I got calls from Republican town supervisors and mayors asking about flood prevention and sewer construction.

I got calls from food banks like Feed More in Western New York, fearful they wouldn't be able to make deliveries to hungry people.

I got calls from Rochester Head Start and other Head Start Programs worried sick—worried sick—that they weren't going to be able to pay the rent or pay their staff.

I got calls from the Roswell Cancer Center, which does some groundbreaking research—they developed the PSA test up there in Buffalo; Northwell Health on Long Island, one of the biggest hospital providers; Churches United for Fair Housing; local leaders in places like Syracuse; community health centers like Cornerstone Family healthcare in the Hudson

Valley—from one end of the State to the other.

So we won't know what the administration will try to do next. An hour from now, we could get a new memo outlining a new round of freezes. They did the last one at night, in the evening. That is how this administration under Donald Trump works—governing by chaos, governing by confusion. And who pays the price? The American people—parents, kids, doctors, teachers, healthcare workers, police, firefighters, and so much more.

So, my friends, in conclusion, I see my colleagues waiting. I will cut short my remarks. I could go on for a while because I am so aggravated and angry about what he has done and will attempt to do.

Even though the Trump administration failed today, it is no secret they will try to find another way to cut these funds. When they do, I want to assure the American people that Senate Democrats will be there not only to call it out but to fight back, to defend American families and beat another evil proposal back—with you, the American people, as our real sword and shield—making sure he doesn't do bad things to you.

So thank you to my colleagues for being here. I see we have four colleagues waiting. Thank you for sounding the alarm on the terrible things this administration is preparing to do, and thank you for being true patriots who believe in our democracy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HUSTED). The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. KIM. Mr. President, I rise today to try to make some sense of it all. Why are we seeing nothing but chaos coming from the White House? Why are people feeling a sense of fear and confusion? Why should Americans be paying attention to any of this?

I want to start by saying to the American people: You are not alone in feeling overwhelmed by what is going on right now.

Just yesterday, my office received more than 700 calls asking questions about the Trump administration's unconstitutional and brazen decision to take money away from them, to freeze programs that help people in every corner of our State and country. That translates to a call every 2 minutes.

I am going to share some of the stories of concern that I received yesterday, but before I do, I want to try to explain what exactly is going on.

On Monday, the Acting Director of the Office of Management and Budget sent a memo ordering Federal Agencies to "temporarily pause all activities related to obligations or disbursements of all federal financial assistance."

I know that sounds complicated, so let me put it another way. The Trump administration said that taxpayer money going to help people across the country was stopped. That is money that you have paid through your taxes

that goes to do important things. It helps provide meals to seniors. It keeps roofs over people's heads. It helps combat theentanyl crisis. It helps get veterans healthcare. It keeps childcare programs open and schools funded. It helps small businesses get back onto their feet after disasters.

That is just a small example of what the Trump administration attempted to take away from you. And let's be clear: This is your money, and they tried to take it away.

What happened next was they got caught, and the backlash was fast. The outrage was real. Their actions were stopped last night when a judge issued an injunction and questioned the constitutionality of the administration's actions.

Then today, in the span of an hour, the Trump administration rescinded their directive, only to contradict that with a tweet from the White House Press Secretary:

This is NOT a rescission of the federal funding freeze.

It is simply a rescission of the OMB memo.

Why? To end any confusion created by the court's injunction.

It goes on to say:

The President's EO's—

Executive order—

on federal funding remain in full force and effect, and will be rigorously implemented."

In short, the first time we tried to take away your money, it was probably unconstitutional, but we are going to keep trying in different ways until we get it right.

If this feels like your head is spinning, I get it. We have seen nothing but mass confusion and chaos for the past week and a half since Donald Trump reentered the White House. It is not governance; it is whiplash.

If you are watching me on C-SPAN or catching a clip on social media, there is one thing I want you to take away: The chaos is just a smoke screen for corruption. It is quite clear. They want to take away your money and give it right to the billionaire donors and corporate interests.

The Trump administration isn't taking this money away from you because they are serious about making government more effective or efficient. They are not doing this because they want to help more people and target our resources where they can do the most good. They are doing this because they are getting ready to gut programs you rely on every day and use that money for another round of tax cuts for those at the very top. They are doing this because the big corporate interests want to dismantle the public servants who work every day to make sure that your water is clean, that your kids get a good education, and that your parents are able to safely get to their doctor's appointments.

We should not lose sight of what is at stake here. We shouldn't get wrapped into the noise and confusion and chaos that the White House throws at us because behind that chaos, there are real

victims of this corruption. There are real lives on the line when people are left behind. Let me share just a few stories.

I heard from a lot of seniors and people who support seniors about their fears about what this means.

Yesterday morning, I got an email from someone who helps operate senior living facilities in Edison, N.J. They said the freeze was “obviously alarming” for those “who rely on federal funding to help people with disabilities become more independent.”

One of my staff received an email from a leader of senior services organizations in Hackensack and Jersey City who said:

Those in most need of services in New Jersey will lose all support.

Another staff received a message from Frank in Toms River. Frank said:

I am paralyzed and use Ocean Ride to get to all my doctors appointments. . . . I am unable to travel in a regular vehicle and without the significant discount of Ocean Ride, I could not afford to get to the doctor. Ocean Ride is essential to my daily life.

Now, you may never have heard of Ocean Ride, but for people like Frank, it is their lifeline. These actions by the Trump administration to take away money could force Ocean Ride to close their doors.

It is not just our seniors who lose out in this corruption and chaos; it is our kids.

I got a call from Kelly, a nurse from Parsippany.

I work with children who need food from free school programs, babies who need WIC, children who are bullied in school, children with disabilities.

She told me that the Trump administration should “quit playing games with politics.”

I heard the same thing from Manny from Bergen County, a public school teacher who said that he had “students that benefit directly from programs” that are on the chopping block. Manny said that this moment makes it hard to look at his 3½-year-old and think about the future. It is a feeling that so many of us have right now.

I heard from Susan from Hudson County who works in a nonprofit that helps the homeless. She said in a call to our office yesterday:

Our funds have been frozen. We are not going to be able to serve our clients or our staff. This is going to have a significant impact, not only with my agency, but the entire community of those we serve.

I am sharing these stories with you because it is important to remember that the impact of the decisions made at the White House go beyond the feeling of hopelessness and helplessness. If the White House continues down this path, those at the very top—the well-off and the well-connected—will get their tax cuts and whatever else they want. They will get it at the expense of a senior who will have to miss a doctor’s appointment because their ride support program has been cut. They will get it at the expense of a young

kid whose aftercare was cut or free school lunch was eliminated. And they will get it at the expense of the person who just needs a helping hand to put a roof over their head.

Mr. President, this isn’t just about ending this chaos; it is about protecting our neighbors, our communities, and our families. We know this fight is not over. The White House was very clear about that today. This was just the beginning.

We have seen these freezes for infrastructure spending that could impact big projects like the Gateway Tunnel and small projects like paving the road you drive on to take your kids to school.

These freezes could make America less competitive on a global stage by cutting research for AI and other next-generation technologies. In a week where we are seeing China make gains, we can’t take our own foot off the gas.

And these freezes could stop critical research into diseases that impact Americans across the country. We should be supercharging our efforts to cure Alzheimer’s and cancer, not cutting them.

Meanwhile, we have seen nearly 20 inspectors general fired from government Agencies, trying to hide what is happening. The American people want more accountability, not less. And making it harder for watchdogs to call out bad behavior could result in a golden age of corruption.

But when it comes to standing up against attempts to take away your healthcare, your childcare, your eldercare, the basic protections that your government provides because you pay into it, we will be with you every step of the way to fight back.

This is just the beginning. We hear your concerns, your frustrations, your anger. Your voice still matters. Your story still matters. And Democrats in this Chamber will lead the way. But together, we will push back and make sure that it is the people’s priorities that win the day.

Mr. President, I ask the American people to see the chaos for what it is: a smoke screen to benefit the ultrawealthy. And although I know this chaos is unnerving and it is frightening, the American people can rest assured that we will fight this chaos and focus on what matters most here: protecting you from the blatant corruption that is the administration’s attempt to take money from our working families and give handouts to those at the very top. Let’s get to work.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, colleagues, a little over a year ago during a FOX News townhall, Sean Hannity gave Donald Trump, then-candidate for President of the United States—the chance to assure the American people that he would not abuse power or become a dictator if he won a second term.

But instead of committing to the rule of law during that townhall, he answered defiantly saying “Except for day 1.”

Well, it has been 9 days since he was sworn into office, and as then-candidate Trump promised, we are already seeing how hell-bent he is on pushing the limits of his power. We see a President unburdened by the rule of law after the Supreme Court handed him blanket immunity and a President with a blatant disregard to the guardrails put in place by the authors of our Constitution.

Over the last week and a half, here is what we have seen him do: He has declared an end to birthright citizenship in clear violation of the 14th Amendment to the Constitution; he has illegally fired 18 inspectors general—individuals, professionals we count on to hold departments and Agencies accountable; he has issued 1,500 pardons for the January 6 insurrectionists, including many who attacked law enforcement officers in an attempt to overthrow an election; and late Monday night, almost 48 hours ago, he set off an actual constitutional crisis.

The President ordered a sweeping freeze on “all Federal financial assistance,” pending a review by his political appointees who have passed his loyalty tests. Yes, those are documented.

Donald Trump has attempted to implement nothing less than a one-man Presidential government shutdown. But, thankfully, the American people would not stand for it. Communities in every corner of California and every corner of the country have raised alarm bells and filed lawsuits. They have not backed down.

President Trump’s administration has backed down—at least for now—because we are not naive enough to think that he is not going to try to do it again. The vague document released by Donald Trump’s budget office threatened to withhold billions of dollars from social safety net programs, for example, all to lay the groundwork to pay for his big tax cuts for large corporations and billionaires—yes, like the billionaires he surrounded himself with during his inauguration.

Working families—again, not just across California, but across the country—knew immediately what the consequences and the impacts mean in real life. Preschools closed, lifesaving cancer treatments halted, meal programs for seniors threatened—I can go on and on with specific real-world examples. But here is another dynamic I ask you to take to heart. The billionaires who sat next to him and the billionaires who set to benefit from the tax breaks he is hoping to achieve, of course, they wouldn’t have felt the impact of this at all.

As we stand here right now, we are told that he has rescinded the order in order to avoid a court battle because, of course, this was already challenged and tied up in court. But we know that the fight is far from over. In fact, the

White House Press Secretary threatened that his Executive order blocking Federal funding that he issued day one in office is still in effect: “Remains in full force” and “will be rigorously implemented.”

Let’s be clear about what President Trump has tried. He has tried to block hundreds of billions of dollars in aid to support families recovering from catastrophic fires in California. He has attempted to block aid to law enforcement agencies that we rely on to keep our communities safe. He is trying to block aid to children and families who depend on Federal childcare and nutrition programs. That is the reality of what is going on here.

And, sadly, for the most part, my Republican colleagues have obediently fallen in line. I have to believe you are getting the same phone calls that I am—countless calls from constituents and community groups and individuals searching for answers, searching for guidance, asking for our help because the way these orders and memos are written, nobody knew which specific programs were affected or for how long. The executive Agencies that were supposed to implement the order didn’t even know how they were affected. And most glaringly, the White House itself changed its story every few hours on what was supposed to be affected by the Executive order that they themselves wrote.

So the Trump administration, through either their intent or their incompetence—or maybe both—and a disregard for the law sowed chaos, confusion, and fear amongst hard-working American families.

State Agencies and local governments, not just throughout California but, again, throughout the country, were blocked from accessing Medicaid and housing assistance grant portals. In case you thought folks were exaggerating, yes, that really happened. Colleagues on both sides of the aisle, I know you know about this.

The director of a grant-funded program with the district attorney’s office in Los Angeles supporting victims of violent crime was concerned about the future of their work because of the uncertainty of Federal assistance. Funding for research on cures for childhood cancer was threatened. Local commuter rail officials in Sonoma raised concerns about their ability to continue service if outstanding Federal funding is frozen—service that workers need to get to work, to do their jobs, keep our economy going. The city of Vacaville was worrying about the potential impact to their housing authority and vouchers.

There is a housing affordability concern and homeless crisis in many parts of the country. This is not helping. Head Start grantees were frozen out of their Federal payment management system. And if those kids can’t go to Head Start, their parents have a tougher time getting to work.

What are you doing?

Health centers in San Francisco met to assess their ability to provide services if grant funding and Medicare reimbursements were frozen. The Oakland Fire Department raised alarm bells about having to cut staff if an outstanding FEMA grant to support pay for 35 firefighters were paused.

The impacts are real, colleagues.

Mr. President, as you know, my home State of California has been devastated by historic fires these last few weeks. Fueled by wind gusts of up to 100 miles an hour, the Southern California fires burned more than 12,000 homes and businesses and more than 40,000 acres—nearly or approximately three times the size of Manhattan. And over two dozen Californians lost their lives.

Thanks to a swift major disaster declaration that President Biden issued in his final days, Federal Agencies like FEMA and the EPA have been instrumental in not just the response to the fires but in the early stages of recovery and rebuilding efforts.

But in his typical, vindictive, and reckless fashion, President Trump didn’t stop to think about the actual impacts of a decision like this. His OMB order shamefully put our disaster relief at risk. The freeze would have delayed FEMA’s public assistance programs supporting debris removal, meaning—look, if you delay the debris removal, you are delaying the rebuilding efforts. It threatens funding for emergency shelters as well as the grant money that supports hiring firefighters and firefighting equipment purchases.

Do you think these fires were devastating? We have all seen the images on television. Some of you may have an appreciation for the scale of the communities impacted. Let me remind us, folks, we are in the middle of winter. Summer is just a few months away. The risk and the threat will continue to grow, and we are going to delay the hiring of firefighters and the purchasing of firefighting equipment?

After threatening to withhold Federal aid for disaster victims in California as leverage to pass other elements of an unpopular agenda, this was just another slap in the face to the thousands of Americans who lost everything and are now counting on our collective support.

Just yesterday, after Federal firefighters returned home from working 24-hour shifts to battle unprecedented fires in dangerous, life-threatening conditions and after risking their own lives to protect our communities, Federal firefighters received a message from President Trump. You would think that maybe—just maybe—it was a message, saying “Thank you for your service. Thank you for your sacrifice. Thank you for your time away from your family to help fellow Americans in need,” but it was not. The message Federal firefighters received after being gone for weeks—24-hour shifts, protecting lives—the message they received was a request for their resigna-

tion. That is right. President Trump offered them a buyout.

It was not just to them; he offered this to all career Federal employees who are not beholden to his loyalty tests without having the clear authority or funding to do so. We have seen this before from President Trump and his co-President, Elon Musk.

I think it is important to share with everybody tonight, especially to Federal employees who are watching: Anybody who received this offer and thinks that maybe this is an offer that is too good to be true, that maybe I should jump at it, let me assure you this offer is too good to be true because there is no Federal funding to pay people who do not show up to work.

Our Federal firefighters saw this attempted buy-off for what it was, and I want to read for you, colleagues, some of the messages—just a few of them—that I have received.

From one brave firefighter:

It’s hard to put into words just how disrespectful this feels to any civil servant but especially to someone who’s given so much—sacrificing precious time away from family, risking everything for the greater good.

Another message reads as follows:

Today I returned home after a two-week fire assignment in California. . . . A slew of executive orders over this last week have put myself and a lot of others on edge. I am worried for my livelihood and my future. A purge of federal Wildland firefighters will have catastrophic outcomes. Our fire seasons are only getting longer, neighborhoods continue to expand well into wild landscapes. We cannot control when a fire will choose to wreak havoc on a community, but we will show up. We want to show up.

Colleagues, tomorrow, as some of the members of the Budget Committee have recognized, we have an opportunity to show these brave Federal workers that we hear them and that we are fighting for them and that we will continue to fight for them.

The Senate Budget Committee will meet to vote on the nomination of Russell Vought to lead the Office of Management and Budget.

By the way, this is the very office that is the source of much of the chaos over the past 48 hours. During his previous tenure with OMB, Vought tried on numerous occasions to withhold and slow the distribution of congressionally appropriated disaster relief and foreign aid based on political motives. During his confirmation hearing last week in the Budget Committee, he continued to hedge on answers that he would not politicize government assistance. He refused at every opportunity to fully commit to following the law when it comes to the distribution of Federal funding.

To any of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle who have worked hard to secure funding for their constituents back home and who don’t want to see the money that families in their States are counting on recklessly withheld, we must vote no on this nominee.

Here is where we stand at the moment: President Trump may have

backed down for now thanks in part to so many of my Democratic colleagues who have spoken out against these outrageous abuses of power that will hurt our constituents, but the chaos over the last 48 hours is only a sign of things to come throughout this administration that has just begun.

I would like to speak to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle for just a moment.

Yes, you all won the majority in this November's election. I respect that. I am not an election denier. But for those of you who just won your campaign, who were just elected, and who just joined the Senate—actually, I think, to everybody, whether you were elected now, 2 years ago, or 4 years ago, I will ask you this: When you ran for the Senate, for the privilege to serve in this body, did you run on a platform of cutting veterans' housing assistance? Did you reach out to voters who are now your constituents and say "Vote for me, and I will cut school lunch programs"? Did you suggest during the courses of your campaigns that, if elected, you would cut disaster relief?

As a colleague, I ask you this: Are you more loyal to your oath of office, to your constituents, and the Constitution or are you more loyal to a wannabe dictator—Trump? Are you just going to stand down silently while he tramples all over your independent constitutional authority and then race to either Mar-a-Lago or to the White House for a picture and for him to thank you? Your silence over the last 48 hours is deafening.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. RICKETTS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session and be in a period of morning business for debate only, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

TRIBUTE TO CYNTHIA BAJJALIEH

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, Americans across the country depend on their elected officials, not only to represent their interests in government, but also to provide every day support and services. But what most Americans do not see is the staff that make it all possible. Today, I want to take a moment to tell you about one invaluable member of my team: Cynthia Bajjalieh. For 20 years, Cynthia, my director of constituent services, has been living, breathing proof that the purpose of government is to help people. I am sad to share that this Friday will mark her last day on our staff. Her de-

parture leaves a void that will be hard to fill.

Cynthia got her start on my staff as an intern, serving out of our Chicago office. I have long told the hard-working young people who work for me: "Treat each constituent as you would your own grandmother." During her outstanding service to our State, Cynthia took this to heart, serving the people of Illinois as if they were her own family.

That directive has defined Cynthia's service to our State and this Nation. Over the past two decades on my team, she has become an integral part of the heart of our office—a problem solver, a redtape cutter, and goodwill ambassador all rolled into one person.

Cynthia always takes the time to get to know the whole story. Ask her about any case she has handled, and chances are she will recall not only the constituent's name but also the names of their family members and details about their lives. She cares deeply about her work and the lives of others.

You can find examples of this in her work each and every day, but one of my favorite stories is from 2018, when Cynthia got a call from the Sisters of Mercy about a Congolese mother who had been separated from her young daughter. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) would eventually take this case to Federal court to stop the cruel practice of family separation and force the government to reunite more than 2,000 children with their parents. It also was Cynthia who fielded hundreds of calls from Americans stranded around the world—and on cruise ships—during the pandemic, helping them get their medications and find their way back home.

To me, Cynthia truly is a miracle worker. For so many Illinoisans over the last 20 years, she has made the seemingly impossible, possible. And she does it all with a smile and compassion. Cynthia embodies how the government should serve Americans; I am lucky to have had her on my team. I wish her all the best as she begins the next chapter of her life.

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE 119TH CONGRESS

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the memberships on the twelve subcommittees of the Committee on Appropriations for the 119th Congress be printed in the RECORD. I thank Senator MURRAY, the vice chair of the committee, for her leadership and cooperation with me in making these important assignments.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Senator Collins, as Chair of the Committee, and Senator Murray, as Vice Chair of the Committee, are ex officio members of all subcommittees of which they are not regular members.

AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES

Senators Hoeven (chair), McConnell, Collins, Moran, Hyde-Smith, Fischer, Mullin, Rounds, Shaheen (ranking member), Merkley, Baldwin, Heinrich, Peters, Gillibrand, and Ossoff. (8-7)

COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE, AND RELATED AGENCIES

Senators Moran (chair), Murkowski, Collins, Graham, Capito, Kennedy, Hagerty, Britt, Fischer, Van Hollen (ranking member), Reed, Shaheen, Coons, Schatz, Merkley, Peters, and Gillibrand. (9-8)

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Senators McConnell (chair), Collins, Murkowski, Graham, Moran, Hoeven, Boozman, Capito, Kennedy, Coons (ranking member), Durbin, Murray, Reed, Schatz, Baldwin, Shaheen, and Murphy. (9-8)

ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT

Senators Kennedy (chair), McConnell, Murkowski, Graham, Hoeven, Hyde-Smith, Hagerty, Britt, Rounds, Murray (ranking member), Durbin, Merkley, Coons, Baldwin, Heinrich, Peters, and Ossoff. (9-8)

FINANCIAL SERVICES AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Senators Hagerty (chair), Boozman, Collins, Mullin, Fischer, Reed (ranking member), Durbin, Coons, and Van Hollen. (5-4)

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Senators Britt (chair), Murkowski, Capito, Kennedy, Hyde-Smith, Hagerty, Murphy (ranking member), Murray, Shaheen, Peters, and Van Hollen. (6-5)

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES

Senators Murkowski (chair), McConnell, Capito, Hoeven, Fischer, Mullin, Rounds, Merkley (ranking member), Van Hollen, Heinrich, Baldwin, Gillibrand, and Ossoff. (7-6)

DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES

Senators Capito (chair), Graham, Moran, Kennedy, Hyde-Smith, Boozman, Britt, Mullin, Rounds, Baldwin (ranking member), Murray, Durbin, Reed, Shaheen, Merkley, Schatz, and Murphy. (9-8)

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

Senators Mullin (chair), Fischer, Rounds, Heinrich (ranking member), and Ossoff. (3-2)

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES

Senators Boozman (chair), McConnell, Murkowski, Hoeven, Collins, Hagerty, Fischer, Rounds, Hyde-Smith, Ossoff (ranking member), Murray, Reed, Schatz, Baldwin, Heinrich, Peters, and Gillibrand. (9-8)

STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, AND RELATED PROGRAMS

Senators Graham (chair), McConnell, Boozman, Moran, Hagerty, Britt, Mullin, Schatz (ranking member), Durbin, Shaheen, Coons, Merkley, and Murphy. (7-6)

TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES

Senators Hyde-Smith (chair), Collins, Boozman, Capito, Graham, Hoeven, Kennedy, Moran, Britt, Gillibrand (ranking member), Murray, Durbin, Reed, Coons, Schatz, Murphy, and Van Hollen. (9-8)

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO CELMA SILVEIRA

• Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I am honored to recognize Celma Silveira of

Atkinson as January's Granite Stater of the Month. Celma regularly helps Granite Staters in need by providing them free house cleanings.

Celma started her small business, Cleaning by Celma, after she and her son experienced domestic violence and homelessness. After spending time in a shelter for survivors of domestic violence, she started cleaning homes to earn money to support herself and her son and eventually started her own cleaning business. Celma faced challenges both big and small while starting her own business, but she has successfully grown and expanded it over the years and now enjoys a healthy base of clients.

And while her business has blossomed, Celma has also always made sure that she supports Granite Staters in need. She has partnered with Cleaning for a Reason, a national nonprofit organization, to provide house cleaning to cancer patients, and in her own time, Celma donates house cleanings to disabled veterans. When Celma first meets the recipients of one of her donated cleaning services, she takes care to ensure that their biggest concerns are addressed and that they come away with the comfort and relief that a clean home can provide. Celma believes that every person has goodness in their heart and wants to spread her own goodness by providing these cleanings.

Celma's dedication to helping Granite Staters who are struggling is a beautiful example of the Granite State spirit of going above and beyond to uplift others. Her passion for sharing her work with her community is why I am proud to name her January's Granite Stater of the Month.●

TRIBUTE TO HAL GOODING

● Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Mr. President, as a Senator from the great state of South Carolina, it is my distinct honor and privilege to recognize Deputy Hal Gooding as he retires after an extraordinary career with the Charleston County Sheriff's Office. His unwavering commitment to public service is a testament to the highest ideals of law enforcement.

On behalf of the U.S. Congress and the American people, I extend my deepest gratitude to Deputy Gooding for his years of selfless service, tireless efforts, and steadfast dedication to keeping Charleston County safe. He has not only protected citizens of Charleston County, but also helped create an environment where families and neighbors can live in peace.

Fifty years with Charleston County speaks volumes about Deputy Gooding's steadfast commitment to the community he serves. As he transitions into this well-deserved chapter of retirement, I am confident that he will continue to make a positive impact in the lives of those fortunate to know him.

Congratulations on your retirement, Deputy Hal Gooding.●

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-201. A communication from the Alternate Federal Register Liaison Officer, Office of the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Update of Challenge Period for Validation of Asserted Restrictions on Technical Data and Computer Software (DFARS Case 2022-D016)" ((RIN0750-AL67) (DARS-2022-0030)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 27, 2025; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-202. A communication from the Alternate Federal Register Liaison Officer, Office of the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Technical Amendments" (DARS-2024-0001) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 27, 2025; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-203. A communication from the Alternate Federal Register Liaison Officer, Office of the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Definition of Material Weakness (DFARS Case 2021-D006)" ((RIN0750-AL25) (DARS-2024-0020)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 27, 2025; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-204. A communication from the Federal Register Liaison Officer, Office of the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Commissary Credit and Debit Card User Fees" (RIN0790-AK92) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 27, 2025; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-205. A communication from the Federal Register Liaison Officer, Office of the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Civil Monetary Penalty Inflation Adjustment" (RIN0790-AL82) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 27, 2025; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-206. A communication from the Federal Register Liaison Officer, Office of the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children Overseas: Revision to Definition of Drafts" (RIN0720-AB91) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 27, 2025; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-207. A communication from the Chair and President of the Export-Import Bank, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a violation of the Antideficiency Act that occurred in account 083-4161X, Export-Import Bank Direct Loan Financing Account, in the amount of \$4.884 billion; to the Committee on Appropriations.

EC-208. A communication from the General Counsel of the National Credit Union Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Succession Planning" (RIN3133-AF42) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 27, 2025; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-209. A communication from the Deputy Director of Congressional Affairs, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the re-

port of a rule entitled "Implementation of Additional Due Diligence Measures for Advanced Computing Integrated Circuits; Amendments and Clarifications; and Extension of Comment Period" (RIN0694-AJ98) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 27, 2025; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-210. A communication from the Director, Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Financial Crimes Enforcement Network; Inflation Adjustment of Civil Monetary Penalties" received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 29, 2025; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-211. A communication from the Deputy General Counsel for Operations, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations, Department of Housing and Urban Development, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 29, 2025; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-212. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the issuance of an Executive Order declaring a national emergency in order to address the damage and danger to the American people and integrity of America's sovereign borders resulting from the invasion on the southern border of the United States by cartels, criminal gangs, known terrorists, human traffickers, smugglers, unvetted military-age males from foreign adversaries, and illicit narcotics that harm Americans; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-213. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the issuance of an Executive Order declaring a national emergency in order to address our Nation's inadequate energy supply and infrastructure; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-214. A communication from the Executive Assistant, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustments" (RIN1024-AE94) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 27, 2025; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-215. A communication from the Management Analyst, Office of the Secretary, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Practices Before the Department of Interior" (RIN1094-AA57) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 27, 2025; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EXECUTIVE REPORT OF COMMITTEE

The following executive report of a nomination was submitted:

By Mr. GRASSLEY for the Committee on the Judiciary.

Pamela Bondi, of Florida, to be Attorney General.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first

and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself and Mr. SULLIVAN):

S. 288. A bill to support and promote human rights of Southern Mongolians in the People's Republic of China, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Ms. DUCKWORTH (for herself, Mr. CURTIS, and Mr. MORENO):

S. 289. A bill to ban the sale of products with a high concentration of sodium nitrate to individuals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Mr. KING, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, and Mrs. HYDE-SMITH):

S. 290. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to upgrade existing emergency communications centers in units of the National Park System to Next Generation 9-1-1 systems, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. PADILLA (for himself, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. SCHIFF, Ms. ROSEN, and Mr. KELLY):

S. 291. A bill to establish an interest-bearing account for the non-Federal contributions to the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. CASSIDY (for himself, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. DAINES, Mr. THUNE, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. SCHMITT, Mr. SHEEHY, Mr. BUDD, Mr. COTTON, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. TUBERVILLE, Mr. JUSTICE, Mr. RISCH, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. HAWLEY, Mrs. BRITT, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. MCCORMICK, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. WICKER, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. RICKETTS, and Mr. HUSTED):

S. 292. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a credit against tax for charitable donations to nonprofit organizations providing education scholarships to qualified elementary and secondary students; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. BRITT (for herself, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. RISCH, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. ROUNDS, and Mr. WICKER):

S. 293. A bill to appropriate \$25,000,000,000 for the construction of a border wall between the United States and Mexico, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. BALDWIN (for herself and Mr. SCOTT of Florida):

S. 294. A bill to require origin and location disclosure for new products of Foreign origin offered for sale on the internet; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. JOHNSON (for himself and Mr. SCOTT of Florida):

S. 295. A bill to reduce the size of the Federal workforce through attrition, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. BENNET (for himself and Mr. HICKENLOOPER):

S. 296. A bill to make certain modifications to the repayment for the Arkansas Valley Conduit in the State of Colorado; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. BOOZMAN (for himself and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 297. A bill to amend title XXVII of the Public Health Service Act to require group health plans and health insurance issuers offering group or individual health insurance coverage to provide coverage for prostate cancer screenings without the imposition of

cost-sharing requirements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. ERNST (for herself, Mrs. BLACKBURN, and Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina):

S. 298. A bill to require the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to relocate 30 percent of the employees assigned to headquarters to duty stations outside the Washington metropolitan area, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Ms. DUCKWORTH, and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 299. A bill to establish a competitive grant program to support the establishment, expansion, or enhancement of youth mentoring programs for eligible youth, and to provide for social and emotional learning, employability skill development, career exploration, work-based learning, and other youth workforce opportunities; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. BUDD (for himself, Ms. ERNST, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 300. A bill to improve accountability in the disaster loan program of the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Mr. BANKS:

S. 301. A bill to authorize the appropriation of \$10,000,000,000 to the Department of Defense for military support to secure the borders of the United States; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Ms. ERNST (for herself, Mrs. BRITT, and Mr. GRASSLEY):

S. 302. A bill to amend the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to improve the calculation and reduce the taxpayer cost of payment errors under the supplemental nutrition assistance program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. DAINES, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. ROUNDS, and Mr. LEE):

S. 303. A bill to amend the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010 to limit to \$0 the amount that the Director of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection may request to fund the activities of the Bureau; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. GRAHAM (for himself, Mr. CRUZ, and Mrs. BRITT):

S. 304. A bill to amend section 301 of the Immigration and Nationality Act to clarify those classes of individuals born in the United States who are nationals and citizens of the United States at birth; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. YOUNG (for himself, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. BUDD, Mrs. SHAHEEN, and Mr. HICKENLOOPER):

S. 305. A bill to authorize small business loans to finance access to modern business software, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Ms. CANTWELL (for herself, Mr. SHEEHY, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. LUJ, Mr. SULLIVAN, Ms. ROSEN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and Mr. PADILLA):

S. 306. A bill to establish and maintain a coordinated program within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration that improves wildfire, fire weather, fire risk, and wildfire smoke related forecasting, detection, modeling, observations, and service delivery, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN (for herself and Mr. OSSOFF):

S. 307. A bill to address sexual harassment and sexual assault of Bureau of Prisons staff in prisons, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. TUBERVILLE (for himself and Mr. CASSIDY):

S. 308. A bill to modify the annual and aggregate limits of Federal Unsubsidized Stafford Loans for graduate and professional students, and to terminate Federal Direct PLUS Loans for graduate and professional students, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself, Mr. LANKFORD, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. HAGERTY, Mr. CRAMER, Ms. ERNST, Mr. SCHMITT, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. SHEEHY, Mr. BUDD, and Mr. ROUNDS):

S. 309. A bill to allow a State to submit a declaration of intent to the Secretary of Education to combine certain funds to improve the academic achievement of students; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. PADILLA, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. ROSEN, and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 310. A bill to establish a grant program to address the crisis in accessing affordable housing and child care through the co-location of housing and child care, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. LEE (for himself and Mr. BUDD):

S. 311. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide incentives for education; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. HAWLEY (for himself and Mr. CRUZ):

S. 312. A bill to establish a Federal tort against pediatric gender clinics and other entities pushing gender-transition procedures that cause bodily injury to children or harm the mental health of children; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. CAPITO (for herself, Mr. COTTON, Mrs. BRITT, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. CRUZ, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. TILLIS, and Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina):

S. 313. A bill to restrict United States voluntary and assessed contributions to the United Nations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. MORAN, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. 314. A bill to prohibit unfair and deceptive advertising of prices for hotel rooms and other places of short-term lodging, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Mr. CRUZ, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BANKS, Mr. BARRASSO, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. BRITT, Mr. BUDD, Ms. CANTWELL, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. COONS, Mr. COTTON, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. DAINES, Ms. ERNST, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. GRASSLEY, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. HAWLEY, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. JUSTICE, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. LUJÁN, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MORAN, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. REED, Mr. RICKETTS, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. SHEEHY, Ms. SMITH, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. YOUNG, and Mr. WICKER):

S. 315. A bill to require the Secretary of Transportation to issue a rule requiring access to AM broadcast stations in passenger

motor vehicles, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Ms. LUMMIS (for herself, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. SHEEHY, Mr. DAINES, Mr. RISCH, and Mr. CRAPO):

S. 316. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to reissue a final rule relating to removing the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem population of grizzly bears from the Federal list of endangered and threatened wildlife, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. LANKFORD (for himself, Mr. COONS, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Mr. RICKETTS, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. WARNOCK, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. CURTIS, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. MORAN, Mrs. BRITT, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, and Ms. ROSEN):

S. 317. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify and extend the deduction for charitable contributions for individuals not itemizing deductions; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. PADILLA (for himself and Mr. SULLIVAN):

S. 318. A bill to require a plan to improve the cybersecurity and telecommunications of the U.S. Academic Research Fleet, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself and Mr. LUJÁN):

S. 319. A bill to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to review the Cattle Fever Tick Eradication Program, and for other programs; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. PADILLA (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 320. A bill to authorize the Earthquake Hazards Reduction Act of 1977, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. HAWLEY:

S. 321. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit United States persons from advancing artificial intelligence capabilities within the People's Republic of China, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. PADILLA (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 322. A bill to improve the lead time, accuracy, and dissemination of forecasts of atmospheric rivers throughout the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. WICKER (for himself, Mr. LUJÁN, and Mr. WELCH):

S. 323. A bill to direct the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information to develop a National Strategy to Synchronize Federal Broadband Programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Ms. ROSEN (for herself and Mr. PADILLA):

S. 324. A bill require the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere to carry out pilot projects relating to improved subseasonal to seasonal forecasting in agriculture and water management, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Mr. PADILLA, and Mr. GALLEGO):

S. 325. A bill to reduce health risks of heat by establishing the National Integrated Heat Health Information System within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the National Integrated Heat Health Information System Interagency Committee to improve extreme heat preparedness, planning, and response, and for

other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. GRAHAM (for himself, Mr. FETTERMAN, and Mrs. BRITT):

S. Res. 43. A resolution affirming the threats to world stability from a nuclear weapons-capable Islamic Republic of Iran; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina (for himself, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. CORNYN, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. DAINES, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. RISCH, Mr. CRAMER, and Mr. WICKER):

S. Res. 44. A resolution designating the week of January 26 through February 1, 2025, as "National School Choice Week"; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. SCHMITT (for himself and Mr. KAINE):

S. Res. 45. A resolution supporting the contributions of Catholic schools in the United States and celebrating the 51st annual National Catholic Schools Week; considered and agreed to.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Mr. GRASSLEY):

S. Res. 46. A resolution raising awareness and encouraging the prevention of stalking by designating January 2025 as "National Stalking Awareness Month"; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 83

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mrs. BRITT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 83, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide enhanced penalties for convicted murderers who kill or target America's public safety officers.

S. 205

At the request of Mr. DAINES, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 205, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit discrimination by abortion against an unborn child on the basis of Down syndrome.

S. 248

At the request of Mrs. BLACKBURN, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 248, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to permanently extend certain in-home cardiopulmonary rehabilitation flexibilities established in response to COVID-19, and for other purposes.

S. 271

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the names of the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH) and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BANKS) were added as cosponsors of S. 271, a bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to increase penalties for individuals who illegally reenter the United States after being removed, and for other purposes.

S. 275

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BANKS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 275, a bill to improve the provision of care and services under the Veterans Community Care Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Mr. KING, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, and Mrs. HYDE-SMITH):

S. 290. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to upgrade existing emergency communications centers in units of the National Park System to Next Generation 9-1-1 systems, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 290

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Making National Parks Safer Act".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS.—The term "appropriate committees of Congress" means—

(A) the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives.

(2) EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term "emergency communications center" means—

(i) a facility that—

(I) is designated to receive a 9-1-1 request for emergency assistance; and

(II) performs 1 or more of the functions described in subparagraph (B); or

(ii) a public safety answering point (as defined in section 222 of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 222)).

(B) FUNCTIONS DESCRIBED.—The functions described in this subparagraph are the following:

(i) Processing and analyzing 9-1-1 requests for emergency assistance and information and data related to the requests.

(ii) Dispatching appropriate emergency response providers.

(iii) Transferring or exchanging 9-1-1 requests for emergency assistance and information and data related to the requests with 1 or more other emergency communications centers and emergency response providers.

(iv) Analyzing any communications received from emergency response providers.

(v) Supporting incident command functions.

(3) INTEROPERABILITY.—The term "interoperability" means the capability of emergency communications centers—

(A) to receive 9-1-1 requests for emergency assistance and information and data related to the requests, such as location information and callback numbers from a person initiating the request; and

(B) to process and share 9-1-1 requests for emergency assistance and information and

data related to the requests with other emergency communications centers and emergency response providers without the need for proprietary interfaces and regardless of jurisdiction, equipment, device, software, service provider, or other relevant factors.

(4) **NEXT GENERATION 9-1-1 SYSTEM.**—The term “Next Generation 9-1-1 system” has the meaning given the term “Next Generation 911” in section 9.28 of title 47, Code of Federal Regulations (or a successor regulation).

(5) **SECRETARY.**—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the National Park Service.

SEC. 3. ASSESSMENT OF EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS CENTERS LOCATED IN UNITS OF THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall complete an assessment of emergency communications centers located in units of the National Park System to identify—

(1) the implementation status of Next Generation 9-1-1 systems at existing emergency communications centers in units of the National Park System;

(2) estimated costs to purchase Next Generation 9-1-1 systems for emergency communications centers in units of the National Park System that have not begun to implement Next Generation 9-1-1 systems; and

(3) estimated costs to maintain and operate Next Generation 9-1-1 systems across all emergency communications centers in units of the National Park System.

(b) **REPORT.**—On completion of the assessment under subsection (a), the Secretary shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress, and make available on the website of the Department of the Interior, a report—

(1) describing the results of the assessment; and

(2) identifying issues that may affect the implementation of Next Generation 9-1-1 systems across all emergency communications centers in units of the National Park System, including—

(A) jurisdictional issues;

(B) technological issues;

(C) issues relating to relevant authorities; and

(D) issues relating to legal agreements.

SEC. 4. PLAN TO INSTALL NEXT GENERATION 9-1-1 SYSTEMS IN UNITS OF THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 1 year after the date on which the report under section 3(b) is submitted, the Secretary shall develop a plan, based on the results of the assessment completed under section 3(a) and subject to subsection (c), to install Next Generation 9-1-1 systems at identified emergency communications centers in units of the National Park System.

(b) **CONSULTATION.**—In developing the plan under subsection (a), the Secretary shall consult with—

(1) State and local emergency operations officials to ensure interoperability of the Next Generation 9-1-1 systems;

(2) State and local stakeholders that the superintendent of the applicable unit of the National Park System determines to be appropriate; and

(3) relevant Federal agencies, including—

(A) the Department of Commerce;

(B) the Department of Transportation; and

(C) the Federal Communications Commission.

(c) **LIMITATION.**—Notwithstanding subsection (a), a plan developed under that subsection shall not be required to address emergency communications centers in any

unit of the National Park System at which the superintendent of the unit of the National Park System determines that sufficient Next Generation 9-1-1 systems have already been installed or are being installed, as applicable.

By Mr. PADILLA (for himself, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. SCHIFF, Ms. ROSEN, and Mr. KELLY):

S. 291. A bill to establish an interest-bearing account for the non-Federal contributions to the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, I rise to introduce the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program Amendment Act of 2025, which would allow the Bureau of Reclamation's Lower Colorado River Multispecies Conservation Program (LCR MSCP) account to collect interest.

In 2005, the LCR MSCP was developed through a collaborative partnership with State leaders, local stakeholders, and the Federal Government with the purpose of balancing the Lower Basin Colorado River system operations and water uses with conservation of native species and their habitats.

Covering approximately 400 miles of the lower Colorado River, the LCR MSCP is a 50-year plan to create at least 8,132 acres of new habitat and restore habitat that has become degraded in order to recover 27 species, including 7 listed under the Endangered Species Act. To date, the program has already succeeded in stocking thousands of native fish and increasing numbers of breeding migratory birds within 5,000 acres of new riparian habitat.

The Federal Government and water utility customers in Arizona, California, and Nevada each contribute funding to support program implementation.

This legislation would amend the law that created the LCR MSCP to allow for its account to collect interest.

Although the program has a budget of \$626 million for its 50-year term, its value is eroded over time by inflation that results in higher costs to implement projects. In the current interest rate environment, the lack of reinvestment can cost the LCR MSCP millions annually that could be used to fund future program work.

This bicameral, bipartisan bill has previously received supportive testimony from the Bureau of Reclamation and passed through the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources by voice vote last Congress.

I would like to thank Congressman KEN CALVERT for introducing this bill in the House of Representatives, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to pass the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program Amendment Act of 2025 as quickly as possible.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Ms. DUCKWORTH, and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 299. A bill to establish a competitive grant program to support the establishment, expansion, or enhancement of youth mentoring programs for eligible youth, and to provide for social and emotional learning, employability skill development, career exploration, work-based learning, and other youth workforce opportunities; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 299

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Mentoring to Succeed Act of 2025”.

SEC. 2. YOUTH MENTORING PROGRAMS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Subtitle D of title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3221 et seq.) is amended—

(1) by redesignating section 172 as section 173; and

(2) by inserting after section 171 the following:

“SEC. 172. YOUTH MENTORING PROGRAMS.

“(a) **PURPOSE.**—The purpose of this section is to make assistance available for mentoring programs for eligible youth, in order to—

“(1) establish, expand, or support mentoring programs;

“(2) assist eligible youth enrolled in secondary schools in developing cognitive and social-emotional skills; and

“(3) prepare eligible youth for success in high school, postsecondary education, and the workforce.

“(b) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

“(1) **COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION.**—The term ‘community-based organization’ means a youth-serving private nonprofit organization (which may include a faith-based organization or may be an affiliate of a national organization) that—

“(A) is representative of a community or a significant segment of a community;

“(B) has demonstrated expertise and effectiveness in workforce development; and

“(C) has demonstrated expertise—

“(i) in the planning and delivery of education, training, and related activities that are included in a career pathway;

“(ii) in forging coordination and cooperation between educators and other members of the community; and

“(iii) in development and implementation of data systems that measure the progress of students and outcomes of career pathways.

“(2) **COVERED INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.**—The term ‘covered institution of higher education’ means—

“(A) an institution of higher education, as defined in section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001); or

“(B) a postsecondary vocational institution, as defined in section 102(c) of such Act (20 U.S.C. 1002(c)).

“(3) **COVERED PARTNERSHIP.**—The term ‘covered partnership’ means a partnership between—

“(A) a community-based organization; and

“(B)(i) an industry or sector partnership;

“(ii) a local educational agency; or

“(iii) another public entity or private employer, as appropriate.

“(4) **COVERED RECOGNIZED POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIAL.**—The term ‘covered recognized

postsecondary credential' means a recognized postsecondary credential issued by a covered institution of higher education.

“(5) **DISABILITY.**—The term ‘disability’ has the meaning given the term for purposes of section 602(3) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1401(3)).

“(6) **ELIGIBLE ENTITY.**—The term ‘eligible entity’ means a community-based organization or covered partnership that—

“(A) provides mentoring services; and

“(B) provides youth workforce readiness programming and career exploration.

“(7) **ELIGIBLE YOUTH.**—The term ‘eligible youth’ means—

“(A) an in-school youth;

“(B) a youth who meets all requirements to be an in-school youth, except that—

“(i) in lieu of meeting the requirements of section 129(a)(1)(C)(ii), the youth is in secondary school; or

“(ii) in lieu of meeting the requirements of section 129(a)(1)(C)(iv), the youth—

“(I) is failing academically or at risk of dropping out of school, is chronically absent, is enrolled in fewer classes or for fewer credit hours than a typical full-time student, has changed schools 3 or more times in the past 180 days, or has a history of multiple suspensions; or

“(II)(aa) is a gang member or resides in a community with high rates of, and prevalence of risk factors associated with, violence-related injuries and deaths, and with other relevant health and safety risks (including high rates of poverty, suicide, or substance use disorder (including opioid use disorder)) or has a parent or guardian who is struggling with substance use disorder;

“(bb) has 1 or both parents incarcerated; or

“(cc) has experienced 1 or more adverse childhood experiences, traumatic events, or toxic stressors, as assessed through an evidence-based screening;

“(C) an out-of-school youth; or

“(D) a youth who meets all requirements to be an out-of-school youth, except that—

“(i) in lieu of meeting the requirements of section 129(a)(1)(B)(ii), the youth would be placed in secondary school if the youth were attending school; or

“(ii) in lieu of meeting the requirements of section 129(a)(1)(B)(iii), the youth is described in subparagraph (B)(ii)(II).

“(8) **MENTORING.**—The term ‘mentoring’ means a structured, managed activity—

“(A) in which eligible youth are appropriately matched with screened and trained adult or peer volunteer mentors for consistent relationships;

“(B) that provides direct one-on-one, group, or peer mentoring services that focus on—

“(i) providing enrichment;

“(ii) promoting educational or workforce success;

“(iii) minimizing risk behaviors;

“(iv) promoting social skills and healthy relationships; or

“(v) any combination of objectives described in clauses (i) through (iv);

“(C) that involves meetings, events, and activities on a regular basis, for a period of not less than 1 year; and

“(D) that is intended to meet, in part, the social and emotional development needs of an eligible youth, the need of the eligible youth for involvement with a caring and supportive adult, and the need of the eligible youth for positive role models, connections, and stability.

“(9) **HIGH SCHOOL.**—The term ‘high school’ has the meaning given the term in section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

“(10) **YOUTH WORKFORCE READINESS PROGRAMMING.**—The term ‘youth workforce readiness programming’ means job training, or a

workforce development program providing an employment and training activity, such as mentoring, an activity to promote communication and problem-solving skills, career exploration, a job readiness activity and certification, a summer job, or a year-round job opportunity or apprenticeship, provided to eligible youth.

“(c) **PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.**—

“(1) **IN GENERAL.**—From amounts made available for this section, the Secretary shall award grants, on a competitive basis, to eligible entities to establish, expand, or support mentoring programs in accordance with subsection (d).

“(2) **DURATION.**—A grant awarded under this section shall be for a period not to exceed 3 years.

“(d) **AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES.**—

“(1) **IN GENERAL.**—An eligible entity receiving a grant under this section shall use grant funds to establish, expand, or support not less than 1 mentoring program that—

“(A) is designed to assist eligible youth in developing cognitive and social-emotional skills to prepare the eligible youth for success in high school, postsecondary education, and the workforce by linking the eligible youth with mentors who—

“(i) have received mentor training, including training on trauma-informed practices, youth engagement, cultural competency, and social-emotional learning; and

“(ii) have been screened using appropriate reference checks and criminal background checks, in accordance with the requirements of subsection (e)(2)(F)(ii);

“(B) serves a population that includes eligible youth living in or from underserved communities or communities with employment disparities;

“(C) provides coaching and technical assistance to mentors participating in the mentoring program;

“(D) seeks to—

“(i) reduce juvenile justice involvement of eligible youth;

“(ii) foster positive relationships between eligible youth and their peers, other adults, and family members;

“(iii) develop the workforce readiness skills of eligible youth by exploring paths to employment, including encouraging students with disabilities to explore transition services; and

“(iv) increase the participation of eligible youth in community service activities;

“(E) encourages eligible youth to set goals and plan for their futures, including making plans and identifying goals for postsecondary education and participation in the workforce;

“(F) develops and carries out regular training for mentors, including training on—

“(i) the impact of adverse childhood experiences;

“(ii) trauma-informed practices and interventions;

“(iii) cultural competency;

“(iv) social and emotional learning;

“(v) positive youth development and engagement practices; and

“(vi) disability inclusion practices to ensure access and participation by students with disabilities;

“(G) works in coordination with a private employer and a local educational agency with not less than 1 high-need school (as defined in section 2211(b) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6631(b)));

“(H) recruits, screens, matches, trains, and, as necessary, compensates mentors;

“(I) hires staff, as necessary, to perform or support the objectives of the program; and

“(J) provides inclusive and accessible youth engagement activities, such as—

“(i) career awareness activities, including job site visits, informational interviews, resume writing, interview preparation, and networking;

“(ii) academic or postsecondary education preparation activities, including trade or vocational school visits, visits to institutions of higher education, and assistance in applying to institutions of higher education;

“(iii) support for the use of career pathways;

“(iv) paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component academic and occupational education, which may include—

“(I) paid employment opportunities;

“(II) pre-apprenticeship programs and apprenticeship programs;

“(III) paid internships;

“(IV) job shadowing; and

“(V) on-the-job training opportunities;

“(v) work-based learning (as defined in section 3 of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2302)) that provides opportunities for the application of employability skills and hands-on work experiences through partnerships among eligible entities;

“(vi) occupational skill training, which shall include priority consideration for training programs that lead to covered recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved, if the local board determines that the programs meet the quality criteria described in section 123(a);

“(vii) activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training; and

“(viii) services to help prepare eligible youth for the workforce, such as—

“(I) leadership development opportunities;

“(II) workforce or workforce readiness opportunities;

“(III) financial literacy education;

“(IV) entrepreneurial skills training;

“(V) services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area;

“(VI) activities to develop fundamental workforce readiness skills or to develop employability skills (such as communication, creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking) that support social-emotional development through every developmental stage; and

“(VII) career exposure offered by local industry or sector partnerships to provide career assessments, education, and career planning.

“(2) **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES.**—An eligible entity receiving a grant under this section may use grant funds to—

“(A) provide professional development (as defined in section 3 of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2302)) for training educators and other providers of educational services who participate in the mentoring program;

“(B) develop assets and resources that assist an employer or groups of employers or sectors in working with eligible youth;

“(C) in the case of an eligible entity that seeks to implement the program through a partnership with another eligible entity, establish the partnership; and

“(D) conduct program evaluation, including acquiring and analyzing the data described in subsection (g).

“(3) **SUBGRANTS.**—An eligible entity receiving a grant under this section may, with the approval of the Secretary, use grant funds to award subgrants to eligible organizations to carry out activities described in paragraphs (1) and (2).

“(e) **APPLICATION.**—An eligible entity desiring a grant under this section shall submit

an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and accompanied by such information as the Secretary may require, including—

“(1) a needs assessment that includes baseline data on the measures described in subsection (g)(1)(B); and

“(2) a plan to establish, expand, or support a mentoring program that meets the requirements of subsection (d)(1), including—

“(A) the targeted outcomes, mentor type, and meeting frequency for the program;

“(B) a description of and data regarding the eligible youth who will participate as mentees in the program, including—

“(i) any age ranges to be served or any other eligibility criteria; and

“(ii) how the eligible entity will ensure that the program serves eligible youth living in or from underserved communities or communities with employment disparities, in accordance with subsection (d)(1)(B);

“(C) the number of mentor-mentee matches proposed to be established and maintained annually under the program;

“(D) the capacity and expertise of the program to serve eligible youth in a way that is responsive to children and youth of color, expectant and parenting youth, indigenous youth, youth who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer, and youth with disabilities;

“(E) actions taken to ensure that the design of the program reflects input from eligible youth;

“(F) an assurance that mentors supported under the program are appropriately screened and have demonstrated a willingness to comply with aspects of the mentoring program, including—

“(i) a written screening plan that includes all of the policies and procedures used to screen and select mentors, including eligibility requirements and preferences for such applicants;

“(ii) a description of the methods to be used to conduct criminal background checks on all prospective mentors and the methods in place to exclude mentors with convictions directly related to child safety that occur during the mentor's participation in the program or in the 7-year period preceding the mentor's participation; and

“(iii) a description of the methods to be used to ensure that the mentors are willing and able to serve as a mentor on a long-term, consistent basis as defined in the application;

“(G) a description of—

“(i) the community-based organizations or the covered partnerships through which the eligible entity will implement the program; and

“(ii) if a covered partnership will assist in implementing the program, the collaboration and coordination that the community-based organization in the partnership has carried out or will carry out with other entities in the partnership, related to that implementation;

“(H) in the case of a program that includes an opportunity to earn a covered recognized postsecondary credential, a description of the activities leading to the covered recognized postsecondary credential; and

“(I) a budget detailing program activities and administrative costs.

“(f) **PRIORITY.**—In awarding grants under this section, the Secretary shall give priority to eligible entities that—

“(1) prior to receiving a grant, serve eligible youth with the greatest need who reside in—

“(A) a high-poverty community;

“(B) a rural area; or

“(C) a community with high rates of, and prevalence of risk factors associated with, violence-related injuries and deaths, and

with other relevant health and safety risks (including high rates of poverty, suicide, or substance use disorder (including opioid use disorder));

“(2) provide eligible youth participating in the mentoring program supported under this section with opportunities for postsecondary education preparation and career development, including—

“(A) job training, professional development, work shadowing, internships, networking, resume writing and review, interview preparation, transition or vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities, application assistance and visits to institutions of higher education, and leadership development through community service, and relevant program elements described in section 129(c)(2)); and

“(B) partnerships with the private sector and local businesses to provide internship and career exploration activities and resources; and

“(3) consult and engage eligible youth in the development, design, and implementation of the mentoring program, including by demonstrating such consultation and engagement in the application submitted under subsection (e) and agreeing to continue such consultation after receiving the grant.

“(g) **REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.**—

“(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 180 days after the end of each year of the grant period, an eligible entity receiving a grant under this section shall submit to the Secretary a report that—

“(A) includes—

“(i) the number of eligible youth and mentors, and the demographics of eligible youth and mentors, who participated in the mentoring program that was supported with grant funds;

“(ii) data on the academic achievement, dropout rates, truancy, absenteeism, outcomes of arrests for violent crime, full-time employment, part-time employment, and postsecondary education enrollment of eligible youth participating in the program; and

“(iii) data on social-emotional development of eligible youth participating in the program, as assessed with a validated social-emotional assessment tool;

“(B) may include indicators such as achievement of career competencies, or successful completion of internships, apprenticeships, or work-based learning opportunities, or high school graduation; and

“(C) includes any other information that the Secretary may require to evaluate the success of the mentoring program.

“(2) **STUDENT PRIVACY.**—An eligible entity shall ensure that the report submitted under paragraph (1) is prepared in a manner that protects the privacy rights of each eligible youth in the same manner as is required for students under section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g; commonly known as the ‘Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974’).

“(h) **MENTORING PROGRAM RESOURCES AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.**—The Secretary shall work with the Administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the Secretary of Education to—

“(1) refer eligible entities receiving grants under this section to the National Mentoring Resource Center to obtain resources on best practices and research related to mentoring programs and to request no-cost training and technical assistance; and

“(2) provide such eligible entities with information regarding transitional services for eligible youth returning from correctional facilities and transition services for students with disabilities.

“(i) **AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section such sums as may be

necessary for each of fiscal years 2026 through 2030.”.

(b) **CLERICAL AMENDMENT.**—The table of contents in section 1(b) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act is amended by striking the item relating to section 172 and inserting the following:

“Sec. 172. Youth mentoring programs.

“Sec. 173. Authorization of appropriations.”.

SEC. 3. STUDY ON MENTORING PROGRAMS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of Labor, acting through the Chief Evaluation Officer of the Department of Labor, shall conduct a study to—

(1) identify successful mentoring programs and evidence-based strategies for administering and monitoring such programs;

(2) evaluate the role of mentors in promoting cognitive development and social-emotional learning to enhance academic achievement and to improve workforce readiness; and

(3) evaluate the effectiveness of the grant program under section 172 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, as added by section 2, on student academic outcomes and youth career development.

(b) **TIMING.**—Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Labor, acting through the Chief Evaluation Officer, shall submit the results of the study to the appropriate congressional committees.

By Mr. PADILLA (for himself and
Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 322. A bill to improve the lead time, accuracy, and dissemination of forecasts of atmospheric rivers throughout the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, I rise to introduce the bipartisan *Improving Atmospheric River Forecasts Act*. This bill would require the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to establish a new program to improve prediction of these important storm systems.

This bill would direct the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to establish a new program within the National Weather Service to improve atmospheric river forecasts. This includes better data acquisition, like new radar systems that can track the heart of atmospheric rivers hours before storms hit. It also includes implementing a quantitative scale for events on a scale of 1 to 5 to better inform emergency managers and the public about the severity of incoming AR events. The bill also requires the Agency to report back to Congress on the plans for the program and anticipated costs.

As Scripps Institution of Oceanography's Marty Ralph said, “Atmospheric rivers are the hurricanes of the west coast.” Why then are we not treating them with the same attention in forecasting? Like the National Hurricane Center in Florida, the West Coast needs a central hub for atmospheric river data acquisition, modeling, prediction, and dissemination.

This bill will take a pivotal first step in bringing atmospheric rivers to the same forecasting sophistication as hurricanes by establishing a new program

at NOAA to coordinate these efforts and create accurate, effective, and actionable predictions to minimize loss of life and property.

These steps are especially necessary under a changing climate. As temperatures increase, water bands in atmospheric rivers widen and storms increase in duration. By 2090, NOAA predicts that atmospheric river caused flood damages may increase to between \$2.3 and \$3.2 billion in annual impact.

I want to thank Senator MURKOWSKI for introducing this important legislation with me in the Senate. I hope all of our colleagues will join us in supporting this bipartisan bill to improve our Nation's resilience to atmospheric river events.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 43—AFFIRMING THE THREATS TO WORLD STABILITY FROM A NUCLEAR WEAPONS-CAPABLE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN.

Mr. GRAHAM (for himself, Mr. FETTERMAN, and Mrs. BRITT) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 43

Whereas numerous officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran have repeatedly made statements against the United States, Israel, and their allies and partners, including—

(1) the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who stated—

(A) “As long as America continues its wickedness, interference, and savagery, the Iranian nation will not abandon ‘Death to America.’”;

(B) “The Zionist regime is a deadly, cancerous growth and a detriment to this region. It will undoubtedly be uprooted and destroyed”;

(C) “We will definitely do everything necessary to prepare the Iranian nation for confronting the Arrogant Powers, whether militarily, in terms of armament, or politically. Our officials are already working on this”; and

(D) “The United States of America and the Zionist regime will definitely receive a crushing response for what they do against Iran and the Resistance Front”;

(2) an adviser to the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kamal Kharrazi, who stated, “We have no decision to build a nuclear bomb but should Iran's existence be threatened, there will be no choice but to change our military doctrine”; and

(3) former foreign ministry spokesperson of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Nasser Kanani, who stated, “This action of the three European countries [France, Germany and the United Kingdom] is the continuation of the hostile policy of the West and economic terrorism against the people of Iran, which will face the appropriate and proportionate action of the Islamic Republic of Iran”;

Whereas the Islamic Republic of Iran is directly responsible for the death and injury of United States servicemembers, including—

(1) between 2005 and 2011, when the Quds Force, a branch of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, provided explosively formed penetrators to Iranian-backed fighters in Iraq and killed 195 United States

troops and wounded nearly another 900 United States troops;

(2) since the October 7, 2023, attack on Israel, where Iranian-backed proxies have attacked United States troops in the region more than 170 times; and

(3) on January 28, 2024, when an Iranian-backed proxy launched a drone that killed 3 United States troops and wounded nearly another 40 United States troops stationed at Tower 22 in Jordan;

Whereas the United States Government has reported—

(1) “Iran's annual financial backing to Hizballah — which in recent years has been estimated at \$700 million — accounts for the overwhelming majority of [Hizballah's] annual budget”;

(2) “Hamas has received funding, weapons, and training from Iran”; and

(3) “Iran also provides up to \$100 million annually in combined support to Palestinian terrorist groups, including Hamas”;

Whereas the Islamic Republic of Iran's support to the Houthis, including through the provision of ballistic and cruise missiles and unmanned weapons systems, has allowed the Houthis to carry out attacks against United States partners;

Whereas, since the Iranian Revolution in 1979, the Islamic Republic of Iran has engaged in acts of international terrorism and continuously threatened the United States, Israel, and their partners and allies;

Whereas, on January 19, 1984, the United States designated the Islamic Republic of Iran as a state sponsor of terrorism for repeatedly providing support for acts of international terrorism;

Whereas, on April 11, 2006, the Islamic Republic of Iran announced that it had enriched uranium for the first time to a level close to 3.5 percent at the Pilot Fuel Enrichment Plant in Natanz, Iran;

Whereas, on December 23, 2006, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1737 (2006), which imposed sanctions with respect to the Islamic Republic of Iran for its failure to suspend enrichment activities;

Whereas the United Nations Security Council subsequently adopted Resolutions 1747 (2007), 1803 (2008), and 1929 (2010), all of which targeted the nuclear program of, and imposed additional sanctions with respect to, the Islamic Republic of Iran;

Whereas, on February 3, 2009, the Islamic Republic of Iran announced that it had launched its first satellite, which raised concern over the applicability of the satellite to the ballistic missile program;

Whereas, in September 2009, the United States, the United Kingdom, and France revealed the existence of the clandestine Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant in the Islamic Republic of Iran, years after construction started on the plant;

Whereas, on January 28, 2017, the Islamic Republic of Iran conducted a test of a medium-range ballistic missile, which traveled an estimated 600 miles and provides the Islamic Republic of Iran the capability to threaten United States military installations in the Middle East;

Whereas, in 2018, Israel seized a significant portion of the nuclear archive of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which contained tens of thousands of files and compact discs relating to past efforts at nuclear weapon design, development, and manufacturing by the Islamic Republic of Iran;

Whereas, on September 27, 2018, Israel revealed the existence of a secret warehouse housing radioactive material in the Turqz Abad district in Tehran, and an inspection of the warehouse by the International Atomic Energy Agency (referred to in this preamble as the “IAEA”) detected radioactive par-

ticles, which the Government of Iran failed to adequately explain;

Whereas, on June 19, 2020, the IAEA adopted Resolution GOV/2020/34, which expressed “serious concern . . . that Iran has not provided access to the Agency under the Additional Protocol to two locations”;

Whereas, on April 17, 2021, the IAEA verified that the Islamic Republic of Iran had begun to enrich uranium to 60 percent purity;

Whereas, on August 14, 2021, the former President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Hassan Rouhani, stated, “Iran's Atomic Energy Organization can enrich uranium by 20 percent and 60 percent and if . . . our reactors need it, it can enrich uranium to 90 percent purity”;

Whereas, on April 17, 2022, the Islamic Republic of Iran confirmed the relocation of a production facility for advanced centrifuges from an aboveground facility at Karaj, Iran, to the fortified underground Natanz Enrichment Complex;

Whereas, on April 19, 2022, the Department of State released a report stating there are “serious concerns” about “possible undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran”;

Whereas, on May 30, 2022, the IAEA reported that the Islamic Republic of Iran had achieved a stockpile of 43.3 kilograms (95.5 pounds) of 60 percent highly enriched uranium, roughly enough material for a nuclear weapon;

Whereas, on June 8, 2022, the Islamic Republic of Iran turned off surveillance cameras installed by the IAEA to monitor uranium enrichment activities at nuclear sites in the country;

Whereas, on July 14, 2022, in The Jerusalem U.S.-Israel Strategic Partnership Joint Declaration, which was signed between President Biden and Israel, the United States stressed its commitment “never to allow Iran to acquire a nuclear weapon, and that [the United States] is prepared to use all elements of its national power to ensure that outcome”;

Whereas, on July 27, 2022, the head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, Mohammad Eslami, announced that the Islamic Republic of Iran is building a new nuclear reactor at the Isfahan Nuclear Technology Center, which will be one of the largest nuclear facilities in Iran;

Whereas, on December 2, 2022, IAEA Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi stated, “Iran informed us they were tripling . . . their capacity to enrich uranium at 60 percent, which is very close to military level, which is 90 percent”;

Whereas, on January 25, 2023, Director General Grossi stated, “One thing is true: [the Islamic Republic of Iran has] amassed enough nuclear material for several nuclear weapons”;

Whereas, on February 27, 2023, the IAEA reported that the Islamic Republic of Iran had enriched uranium to 83.7 percent, which is just short of the 90 percent threshold for weapons-grade fissile material;

Whereas, on September 4, 2023, an IAEA report estimated the total uranium stockpile of the Islamic Republic of Iran to be 3795.5 kilograms (8367.65 pounds) and that the Islamic Republic of Iran has enough fissile material, that if further enriched, would be sufficient to produce several nuclear weapons;

Whereas, on October 18, 2023, United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231 (2015) lapsed and many proliferation-related penalties and restrictions were lifted, allowing the Islamic Republic of Iran to test or transfer ballistic missiles, which may contribute to the further development of a nuclear weapon delivery system;

Whereas, on December 28, 2023, the governments of the United States, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom jointly declared, “The production of high-enriched uranium by Iran has no credible civilian justification. These decisions demonstrate Iran’s lack of good will towards de-escalation and represent reckless behavior in a tense regional context . . . Iran must fully cooperate with the IAEA to enable it to provide assurances that its nuclear program is exclusively peaceful.”;

Whereas, on February 27, 2024, a spokesperson for the Department of State stated, “We remain seriously concerned about Iran’s continued expansion of its nuclear program in ways that have no credible civilian purpose, including its continued production of highly enriched uranium”;

Whereas, on June 3, 2024, Director General Grossi stated, “Many countries have said if Iran gets nuclear weapons, they will do the same. Adding nuclear weapons to the cauldron of the Middle East is a very bad idea.”;

Whereas, on June 5, 2024, by a vote of 20 to 2, the United States joined other nations in formally censuring the Islamic Republic of Iran for advances in their nuclear program and failure to cooperate with the IAEA;

Whereas, on June 18, 2024, it was reported that intelligence agencies of the United States and Israel were looking into information that the Islamic Republic of Iran may have developed a computer model that could be used for research and development of nuclear weapons;

Whereas, on July 23, 2024, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence published an assessment, in accordance with Iran Nuclear Weapons Capability and Terrorism Monitoring Act of 2022 (22 U.S.C. 8701 note; Public Law 117-263), which stated, “Iran continues to increase the size of its uranium stockpile, increase its enrichment capacity, and develop, manufacture, and operate advanced centrifuges. Tehran has the infrastructure and experience to quickly produce weapons-grade uranium, at multiple facilities”;

Whereas, on November 28, 2024, the Islamic Republic of Iran informed the IAEA that it planned to start enriching uranium with thousands of advanced centrifuges at its Fordow and Natanz plants, while also installing more uranium-enriching centrifuges at those locations;

Whereas, on December 5, 2024, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence published another assessment, in accordance with Iran Nuclear Weapons Capability and Terrorism Monitoring Act of 2022 (22 U.S.C. 8701 note; Public Law 117-263), which stated—

(1) “Iran’s 20- percent and 60-percent enriched uranium stockpiles are far greater than needed for what it claims it will use the uranium for and Iran could produce more than a dozen nuclear weapons if its total uranium stockpile were further enriched”;

and

(2) “Iran probably will consider installing or operating more advanced centrifuges, further increasing its enriched uranium stockpile, enriching uranium up to 90 percent, or threatening to withdraw from the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons”;

and

Whereas, on December 9, 2024, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom released a joint statement that—

(1) condemns “Iran’s latest steps . . . to expand its nuclear programme to significantly increase the rate of production of uranium enriched up to 60 percent”;

(2) expresses extreme concern “to learn that Iran has increased the number of centrifuges in use and started preparations to install additional enrichment infrastructure”;

(3) “strongly urge[s] Iran to reverse these steps, and to immediately halt its nuclear escalation”: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) affirms that the Islamic Republic of Iran’s continued pursuit of a nuclear weapons capability is—

(A) a credible threat to the United States; and

(B) an existential threat to Israel and other allies and partners in the Middle East;

(2) asserts all options should be considered to address the nuclear threat the Islamic Republic of Iran poses to the United States, Israel, and our allies and partners;

(3) demands the Islamic Republic of Iran to immediately cease engaging in any and all activities that threaten the national security interests of the United States, Israel, and our allies and partners, including—

(A) enriching uranium;

(B) developing or possessing delivery vehicles capable of carrying nuclear warheads; and

(C) developing or possessing a nuclear warhead.

SECTION 1. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.

Nothing in this resolution may be construed to authorize the use of military force or the introduction of United States Armed Forces into hostilities.

SENATE RESOLUTION 44—DESIGNATING THE WEEK OF JANUARY 26 THROUGH FEBRUARY 1, 2025, AS “NATIONAL SCHOOL CHOICE WEEK”

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina (for himself, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. CORNYN, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. DAINES, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. RISCH, Mr. CRAMER, and Mr. WICKER) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 44

Whereas providing a diversity of choices in K-12 education empowers parents to select education environments that meet the individual needs and strengths of their children:

Whereas high-quality K-12 education environments of all varieties are available in the United States, including traditional public schools, public charter schools, public magnet schools, private schools, online academies, and home schooling;

Whereas talented teachers and school leaders in each of these education environments prepare children to achieve their dreams;

Whereas more families than ever before in the United States actively choose the best education for their children;

Whereas more public awareness of the issue of parental choice in education can inform additional families of the benefits of proactively choosing challenging, motivating, and effective education environments for their children;

Whereas the process by which parents choose schools for their children is non-political, nonpartisan, and deserves the utmost respect; and

Whereas tens of thousands of events are planned to celebrate the benefits of educational choice during the 14th annual National School Choice Week, held the week of January 26 through February 1, 2025: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week of January 26 through February 1, 2025, as “National School Choice Week”;

(2) congratulates students, parents, teachers, and school leaders from kindergarten

through grade 12 education environments of all varieties for their persistence, achievements, dedication, and contributions to society in the United States;

(3) encourages all parents, during National School Choice Week, to learn more about the education options available to them; and

(4) encourages the people of the United States to hold appropriate programs, events, and activities during National School Choice Week to raise public awareness of the benefits of opportunity in education.

SENATE RESOLUTION 45—SUPPORTING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN THE UNITED STATES AND CELEBRATING THE 51ST ANNUAL NATIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

Mr. SCHMITT (for himself and Mr. KAINE) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 45

Whereas Catholic schools in the United States are internationally acclaimed for their academic excellence and provide approximately 1,700,000 students with more than an exceptional scholastic education;

Whereas Catholic schools instill a broad, values-added education emphasizing the life-long development of moral, intellectual, physical, and social values in young people in the United States;

Whereas Catholic schools serve the United States by providing a diverse student population from all regions of the United States and all socioeconomic backgrounds with a strong academic and moral foundation, including 29.4 percent of students from racial minority backgrounds, 18.8 percent from Hispanic heritage, and 20.8 percent from non-Catholic families, according to the 2023-2024 National Catholic Education Association survey of elementary and secondary Catholic schools in the United States;

Whereas Catholic schools are an affordable option for parents, particularly in underserved urban areas;

Whereas Catholic schools produce students who are strongly dedicated to their faith, values, families, and communities by providing an intellectually stimulating environment that promotes spiritual, character, and moral development;

Whereas Catholic schools are committed to community service, producing graduates who hold “helping others” among their core values;

Whereas the total Catholic school student enrollment for the 2023-2024 academic year is 1,700,000, and the student-teacher ratio is 10 to 1, according to the 2023-2024 National Catholic Education Association survey of elementary and secondary Catholic schools in the United States;

Whereas the Catholic high school graduation rate is 98.9 percent, with 85.2 percent of graduates attending 4-year colleges;

Whereas the week of January 26, 2025, to February 1, 2025, has been designated as “National Catholic Schools Week” by the National Catholic Educational Association and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops; and

Whereas the theme for National Catholic Schools Week 2025 is “Catholic Schools: United in Faith and Community”, which reflects the fact that Catholic schools, united in their faith, expand beyond the walls of the classroom to envelop the parents and families of students as integral parts of the school community: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals of National Catholic Schools Week, an event—

(A) cosponsored by the National Catholic Educational Association and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops; and

(B) established to recognize the vital contributions of the thousands of Catholic elementary and secondary schools in the United States;

(2) applauds the National Catholic Educational Association and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops on their selection of the theme “Catholic Schools: United in Faith and Community”, which is a theme that all can celebrate; and

(3) supports—

(A) the dedication of Catholic schools, students, parents, and teachers across the United States toward academic excellence; and

(B) the key role they play in promoting and ensuring a brighter, stronger future for the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 46—RAISING AWARENESS AND ENCOURAGING THE PREVENTION OF STALKING BY DESIGNATING JANUARY 2025 AS “NATIONAL STALKING AWARENESS MONTH”

Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Mr. GRASSLEY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 46

Whereas approximately 1 in 3 women and 1 in 6 men in the United States, at some point during their lifetimes, have experienced stalking victimization, causing them to feel very fearful, threatened, or concerned for their own safety or the safety of others;

Whereas it is estimated that, each year, over 13,400,000 individuals in the United States report that they have been victims of stalking;

Whereas more than 80 percent of victims of stalking report that they have been stalked by a current or former intimate partner or acquaintance;

Whereas nearly 70 percent of female stalking victims and 80 percent of male stalking victims are threatened with physical harm by stalkers;

Whereas stalking is a risk factor for intimate partner homicide;

Whereas 3 in 4 female victims of intimate partner homicides were stalked during the year preceding the homicide by their killers;

Whereas 11 percent of victims of stalking report having been stalked for 5 or more years;

Whereas 2 in 3 stalkers pursue their victims at least once a week;

Whereas many victims of stalking are forced to take drastic measures to protect themselves, including relocating, changing jobs, or obtaining protection orders;

Whereas the prevalence of anxiety, insomnia, social dysfunction, and severe depression is much higher among victims of stalking than the general population;

Whereas many victims of stalking do not report stalking to the police or contact a victim service provider, shelter, or hotline;

Whereas stalking is a crime under Federal law, the laws of all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the territories of the United States, and the Uniform Code of Military Justice;

Whereas stalking affects victims of every race, age, culture, gender, sexual orientation, physical and mental ability, and economic status;

Whereas national organizations, local victim service organizations, college and university campuses, prosecutor's offices, and police departments stand ready to assist victims of stalking and are working diligently to develop effective and innovative responses to stalking, including online stalking;

Whereas there is a need to improve the response of the criminal justice system to stalking through more aggressive investigation and prosecution;

Whereas there is a need for an increase in the availability of victim services across the United States, and those services must include programs tailored to meet the needs of victims of stalking;

Whereas individuals between 18 and 24 years old experience the highest rates of stalking victimization, and a majority of stalking victims report their victimization first occurred before the age of 25;

Whereas 43 percent of women in college who experience stalking by an intimate partner also experience sexual or physical assault;

Whereas college students with disabilities are twice as likely as college students without disabilities to experience stalking;

Whereas there is a need for an effective response to stalking on each college and university campus;

Whereas 80 percent of stalking victims report being stalked with technology, such as phone calls, text messages, social media platforms, internet posts, emails, and electronic tracking;

Whereas victims of technology-facilitated stalking often report higher fear than victims who experience in-person stalking, and are just as concerned for their safety;

Whereas January 2025 marks the 21st anniversary of the first “National Stalking Awareness Month”; and

Whereas the Senate finds that “National Stalking Awareness Month” provides an opportunity to educate the people of the United States about stalking: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates January 2025 as “National Stalking Awareness Month”; and

(2) applauds the efforts of service providers, police departments, prosecutor's offices, national and community organizations, colleges and universities, and private sector entities that combat stalking, support victims, and bring awareness to this crime;

(3) encourages policymakers, criminal justice officials, victim service and human service agencies, institutions of higher education, and nonprofit organizations to increase awareness of stalking and continue to support the availability of services for victims of stalking; and

(4) urges national and community organizations, businesses in the private sector, and the media to promote awareness of the crime of stalking through “National Stalking Awareness Month”.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I have six requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority Leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, January 29, 2025, at 10 a.m., to conduct an executive session.

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, January 29, 2025, at 10:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing on a nomination.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

The Committee on Finance is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, January 29, 2025, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on a nomination.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, January 29, 2025, at 9 a.m., to conduct an executive business meeting.

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, January 29, 2025, at 3:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing on a nomination.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

The Special Committee on Aging is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, January 29, 2025, at 3:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Justin Pacheco, a fellow in my office, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of the 119th Congress.

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

SUPPORTING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN THE UNITED STATES AND CELEBRATING THE 51ST ANNUAL NATIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

Mr. RICKETTS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 45, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 45) supporting the contributions of Catholic schools in the United States and celebrating the 51st annual National Catholic Schools Week.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. RICKETTS. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed

to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 45) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

NATIONAL STALKING AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. RICKETTS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 46, which was submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 46) raising awareness and encouraging the prevention of stalking by designating January 2025 as "National Stalking Awareness Month".

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. RICKETTS. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 46) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, JANUARY 30, 2025

Mr. RICKETTS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 12 noon on Thursday, January 30; that following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; further, that the Senate proceed to executive session to resume consideration of Executive Calendar No. 9; that all time during morning business, recess, adjournment, and leader remarks count postcloture; finally, that if any nominations are confirmed during Thursday's session, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. RICKETTS. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come be-

fore the Senate, I ask that it stand adjourned under the previous order following the remarks of my colleagues.

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

Mr. RICKETTS. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

TRUMP EXECUTIVE ORDERS

Mr. KELLY. Mr. President, Arizona is a couple thousand miles away from here, and as folks know, we are a bit unique in the sense that we do not observe daylight savings time. What that means is that we are either 2 or 3 hours behind DC depending on the time of year. Right now, it is 2 hours.

So usually when things start happening here in Washington that affect my State, me and my staff will hear from concerned Arizonans a little later in the morning, usually closer to 12 noon. That wasn't the case on Tuesday because that is the day that we all woke up to a vague, reckless memo from the Trump administration that said they would freeze all Federal grant funding.

The memo was short. It was just two pages. It said:

Federal agencies must temporarily pause all activities related to the obligation or disbursement of all federal financial assistance.

There was no list of programs it would impact and programs it wouldn't—no details. It was just a broad, unconstitutional mandate that pretty clearly intended to just grind everything to a halt.

The calls and texts to me and my staff started immediately. As early as 6:30 a.m. Arizona time, my Southern Arizona director was hearing from a nonprofit concerned about what this meant to them. Ten minutes later, my Northern Arizona director got a text from a county supervisor, asking what this meant for their county's Federal grants that had already been awarded. On and on this went for the rest of the day.

I would like to take some time to read through some of the examples of the concern and the real-life issues this created in my State.

When I spoke to Governor Hobbs, early in the morning, the State's portals for Medicaid and Head Start were both down. They ended up being down for the better part of the day. She said that they were concerned immediately about how this would impact providers and families and parents and workers.

She was also concerned about department of public safety programs. At that point, the State had more questions than answers because of the recklessness of this order.

The Hopi Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program, which provides housing vouchers and assistance for veterans, faced uncertainty because its funding fell under Federal rental assistance programs.

The Flagstaff Housing Authority had similar concerns about how landlords

would get paid next month under the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program. One landlord told us that they rent out a few units to low-income families and were worried that they wouldn't receive their payments, leaving them and their tenants in a horrible situation.

Just yesterday, Phoenix Mayor Kate Gallego joined the Maricopa Association of Governments to conduct the annual HUD Point-in-Time Count, which is funded by Continuum of Care dollars. This data is vital to Arizona's work to address homelessness, and a Federal freeze keeps homeless assistance grants from helping Arizonans.

We heard from colleges across the State, where students were being told that their Pell grants could be frozen.

A member of my veterans advisory committee told me that it had created chaos bordering on hysteria among veteran college students who had multiple programs that supported their education and that could be frozen.

From the Arizona Food Bank Association, we heard immediate fears that families relying on SNAP—that is food stamps—on those benefits, could face disruption, putting food security for thousands of Arizonans at risk. What that means is that kids will not get to eat.

In Mohave County, officials were concerned that Federal support through the Community Development Block Grant Program, which funds housing and economic opportunities for low-income communities, would no longer be available.

Several community health centers said a stop on Federal funds would necessitate layoffs. Organizations were looking at having to shut down programs that treat miners—coal miners—with black lung and suicide prevention programs and substance abuse services. What this means is layoffs for counselors who treat folks who are suicidal—layoffs.

The Arizona Department of Transportation told us that vital infrastructure projects are now in limbo. Funding for the I-40 interchanges in Window Rock and Lupton, which serve Tribal communities, they have been frozen. The U.S. 93 corridor improvements in Wickenburg, meant to modernize and expand a major highway, they are now stalled. And safety improvements for high-risk railroad crossings in Gilbert and Yuma are no longer moving forward, putting drivers at risk.

The Arizona Water Infrastructure Finance Authority has raised concerns about the future of clean drinking water State revolving funds, which provide essential loans and grants to communities to ensure that their drinking water is safe.

Without access to these funds, projects aimed at improving water systems, including projects already partway through construction in rural and Tribal areas, could be delayed indefinitely.

Cities and water users called to express concern that they would not be

compensated for water savings that they are undertaking as part of the agreement to protect the Colorado River.

Coconino County was concerned about funds they were planning to advance projects that protect communities from floods and wildfires.

Not even our State and local law enforcement was spared from this chaos. I heard from Arizona's attorney general, Kris Mayes, about how the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Program was impacted. This is a critical program, by the way, that funds our law enforcement's frontline efforts with the Federal Government to combat the fentanyl crisis and battle the Mexican drug cartels. This program that the administration tried to freeze helps fund the positions of over 700 law enforcement officers who are in the fight against drugs in Arizona. Multiply that times 50 across the country.

At a time when we need to do as much as we can to combat the drug crisis, this administration attempted to freeze critical funding for my State's counterdrug efforts.

Jennifer, in Tucson, a small business owner, provides training for Tribal health programs. She told us that her invoices can't be paid due to the Federal freeze. As an independent contractor, what that means is this isn't just an inconvenience; it would be devastating for her family and many others like her.

Julie, in Sun City, works at a seniors center and has seen firsthand how Federal funding supports Arizona's elderly, helping them afford food and access to mental health services. It helps them afford and get some one-on-one support. She watched seniors panic as uncertainty grows over whether those resources will still be there next month.

Kathy in Tucson, a mother of three daughters with disabilities, woke up to frantic messages from other parents who rely on Medicaid-funded support programs for their children. She described a wave of fear as families tried to log into the State portal, only to find it down, leaving them unsure whether the critical care their children needed will continue.

In Apache Junction, Janice's husband is in a memory care unit, and Medicaid covers most of his room and board. If these payments had stopped, she didn't know how she could afford his care.

And Michelle in Glendale, a 69-year-old diabetic, is struggling to survive on only \$1,259 a month. If Medicaid was disrupted, she will be forced to choose between food and lifesaving medication.

Christine in Flagstaff wrote to me about her brother-in-law who is currently fighting for his life in the hospital as part of a clinical trial funded by NIH. If that funding is pulled, so is his treatment, and he may die.

Christine in Flagstaff—another Christine, also from Flagstaff—a disabled veteran, told us she simply can't

afford increased VA copays if her benefits are impacted.

Collin in Tempe, who runs a science startup, was notified that his NSF grant payments are paused, meaning that he can't pay his employees. What that means is he will have to lay them off. These are real jobs that affect real people. These jobs are in groundbreaking research projects that are now needlessly put in jeopardy.

That is not an exhaustive list of the outreach that only my office received and the consequences in Arizona. I could go on for hours.

On top of this, I understand that most counties, cities, and major organizations in Arizona held emergency meetings to try to understand how their operations would be impacted and what could they do about it.

This administration tossed them into chaos. These aren't folks who think about things as Republicans or Democrats. These are folks who provide real services to real people in Arizona. They wake up every day to serve people, to solve problems. And it is not easy, not even on the best of days. But Tuesday, Tuesday wasn't the best of days; it was the worst. And for most of them, today hasn't been great either.

I had the leaders of a couple of Arizona Head Start programs in my office here just today—earlier today. They were already scheduled to be there. One of these Head Start Program managers runs Head Start. She said she had a payment that they were owed, and they weren't able to access it, and it has been delayed. They receive these payments every 3 days, and they cannot hold major cash reserves.

This program serves 500 Arizona families. They were not going to be able to make payroll. She made a plan to lay people off on Tuesday. She told me that it was based on their cash flow; that they probably should have laid these people off already. But they were able to call on some emergency reserves with the help of their board. But if the payments are delayed much further, these people who work for her will not have jobs. That means it doesn't only affect them—they are out of a job—but there are 500 Arizona families who suddenly don't have childcare or the additional services that Head Start provides to parents and families.

We hope it doesn't come to that. Thankfully, their attempts to freeze funding have been blocked by a court. But this had real consequences in Arizona to a lot of people. And that is multiplied across the country.

Our Head Start leaders are in DC for a national conference right now, and they said every person here is dealing with the same issue. They are in a panic mode trying to keep their employees on the payroll, and their doors open so they can continue to serve families.

Head Start is probably one of the best investments that our country makes. It helps kids get ahead. It provides parenting training. It helps work-

ing parents with childcare so they can earn a paycheck.

The recklessness and the incompetence of the Trump administration threw that program into utter chaos in just a day.

And I don't believe this is over. We need clear guidance, and we need strong leadership. This administration hasn't provided that, and it is hurting Arizonans.

I thought last week, when the President pardoned criminals who beat up cops, would be the worst thing that he would do this month. Now I am not so sure.

This needs to be fixed, and the President—the President on Pennsylvania Avenue—should take steps to ensure that he doesn't make mistakes like this again.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RICKETTS). The Senator from Connecticut.

TRUMP EXECUTIVE ORDERS

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I think it is fair to say that none of us expected a week ago to be here on the floor at this moment, talking about a massive, across-the-board freeze on Federal funding. I don't think either of us, on either side of the aisle, expected to be here on this topic.

We are in no ordinary time. The chaos and confusion are extraordinary. And it is the result of one man: Donald Trump. It is part of a calculated strategy: confusion and chaos; a blizzard of illegal actions; a hiring freeze that violates the law; a firing of inspectors general that abridges the statute; a freeze on funding that crosses the line because it violates the Impoundment Control Act, which has been upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court despite Donald Trump's contention that it is unconstitutional; and it also violates the Constitution.

It is a seizure of power—namely, the power of the purse—that Congress intended never to surrender. It was given by the Founders as a check on Presidential power. The checks and balances of our system operate to create a system that prevents tyranny. And, unfortunately, this country is veering and careening toward tyranny.

So we are here to say we will not obey in advance. One of the lessons of "Totalitarianism in the 20th Century," one of the "Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century" that Professor Tim Snyder has instructed us to take from that awful period in world history is: Do not obey in advance; do not yield what the tyrant wants in advance of his demanding it. Stand up, speak out, stop it.

That is why we are here. And the American people rose up in the last 24 hours because of the chaos and confusion of this funding freeze they saw in their everyday lives. They saw it in the domestic shelters that were imperiled, in the homeless places that would go

without funding, at the food banks, at the community health centers, at daycare places, in schools, in hospitals. In every place where everyday Americans depend on vital services for their ordinary lives, they were seeing their worlds upended.

And the Trump administration responded to that outcry. They pulled back from the precipice of a total breakdown in order. They came back from the cliff. They walked back the illegal order to freeze that funding.

But—make no mistake—they did it once, and they can do it again. In fact, after the one-line order that walked back that funding freeze, the President's Press Secretary said: Well, the funding freeze is still in effect.

These whiplash reversals are themselves damaging the country. Organizations can't meet payrolls. They can't plan budgets. They can't assign their staff. They can't pay for the machines that do the road reconstruction and bridge repair. They can't run railroads when they don't know that Amtrak is going to be funded. And so the doubt, uncertainty, breeding anxiety and fear and anger are also damaging the country.

They did it once, and they can do it again. And it looks like they already have, because the purpose here is theft. Let's call it what it is. Donald Trump is stealing from the community health centers and domestic violence shelters to finance tax cuts for billionaires. He is looting those kinds of public services so that there is money to pay for those tax cuts benefiting his billionaire friends and family.

And Americans have to see that fact for what it is—the plain truth, unpleasant as it may be, unpalatable morally, and illegal under our Constitution.

He doesn't have the power to just stop spending under an appropriation bill passed by Congress and signed by the President. It may not have been signed by this President, but that fact makes no difference. It is the law. That spending appropriation is the law of the land. The President has no right to seize the power of the purse under the Constitution and violate that law.

Now, if the order had remained in effect, as it was originally intended, it almost certainly would have been enjoined by the courts. I certainly hope so. The initial administrative stay indicates the court was certainly concerned about it, and the combination of irreparable harm and likely prevailing on the merits, I think would have led that court in the District of Columbia to hold that a temporary injunction at least was appropriate.

But the fact is we then may have a President who disobeys a court order. We are in uncharted territory. It is truly a crisis for our democracy.

And I want to thank the American people for that outcry that led to the reversal but also to alert the American people that we are far from done.

And I want to appeal to my Republican colleagues. In fact, I want to ap-

peal to Republicans in Connecticut, people who think of themselves as a member or a supporter of the Republican Party and Republican candidates. This fight is yours, too, because those domestic shelters and community health centers and all the facilities, all the groups, all the individuals affected by this massive funding freeze, they are in red States as well as blue States. The block grants that are suspended, they are in red States and in blue States. The firefighter equipment that will be held back—red States as well as blue States. The subsidies for housing and the benefits and care for veterans—red States and blue States.

This fight is yours, not just ours on this side of the aisle. And my Republican colleagues, I am absolutely sure, are hearing from their constituents about how difficult and daunting these last 24 hours have been after the announcement of this freeze because I know I have fielded calls from all across the State of Connecticut—from those food bank programs, health and nutrition assistance programs, Head Start and childcare programs, housing programs, veterans programs, energy assistance programs, and many more.

And it has impacts beyond what you would think are obvious. Just Monday, I met with farmers who suffered from flooding and hailstorms earlier this year—last year. And under the end-of-session continuing resolution that we passed, disaster relief was provided across the country for farmers and for others. And those farmers celebrated, along with us, Members of the congressional delegation, the fact that they were receiving millions of dollars to help them recover from the floods. Well, now that money is uncertain—when it will arrive and even whether it will be available.

Connecticut Head Start was unable to access payments. President Trump's order jeopardized childcare and early childhood education for 5,000 families. Domestic violence shelters, survivors with nowhere else to go, were forced to return to their homes where there were abusers. This funding freeze has terrifying and likely implications not just for Connecticut but all over the country.

And in the midst of winter, the LIHEAP program, Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, a critical program that provides energy assistance to low-income individuals and households, is also in jeopardy. One hundred thousand households in Connecticut rely on LIHEAP to meet their home energy needs. Uncertainty about this Federal funding leaves them more vulnerable than ever.

Like my colleagues, I could go on. But my colleagues are joining us on the floor, and I just want to end on this note. I mentioned that this funding freeze is part of a calculated strategy to steal from the domestic violence shelters and childcare and Head Start and all the other services funded under these programs and make that money

available for tax cuts to the billionaire friends and family of Donald Trump.

But what is also part of the strategy is a blizzard of orders, a deluge of illegalities, one of them being the firing of inspectors general. And if there is one thing we need right now in our Federal Government, it is transparency; it is the watchdogs who demand accountability and stop waste and fraud and abuse. Firing inspectors general, the independent watchdogs and bulwarks against corruption, is a profoundly important sign of where this President wants to take the country.

The Veterans' Inspector General, Mike Missal, has recovered billions of dollars for the VA. Firing him and eliminating his independent oversight is a betrayal of trust to our veterans, as well as a violation of law, because none of these inspectors general was fired with the requisite 30-day notice to Congress and with a statement of reasons and rationale that is required under the law.

If the President is really committed to finding waste in government, why is he firing the watchdogs who are the ones who root it out? And today's or earlier this week's firing makes clear that the President is lacking in that commitment.

We are here because we are determined to fight, and we are determined also to continue to support the American people in this outcry against lawlessness and recklessness that so imperils hard-working, everyday Americans.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

TRUMP EXECUTIVE ORDERS

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, in an overnight maneuver on Monday, President Trump unlawfully and unilaterally blockaded much of the Federal budget. Hitting "send" on a two-page memo, the Trump administration triggered a chaotic 24 hours that has thrown every town, county, Tribe, nonprofit, doctor's office, hospital, nursing home, school, and preschool in my State into disarray. From New Mexico's Roundhouse—our capitol—to the classroom, to the emergency room, there were a thousand questions and zero answers.

Now the Trump administration has both withdrawn and not withdrawn this blockade. In so-called clarifications, President Trump has made things about as clear as mud, but here are three things that are crystal clear: First, President Trump's funding blockade was blatantly unconstitutional and illegal; secondly, it has caused real harm; and third, this was a test run where chaos was actually the point.

If you are trying to follow the news and getting confused, it is not you. If you heard that President Trump blocked all Federal Medicaid reimbursements, you heard correctly. If you

heard that the White House claimed Federal Medicaid reimbursements were exempt from the blockade, you also heard correctly. If you heard that despite being allegedly exempt, Medicaid reimbursement was still blocked, you heard correctly. Same story for Head Start, same goes for food assistance, or SNAP, and for school lunches, and that list goes on and on and on.

Even today, after a Federal court ruled that the Trump administration had to pause the pause, I am still getting reports of organizations that cannot access Federal funding portals. In the midst of all of that, there are very real consequences.

Let's just take Medicaid just for a start. Almost a quarter of my State's budget moves through the Medicaid portal—the one that was shut down yesterday. Eight billion dollars in Federal Medicaid funding comes to New Mexico every single year. Millions and millions of dollars' worth of Medicaid reimbursement happen on that portal in any given day.

Seven out of ten nursing home residents, 55 percent of newborn births, more than 700,000 people in total in my State depend on Medicaid for their healthcare. Because a Medicaid blockade would impact over a third of New Mexico's population, it really impacts all of our healthcare providers, from small, rural clinics to our largest hospitals.

Shutting that down is a big deal, but it wasn't just that. I heard from childcare and Head Start providers, rental assistance programs, Tribal governments, local law enforcement, fire departments, and nonprofit organizations that provide everything from support to our veterans to healthy meals for seniors and families.

We need to call out Trump's brazen action for what it truly is. It is a power grab and a test to see just how much he can get away with. President Trump and his cronies are testing how far they can go to dismantle and dismember our democracy in service of his strongman impulses and his ideological agenda.

Our message to him: The stove is hot, Mr. President. You should remember that.

The Constitution and Federal law are clear on who controls the spending of our taxpayer dollars. The President cannot simply override or delay or rescind Congress's appropriations bills once they are signed into law—full stop.

This has been upheld time and again by the Supreme Court, by the Justice Department, the Government Accountability Office, and it was codified into law in the Impoundment Control Act of 1974. Under that law, the President cannot unilaterally stop the disbursement of Federal funds that Congress has appropriated and the President has signed into law. Sound familiar? A President unilaterally stopping the disbursement of Federal funds that Congress has appropriated? Yes. This is exactly what President Trump just tried.

As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I know how much work goes into writing and passing our bipartisan funding laws.

I am here now talking on the Senate floor because I will fight like hell to stop this or any of Trump's brazen, illegal funding blockades, and I am not alone. I am joined by my colleagues here in the Senate on the Senate floor tonight, my colleagues in the New Mexico Federal delegation, my State's attorney general, and countless of my constituents.

Now, let me read just a few letters that I received from New Mexicans over these last 2 days:

Tamborah from Deming, who depends on Social Security disability benefits and Medicaid, was scared she would not be able to keep up with rent or basic necessities during the pause.

Tamborah wrote to me:

I will not be able to pay full price rent. My heart is filled with uncertainty. I am afraid for my neighbors with children. It has saddened my heart to see so many people including myself become unsure of the future.

Caitlin from Taos wrote to my office expressing concern for her safety and security should DreamTree, a federally funded youth shelter in northern New Mexico, shutter its services due to Trump's pause.

She wrote:

Without DreamTree, I wouldn't have a roof over my head, which would cause a lot of worry and fear, being vulnerable to sexual assault, which happened to me in the past. DreamTree is not just a program: it's home, it's my safe space.

Dolores from Albuquerque is fearful she won't be able to make ends meet if she loses her job because of the freeze.

She wrote to me:

Please help! I am a senior citizen trying to make ends meet. I am alone paying my own bills. I work in the Senior Community Service Employment Program and President Trump's administration is going to cut the funding. I won't be able to pay my bills. I am so afraid.

Shelley from Albuquerque, a dietitian, nutritionist, is scared for the very lives of her patients who depend on Medicaid to survive.

She wrote to me:

Those I serve on the Developmental Disabilities Waiver are Medicaid recipients, and some rely 100 percent on the specialized formula for tube feeding.

To reiterate, they get 100 percent of their nutrition from that formula, primarily through a tube in their stomach. If they do not have it, they will starve.

Louis from Las Cruces is concerned that his grandson won't be able to support his family if President Trump's border eliminates NIH funding and consequently his grandson's job.

Louis wrote to me:

My grandson graduated with honors from [New Mexico State University]. He is the recipient of an NIH grant which has been suspended. He has a wife and child. I don't think the President understands his actions affect real people.

Joan from Santa Fe has already lost money due to Trump's funding freeze. Joan wrote:

I've just lost a \$5,000 contract, and this order is going to have a negative ripple effect through the economy. Please protect federal workers from the Trump administration's purge and harassment.

Mara from Albuquerque, who is a biomedical student at the University of New Mexico doing cancer research and is fearful of what this freeze means for her job and ability to do this important work, wrote:

I am personally affected by this pause because of the NIH grants that sustain my lab and pay the salaries of my staff and students. These grants were applied for and awarded in good faith and they pay for extremely important cancer research.

Melissa from Albuquerque is a Head Start childcare provider and has a son at Head Start. Melissa wrote to me:

I am employed by Head Start. My son is a student at Head Start. I believe in what we do, I believe in the men and women I work with. These teachers change children's lives. I am so saddened and stressed. Can you please help?

Andra from Albuquerque is a researcher at the University of New Mexico whose work is funded by the National Science Foundation. Andra wrote to me:

I work at the University of New Mexico as part of a team entirely funded from the National Science Foundation. We have been notified that we may lose our funding. This will likely result in the loss of my job, along with those of my colleagues.

Eytan, a Forest Stewards Guild member in New Mexico, is worried about how a Federal funding freeze could lead to more deadly and destructive wildfires across our State.

Eytan wrote to me:

This disruption puts New Mexico at significant risk for a catastrophic wildfire as we head into another high-risk fire season.

Sienna from Taos is a behavioral healthcare provider concerned that the loss of Federal funding could prevent her from meeting the needs of toddlers and their families.

Sienna wrote to me:

This is a total assault on New Mexico's most vulnerable populations. Our programs assist families everyday and this funding is at risk. Halting federal grants will impact the early childhood programs serving low-income kids.

These letters paint a painful picture of the chaos and uncertainty that President Trump's actions have created in my State alone.

What do you say to those Americans, President Trump? How could you possibly defend taking their taxpayer dollars, the work of their elected leaders, the Constitution you swore to defend just a few days ago and pushing that all aside?

What funding exactly was thrown aside with it? Let me read you a list of funding impacted in just New Mexico, even as we still do not know which programs are or are not on the chopping block.

I will start with the New Mexico High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Program. If you have one in your State, you probably know it as an

HIDTA program. This program includes 17 counties that are coordinating on drug intelligence, interdiction, investigation, and prosecution efforts to reduce the impact of illicit drugs. These are the folks coordinating to go after the cartels, who are going after the fentanyl trafficking. How woke is that? Stopping fentanyl trafficking. They received over \$1 million last year for this work.

New Mexico's program to prevent and prosecute violence against women—this program works to reduce domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking by strengthening services to victims and holding offenders accountable. New Mexico received over \$1 million for this program last year.

The New Mexico crisis intervention program was created through our Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, a bill that I helped to negotiate. This program funds the enforcement of red flag mandates to combat and prevent gun violence. Last year, Federal funding for New Mexico's crisis intervention program totaled over \$4 million.

New Mexico's crime victims funds. These programs help New Mexican community organizations and public agencies provide services directly to the victims of crime. Last year, the Crime Victims Reparation Commission of New Mexico received \$1.2 million in Federal funds.

Justice assistance grants for police departments. Last year, New Mexico local law enforcement entities received about \$1 million in Federal justice assistance grant funding, and that funding is used for personnel, equipment, training, and technical assistance for New Mexico's police departments.

You heard from my colleague from Connecticut about fire grants, assistance to firefighter grants and staffing for adequate fire and emergency response. These programs fund equipment and resources for our fire departments, including volunteer firefighters in rural areas and emergency first responders.

Just last year, many of us in this body worked hard to get this program reauthorized, and I can't tell you of another program that is more popular at home than the fire grants.

Since 2015, fire departments across my State have received over \$22 million through these programs.

New Mexico homeless support services. Last year New Mexico nonprofits received \$17 million to the Housing and Urban Development Department's Continuum of Care Program to help put a roof over the heads of people who have been living on the streets.

Road improvements to prevent traffic deaths. You heard me. Those woke road improvements. In 2024, New Mexico local governments received almost \$2 million to make our roads safer. Local governments, from Truth or Consequences to the Pueblo of Santo Domingo, rely on this funding to make their streets safer.

Road construction for railroad crossings. Recently, New Mexico was awarded \$44 million for road construction in Gallup to build a safer rail crossing.

New Mexico's community schools. New Mexico community schools rely on the Community Schools Program for social support services for their students and families. Last year, schools in Bernalillo County received \$2.4 million to support the work of their educators and their students.

Literacy programs. Comprehensive literacy development programs, \$60 million to help kids read better.

The community health centers. Each year, 16 federally funded community health center organizations in our State leverage, on average, \$76 million to serve over 300,000 patients, to provide them with healthcare—17 percent of those patients are completely uninsured; 40 percent are covered by Medicaid.

How about essential air service for our rural airports? That is something that gets incredible bipartisan support in this body because it makes sure that rural communities have access to air service. Carlsbad air terminal, Clovis Regional Airport, Grant County Airport—all rely on this program to maintain their commercial air operations. These three rural airports receive \$15 million a year, more or less, through this program.

New Mexico's housing trust fund. The housing trust fund money is used for affordable housing for extremely low- and very low-income households.

It is not like any of us have a housing problem in our States right now, do we?

Small business loans. The Small Business Administration loan program has supported 112 New Mexico small businesses with almost \$50 million in loans. And those loans help those businesses grow; they allow them to purchase new facilities, equipment, supplies.

Let's not forget New Mexico's farmers. Last year, New Mexico received funding to support our specialty crop farmers. Those are the farmers who grow crops essential to the economy, as well as to the history, the identity, of our State—crops like chili, onions, pecans, garlic, stone fruit—just a few examples.

These programs that I have just read through are a fraction of the list. They aren't even a quarter of it. So let's go a little deeper now into more concrete examples of the disruptions and harm caused by President Trump's blockade. And each of these were shared directly with me or with one of my staff just in the last day and a half.

This one really pisses me off: Sexual Assault Services of Northwest New Mexico. They provide lifesaving services to sexual assault survivors in our State, and the freeze meant that this organization may not make payroll because they were locked out of the Federal reimbursement portal. They don't even know if their grant is still coming

through. They said that “as a victims' service provider, this memo directly threatens our ability to serve survivors of sexual assault.”

Women's Economic Self-Sufficiency Team—we call them WESST in the central part of the State. WESST serves around a thousand New Mexico small businesses—2,000 people a year—with consulting and training, incubation, microlending programs. They told me Federal funds directly and indirectly provide the majority of their operating budget. They planned to open a seventh Women's Business Center in Hobbs, NM, to focus on growing childcare businesses. That expansion was put on hold by the freeze.

They employ 34 staff and operate six Women's Business Centers throughout New Mexico.

They are incredibly concerned about the continued survival of the SBA Office of Women's Business Ownership and the Minority Business Development Agency.

Here is another really woke one. Cannon Air Force Base and the Ogalalla Land and Water Conservancy. They told me the readiness and environmental protection integration program that is at risk is more than a funding mechanism; it is a lifeline. This project addresses the incredibly severe water scarcity challenge faced by the entire region where groundwater from the Ogalalla Aquifer is now the sole source of water for municipal, industrial, and agricultural needs.

But without this program, the Ogalalla Aquifer is projected to lose its functional capacity as early as 2028. That would leave the region without water that they need to survive, but it also cripples those local communities, and it would jeopardize the very viability of Cannon Air Force Base and the Melrose Air Force Range.

Albuquerque Public Schools. This is the largest school district in New Mexico. It is actually the 31st largest in the entire Nation. It serves almost 80,000 students across 143 schools, and one of Albuquerque's largest employers with over 11,000 staff and well over 5,000 teachers.

Because of the freeze, APS was forced to halt all nonstaff-related funding for grants from the Department of Education, Centers For Disease Control and Prevention.

Here is what they told me: APS paused spending on its Federal community school grant, magnet school grant, Centers For Disease Control grant, and transportation funding for upcoming college field trips.

Their community school grant provides essential support—including counseling, tutoring, food assistance, and housing programs—for almost 2,000 students across three schools in Albuquerque. We have learned that these community schools are vital to better outcomes in our public schools.

The magnet school grant serves over 2,000 students across four more schools, funding programs that keep students

engaged and prepare them for the 21st century workforce.

The CDC Prevention grant supports students in all of our 141 APS schools, providing critical health and wellness resources.

Finally, students at 13 schools who were looking forward to a college field trip to New Mexico Tech next month just had their trip canceled because the district could not access Federal grants to pay for their transportation.

Silver Consolidated Schools, which serves over 2,500 students and their families in Southwest New Mexico, they told me the Silver Consolidated School District is 2 years into their 5-year, nearly \$6-million school-based mental health services grant. And this grant created, once again, in the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, has allowed the school district to put mental health services in each school in the district. These are services that the students, especially those in crisis, have come to rely on in a four-county region that lacks basic mental health services.

These programs I have just read through, they are not the whole list. They aren't even a quarter of it. So let's go now—and some of you watching are wondering, Why come to the Senate floor? Why decry an action that the President has already supposedly reversed?

First, I think we have to ask: Has he reversed it? According to his Press Secretary, the funding is still blocked. Again, these are laws, not guidance. They are laws passed by Congress, signed into law by the President of the United States.

And let me tell you about just a few of the projects under some of these laws that President Trump is unilaterally blocking funding for: projects from the Inflation Reduction Act, which is law, and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill, which is now law.

Over \$9 million for the Eastern New Mexico Rural Water System Project, which would continue fieldwork and design on a project that will, eventually, bring drinking water to more than 75,000 people in Clovis, Portales, Cannon Air Force Base, and other communities in eastern New Mexico.

Another 5 million for the Jicarilla Apache Rural Water System Project, which would contribute to final design and construction of the water system serving the Jicarilla Apache Nation.

Just over 5 million for the city of Santa Fe from the infrastructure law to complete the San Juan-Chama Return Flow Pipeline that will return treated unconsumed San Juan-Chama water back to the Rio Grande. This project was Santa Fe's primary strategy to mitigate the water supply shortages that we struggle with and create a sustainable water source.

I could go on and on and on. It is really remarkable how many people in my State have just been thrown into chaos by all of this. Now, before I finish, I want to be clear that this type of

chaos and uncertainty is not what Americans elected President Trump to deliver. It is illegal. It is a type of action that puts our democracy—really, the whole structure of our government—in jeopardy.

But if your focus is just on money, if the fate of our democracy feels a little too abstract, then understand this: President Trump has also blocked funding from going out under the infrastructure law and the Inflation Reduction Act. Again, these laws are laws passed by Congress and certainly not what New Mexicans sent me to Washington to deliver. They want certainty.

Americans are calling on us—really, all of us—to work together on policies that will bring down the cost of their groceries, their rent, their internet, their healthcare. They want us to help get fentanyl off of our streets or make our communities safer and support survivors of sexual assault. They want us to put our veterans in safe housing.

And according to a number of New Mexicans, they still can't access Federal funding.

They want us to help the small businesses and support the public lands that are the beating heart of local rural economies. They want us to create jobs that they can build a family around, jobs they can be proud of, jobs that are in their own communities. They don't want all this chaos.

I would hope that my Republican and my Democratic colleagues alike, especially the appropriators—we work together every single year to try to produce bipartisan bills. By nature, those bills have to be written in a bipartisan way. I have written many of those bills since I joined the Appropriations Committee with my Republican colleagues, some of which got reported out of committee unanimously.

I hope we can all join together in calling on the President to just get back to following the law that we all passed together. Let's get back to creating certainty for our communities, for our small businesses, for our democracy itself.

Benjamin Franklin put it years ago like this: We have a republic, if we can keep it.

I will fight like hell to keep it. And I know that I am not alone.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BUDD). The Senator from Wisconsin.

TRUMP EXECUTIVE ORDERS

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I would like to just step back a minute and reflect on the last 10 days. That is right. It has just been 10 days since Donald Trump was sworn in as our President. Like myself, many Americans feel like it has been much longer, given the onslaught of news and chaos that we have experienced in that time.

First, there was the inauguration speech. Instead of talking about uniting our country and mapping out a real plan to address Wisconsinites' needs, he used his first moments as President

to suggest we rename the Gulf of Mexico to the "Gulf of America," all while his billionaire friends looked on from front-row seats.

Then there was the flood of day one Executive orders, among other things, attempting to end birthright citizenship and removing the United States from the World Health Organization and removing the United States from the Paris climate agreement.

And, of course, I would be remiss if I did not highlight that the President also pardoned over 1,500 criminals who had participated in a violent insurrection—people who beat police officers with metal batons and fire extinguishers, people who tased cops, all in the name of undermining the will of the American people and overturning a free and fair election—so much for tough on crime.

And this was just day one—chaos, chaos, chaos. I will fast-forward to Monday night of this week, when the Trump administration directed virtually all Federal Agencies to cut grants and loans that millions of Americans rely on. There were barely any details on what programs were impacted.

Almost immediately, my office began receiving calls from constituents. In fact, the phones rang off the hooks. Childcare and Head Start programs reached out, concerned that they would have to shutter their doors or lay off staff if Federal funding was paused.

One Head Start Program told me that their portal to access the funds that they need to stay open was down, inaccessible. And I heard from another Head Start Program in Western Wisconsin that serves hundreds of children. They told me that they would have to start laying off employees as soon as Thursday if their funding was cut.

Let's just think about what that means in practice. Maybe a parent is getting home from work after a long day and gets a phone call that the place that they use for daycare will be closed for an indefinite amount of time. Will they be able to go to work the next day? Who is going to come forth to care for their kid now?

A deputy fire chief in a rural Central Wisconsin community reached out to me. Without Federal funding, he would have to lay off as many as nine firefighters. Would this mean longer waits for residents for a firefighter to respond to an emergency if their house was on fire?

Another fire chief in Northern Wisconsin called me to ask whether his volunteer department could go ahead with needed upgrades for their equipment. Without their Federal grant, which was more than half of their operating budget, they would not be able to purchase the new chassis needed for their department's purposes.

And from Western Wisconsin, a local mayor reached out to me to share that a pause in Federal funding would be catastrophic for their ability to make

timely payments on a loan they took out to make necessary renovations to their fire department.

I heard from an administrator of a women's shelter for survivors of domestic abuse based in Southwestern Wisconsin. Without Federal funding, they would have to turn away women looking for safety from their abusers for themselves and their children.

As communities across Wisconsin continue to battle the opioid and fentanyl crisis, a community organization specializing in drug prevention told me that they would not be able to pay their staff or continue their vital work if funding was cut. I also heard from a community dental center in Southeastern Wisconsin that serves thousands of patients every single year, the vast majority of whom are children. They told me that without their Federal funding, they would be at significant risk of closing within a matter of a few short months, and, as a result, thousands of children would have nowhere to go to receive dental care, and 45 individuals would be out of employment.

Another family shelter in Milwaukee, which serves hundreds of families a year and dozens of pregnant and postpartum women, shared that a freeze on Federal funding would likely result in them having to cut wages for their 100 employees and consider staffing reductions. Without their services, more than 100 kids would remain in foster care, instead of with their families.

While the White House seems to be contradicting itself and putting out mixed signals on these drastic cuts, the level of chaos it has created should be upsetting to every American. We are talking about the most vulnerable people in our society.

Republicans who say these cuts are necessary are essentially saying it is fine if Americans don't get lifesaving treatment for opioid addiction. They are saying it is fine if kids miss a meal or can't access the medication they need to stay healthy; it is OK, in their books, if fire departments and law enforcement go without the resources they need to keep our communities safe.

Look, I agree that we need to go after fraud and waste in our government where it exists. Where I adamantly disagree with my Republican colleagues is what that waste and fraud actually is. Programs that Wisconsin families rely on every day are not waste in my book.

President Trump's egregious overreach of his Presidential power is plainly unconstitutional. It is illegal to withhold this funding from the American people, period. This funding came through bipartisan bills.

And I hope that my Republican colleagues are just as angry at President Trump for the confusion his administration has created as I am. But based on what I witnessed so far, I fear they are not.

This directive has put real people in real distress—something, it appears, President Trump and his allies don't really care about. We are going to do everything that we can to challenge this and make sure that kids can get a hot lunch at school, that cops get the funding that they need to be on the beat, and that families have what they need.

I will close with this. The Trump administration has said this is all to stop the "woke agenda." Well if the "woke agenda" is ensuring that seniors can access healthcare, kids can have food on the table, parents can find affordable childcare in their neighborhoods, and police officers and first responders have the resources they need to keep our communities safe, I think this administration is about to learn a real lesson in just how out of step they are with the vast majority of Americans who rely on these services every day.

If this is any indication of the next 4 years, I want my constituents to know that I, for one, intend to do right by them and stand up for their best interests.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

TRUMP EXECUTIVE ORDERS

Ms. ALSOBROOKS. Mr. President, while this may not be my maiden floor speech, I think it of vital importance that Marylanders hear from their elected leaders in this moment of chaos.

One of my greatest inspirations growing up was my grandmother, Sarah Daisy Alsobrooks. She was my father's mother. She raised my father and his siblings in a one-bedroom apartment in Northeast Washington, DC. My grandmother wanted for her family what all Americans want for their families—an affordable home to live in, a job that allowed her to support her family, and a safe community to raise her kids in.

My grandmother dreamed of civil service. She dreamed of working in the Federal Government, and she was determined to do so. Many in this Chamber will recall that you had to pass the civil service exam in order to be hired. And to pass, you had to take a typing test. At the time, my grandmother was a housekeeper. She worked day and night to provide for my father and his siblings. Every dollar she made went to her family. So she couldn't afford a typewriter to practice typing on. But that didn't stop her from pursuing her dream.

She took a white piece of paper and hand drew a keyboard on it. She taped that white piece of paper up on the refrigerator, and every night, after my dad and his siblings went to bed, she stood in front of that refrigerator and practiced on that white piece of paper. She taught herself to type every keystroke.

It was with fierce determination—the same determination that I have seen in

so many mothers and fathers who just wanted their kids to have more opportunities than they did—that she learned to type. She took the test, and she passed. She got the job she dreamed of, working in the Federal Government.

And she was so proud of herself. She worked for the Pentagon. I can still remember she would come home and tell me: I saw General This Person and General That Person in the hallway that day. She knew that the work she did mattered. For her, working in the Federal Government wasn't just a job. Working on behalf of the people of the United States was her American dream.

It is that kind of pride that makes our Federal workforce so special—the thousands of men and women who show up every single day to work on behalf of the people of this great Nation. They are public servants in the truest sense of the word.

At the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, MD, they are researching cures for cancer, trying to make sure that when a family gets that devastating news of a loved one who has been diagnosed with cancer, they have options. At the Food and Drug Administration in Silver Spring, MD, they are working tirelessly to make sure our food is safe to eat. At the Social Security Administration in Woodlawn, MD, they are working to make sure that our seniors have access to their hard-earned benefits.

These civil servants are patriots just like my grandmother. They love their country. They work for Democratic Presidents and for Republican Presidents. Their focus isn't on the politics of the day. It is on the mission of the Federal Government to serve the people of the United States of America.

So you can imagine my deep frustration with this current administration that has decided to target these hard-working Americans in what I can only describe as a witch hunt. When I think of the people being pushed out, I think about people like my grandmother—hard-working folks who wanted to make a difference in this country.

The calls that I am getting are equally heartbreaking as they are infuriating. I spoke with a woman just this morning who worked at the Department of Health and Human Services for over 35 years. She has been put on leave as a part of one of the President's Executive orders.

I spoke to another woman who spent over 37 years at the Department of Agriculture, and believe it or not, she was placed in a position under this current President's first administration, but now she has been let go.

These are people who have worked under President George H. W. Bush, a Republican; President Bill Clinton, a Democrat; President George W. Bush, a Republican; President Barack Obama, a Democrat; President Donald Trump, a Republican; and President Joe Biden, a Democrat—because, for these women

and countless other Marylanders, it is not about which party is in power or which President won the election; it is about the work. It is about doing their part to make sure that our government functions.

I represent the highest number of Federal workers per capita in the country. No State has more Federal workers per capita than the great State of Maryland. These are our friends, our neighbors, our mothers, our fathers, and, yes, our grandmothers. The fact that this administration has decided to disparage and demean these civil servants is infuriating. The bullying, the scare tactics, and the smoke and mirrors are unacceptable. These hard-working Marylanders deserve better.

I want every Federal worker in Maryland who sees this to know that, when they see me in these halls, they must also see you.

And what we know now is that this administration isn't stopping at our civil servants, which brings to us the last 48 hours. Let's recap.

The administration issued a cruel and callous directive. No longer was the target just Federal workers. Suddenly, it was the entirety of the American people, because what this directive did was freeze Federal funds—a move intended to sow chaos and confusion, to instill fear. You don't have to take my word for it. Talk to the countless Marylanders who called my office—veterans who were scared that their benefits wouldn't go through, seniors who didn't know if they would still have Medicare, families who rely on SNAP benefits who didn't know if they would be able to feed their kids. These were the calls my office was getting yesterday—all because the President decided to freeze Federal funds.

I don't know how to make this more plain. This has impacted so many people—people who voted for this President, people who did not vote for this President, and people who didn't vote at all.

We are talking about law enforcement officers who rely on Federal funds to protect victims of domestic violence—women and children. I was a full-time domestic violence prosecutor—the first in my county. So, when I hear that the President of the United States is making it harder for these victims, you can imagine my deep frustration. Know this: We are not going to accept this.

So I would like to take a few moments to paint a picture of exactly the kinds of Americans this administration is targeting: seniors and people with disabilities. Maryland is home to 1 million seniors and nearly 670,000 people living with disabilities. At the Department of Health and Human Services, the Administration for Community Living covers all the programs and services that help older adults and people with disabilities. Their work is essential, and it connects seniors with employment opportunities and provides support for caregivers like my fa-

ther. It supports States in providing nutrition services for seniors, just to name a few.

Services for seniors—on the chopping block.

The Nutrition Services Incentive Program, in the Division of Administration for Community Living, is responsible for delivering nutritious meals to older adults. They work to make sure that older adults who can't leave their homes have an opportunity to access food.

Helping hungry seniors—on the chopping block.

The Alzheimer's Disease Demonstration Grants to States expand the availability of diagnostic and support services for those with Alzheimer's disease and related dementia. Anyone who has watched a loved one suffer with Alzheimer's knows exactly how painful this is. So we should be doing everything in our power to find a cure for this disease and support those suffering from it—a disease that is the seventh leading cause of death among older residents in Maryland.

Supporting those with Alzheimer's—on the chopping block.

The National Family Caregiver Support Program provides grants to caregivers. I am a member of the sandwich generation. I am raising my 19-year-old daughter, who is just amazing—her name is Alex—while caring for two wonderful, aging parents. The work of caregivers across our country is so selfless, valuable, and necessary to ensure those who raised us get the care and support they deserve and have earned. I know I wouldn't be here today without my incredible parents. More than 700,000 caregivers receive services through this program.

Supporting our caregivers—on the chopping block.

The Office of Family Violence Prevention and Services supports emergency shelters and related assistance for victims of domestic violence and their children. I have sat with these women and their children in the courtroom, prosecuting the cases against their abusers, and I know how hard it is for them to get out of an abusive relationship and seek help at an emergency shelter.

These shelters literally save lives, providing emergency shelter to victims of domestic violence. You guessed it. It is on the chopping block.

Now, I could go on and on, but I think what has been made clear is that these political stunts are going to have a devastating and long-lasting impact on Marylanders—and, yes, it bears repeating—on Marylanders who voted for this President, Marylanders who didn't vote for this President, and Marylanders who did not vote at all.

My job in the Senate is to advocate for my people, and my people are Marylanders. They are the Federal workers who have spent their lives working on behalf of the American people, no matter who the President is. They are the parents who rely on SNAP benefits to

make sure their children don't go hungry. They are the teachers who prepare our kids to be leaders. They are the watermen who harvest blue crab from the Chesapeake Bay. They are the caregivers who make life easier for our loved ones. They are the scientists who are researching a cure for cancer. They are the veterans who serve our country honorably. They are the police officers who keep our communities safe. They are the Democrats. They are the Republicans. They are the Independents. And each and every one of them deserves better than this administration.

I am willing to work with anyone—Democrat, Republican, Independent, whoever—to deliver for Marylanders. My door is always open. What I have come to learn from my time in public service is that the people of this great country all want the same things: a roof over their heads, a good-paying job so they can provide for their families, great schools, good healthcare, safe communities, a lower cost of goods. These are the things each and every one of us should be fighting for. This is what the administration should be focused on. So, when they return to that mission, I will be here. But if this President continues to threaten Marylanders, I will be here, too, fighting back.

As I end, you know, many of my constituents know that I am a woman of faith and that, in the midst of chaos, I turn to the Word. So I would like to close by sharing Scriptures of encouragement, words that speak to us in tumultuous times and remind us to love one another.

II Timothy 1:7 says:

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Romans 12:12 says:

Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.

Joshua 1:9 says:

Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.

James 1:2-4 says:

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.

Psalms 34:17 says:

The righteous cry, and the Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles.

I Corinthians 14:33 says:

For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

John 16:33 says:

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Romans 8:28:

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.

II Corinthians 4:17:

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Proverbs 25:28:

He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.

Proverbs 11:14:

Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.

II Thessalonians 3:16:

Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

REAGAN NATIONAL AIRPORT MIDAIR COLLISION

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, before I start my remarks, I do want to note that we have had news just now of a terrible tragedy at DCA. There has been a plane crash. We do not know all the details yet, but it is fair to say that, here in DC and all around the country, we should all be praying for the loved ones of those involved in this crash, hoping for some positive news, but knowing that this was a very, very serious crash, and the news is not likely to be good as we learn more. Our hearts and our prayers go out to all of those affected.

TRUMP EXECUTIVE ORDERS

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I rise at this late hour to join my colleagues in expressing my grave concern—my alarm—at the new administration's attempt to discard the rule of law and expand Executive power and, in so doing, threaten the well-being of communities across the country, including in New Hampshire.

Typically, when Presidents are inaugurated, especially after a divisive election, they try to bring the country together. They focus on what unites Americans. President Trump campaigned on a platform promising to bring down costs for families. This is a priority of mine and a priority of Granite Staters, and I would welcome commonsense, good-faith efforts to work together to bring down costs.

Despite my deep and meaningful differences with the President, I am and remain willing to work together to help lower costs for families. But in the opening days of the Trump administration, it has been overwhelmingly clear that lowering costs is not one of President Trump's priorities.

This administration's priorities have ranged from the ridiculous to the reckless—unconcerned with delivering relief and results, more concerned with exacting retribution and revenge, pardoning violent criminals who attack police officers, firing inspectors general, who are the government's watchdogs, and freezing Federal grants—an illegal act that, should they go through with it, would be devastating for the lives of everyday Americans in every corner of our country and would signal

a break with our principles of self-government.

The President isn't going after high prices; he is going after the rule of law. He is going after our system of self-government. He is going after our government's ability to support communities and families across the country, and he needs to reverse course now.

In New Hampshire, our love of freedom runs deep. New Hampshire was the first colony to sign the Declaration of Independence. Patriots from New Hampshire, under Colonel John Stark, fought in one of the first major battles of the Revolutionary War—the Battle of Bunker Hill. It was Colonel Stark who, years later in a letter, wrote the words that would become our State's motto, a motto recognized by people in faraway corners of the world, including Ukraine—the words “Live free or die.” For us Granite Staters, these words represent an unwavering belief in the idea of self-government—that the government's powers derive from the consent of the governed.

We secured our freedom through the rule of law and our Constitution. We believe, as Americans across this country believe, that this great country of ours has no use for a king, nor do we have any use for anyone who confuses themselves with a king.

We secured these freedoms through the rule of law and our Constitution. We did all this not only because we believed that our values of freedom, the rule of law, and democracy are noble principles—although, indeed, they are—but because freedom, the rule of law, and democratic, small government are still the best means to improve people's lives.

Presidents from both parties have been committed to this principle, but the actions of the Trump administration have demonstrated a break with the rule of law and self-government that 10 years ago would have been impossible to imagine being tolerated by either political party.

Let me run through some of the most egregious priorities that this administration is advancing instead of doing what the American people expect them to do, which is working to lower costs for families.

As the first day of the new Trump administration drew to a close, the President chose to pardon the violent criminals who assaulted police officers, stormed these halls, and tried to overthrow our free and fair election. He has referred to these criminals as “patriots.” The patriots on January 6 were the Capitol Police who saved lives, including the Vice President's, and saved our democracy.

The violent criminals who assaulted police officers, who beat them with fists and flagpoles within an inch of their lives, do not deserve our praise, nor our pardon. To pardon them, as the President did, is to venerate lawlessness, reward violence, and betray police officers.

Police officers have some of the hardest jobs around. They deserve a Presi-

dent who has their backs. Instead, the President sent a message that violence against police officers is permissible, even laudable, if it is in his name or to advance his political cause.

I suggest that the President meet with the families of those officers and explain to them why these criminals deserved a pardon, why he thinks people who attack police officers are patriots.

The pardons have been issued. These violent criminals are now free. January 6 is now a part of our history, and time marches on. But the shamefulness of the President's decision will not fade away.

Of course, the pardons were only the beginning. By the end of the week, late on Friday night, the President attempted to fire at least 17 Federal inspectors general. Inspectors general offices are indispensable watchdogs who identify tens of billions of dollars in savings per year, and they crack down on fraud, abuse, and corruption. They hold big corporations to account, preventing those corporations from ripping off the American taxpayer, such as through overpayments on Federal contracts or Medicare reimbursement.

But in order to do their jobs effectively, inspectors general are supposed to be apolitical and independent. They need to be able to operate without fear or favor. Their job is not to serve the President's agenda; their job is to serve the American people. But President Trump, in a reckless, illegal, and politically motivated act, tried to reduce what is a pillar of government accountability to a rubberstamp for his agenda.

Even if one is not concerned with the illegality of this act—although you certainly would hope that the President would be concerned with following the law—this action to expand and consolidate Executive power does nothing to bring down costs and, in fact, will make government less efficient, open the door to rampant corruption, and waste more taxpayer money.

So why is an inspector general important? To begin with, the inspector general, tasked with finding ways to save taxpayer money, would not do so by releasing a memo freezing Federal grant funding across the board for every community in every corner of the country.

In a truly unprecedented act, President Trump ordered the freeze of nearly all Federal grant funding. This includes grant funding for firefighters, for police departments, for care and shelter for veterans, for disaster relief, for resources to fight the spread of fentanyl, for law enforcement fighting drug trafficking, for school lunches, for special education for students with disabilities, for small business grants, for community health centers—in short, for virtually every part of American life. Then the administration released a memo doubling down on these efforts and offering more chaos and more questions than answers.

Communities across the country began to scramble to find out if they were losing their funding and for how long. My office and the offices of every Senator and Governor in the country have been deluged with frantic calls from our constituents desperate for answers.

Since then, the administration announced that the memo was rescinded, and then the White House announced that rescinding the memo was “not a rescission of the federal funding freeze,” only further muddying the waters. The White House continues to send out confused and chaotic messages.

The administration has suggested that those of us who are speaking out about the devastating consequences of their actions are being alarmists. They have given glib assurances that the funding for particular programs will not be cut. This is, of course, ridiculous.

This is the White House’s mess. This is the President’s chaos. It is not on the American people to do the White House Office of Management and Budget’s job for them. It is not on the American people to determine how this order is being implemented and what funds are being impacted. It is on this White House. It is on this President to take ownership of a mess that started with the President’s orders—this self-inflicted disaster.

The alarm that I hear from my constituents is real because the devastating consequences to our communities and our families if these grants remain frozen are very, very real. These grants are not toys to be played with. They are not a political football to toss around. Behind every one of these grants are people whose lives depend on this funding. It is not OK, it is not permissible for the people who rely on these grants to be left waiting for clarity from the administration, hoping the President can summon enough magnanimity to restore this funding.

Let me talk for a moment about why these grants matter to people whose lives are being played with.

In New Hampshire, Granite Staters have been devastated by the fentanyl crisis. Everyone in our State knows someone or knows someone who knows someone who has been personally affected by this crisis.

Last year, a woman who I was talking with about the mental health of our young people in our schools approached me after an event. She told me she had lost three brothers to the fentanyl crisis—three brothers from one family.

Far too many young people have been lost to addiction. Far too many promising futures have been lost, young people with a lifetime’s worth of hopes and aspirations cruelly dashed by an overdose.

In New Hampshire, it has been a struggle just keeping our heads above water when fighting this crisis. Every time we begin to get a handle on it, a

new threat emerges. It is tough work that has required the dedication of public servants from across our community—law enforcement officers, addiction specialists, teachers and school administrators, veterans organizations, hospitals, and parents. It has required the uncommon devotion of everyone.

While we have made progress, the challenge is still as daunting as anything our State has ever faced. The progress that we have made, though, has been possible in part through Federal grant programs, including the State opioid response grant, grants to community health centers, funding for law enforcement, and recovery services block grants.

This funding across a range of sectors has allowed us to get more resources behind successful programs and strategies that have proven records of working. For rural communities in particular, these Federal dollars make an extraordinary difference. Lives have been saved because of this funding, but President Trump would end these grants.

Another grant which would be frozen by this order are grants for firefighters. The firefighter grant program has been invaluable in helping fire departments in big cities and small towns alike to modernize their equipment, hire more firefighters, and provide more training so that our first responders can do their jobs safely and effectively.

Being a firefighter is an unimaginably tough job. Every day, they know that they can be called to rush into danger to save lives.

I have had the privilege of visiting fire departments across our State that have benefited from this program, including in Berlin, where, thanks to Federal grant funding, they were able to secure a new engine, which will replace one that the fire department has had to rely on for 43 years.

Our firefighters need to remain on the cutting edge so that they can do their jobs and get home safe, but President Trump would end those grants.

Federal grants are also indispensable for keeping police departments fully funded. For instance, COPS grants are vital for giving departments the resources to remaining fully staffed. New Hampshire received a \$1 million COPS grant in 2023 to help develop an anti-heroin task force. At a time when police departments are often stretched to the limit, freezing these funds is reckless and dangerous.

Let me be clear on this point. I have proudly stood up to members of both political parties when they have attempted to defund our police departments. The most important job of government is keeping people safe. Defunding police departments is always wrong, and President Trump’s order to defund police departments is wrong now.

So perhaps we shouldn’t be surprised. After all, a President who would pardon violent criminals who assaulted

police officers can’t be trusted to put police officers first and his political ambitions second.

This is just a small sampling of the grants and people—people—who would be affected by an across-the-board funding freeze.

President Trump seems to spend most of his time with the multimillionaires and billionaires who want even more tax cuts for those already at the top. The President perhaps would know the dangers of his actions if he knew the Granite Staters that I know whom I have the privilege of representing.

The President has been to New Hampshire in the past and seen our State from the stage of his rallies. He has seen New Hampshire under the glow of television lights, under the gaze of cameras, surrounded by campaign signs emblazoned with his name. But perhaps if he knew the Granite Staters who have been writing and calling in alarm to my office, he would learn about the people whose lives would be hurt by this grant freeze.

If he talked with New Hampshire police officers, he would know they need every dollar they can get as they work to get fentanyl off our streets and as they try to keep our children safe from addiction, danger, and despair.

If he listened to the Granite Staters who volunteer at our homeless shelters, he would hear about how Federal funding is used to help homeless veterans, to ensure that our heroes have a place to rest their heads on a snowy, cold New Hampshire night.

Earlier this month, I had the privilege of visiting Sunset Heights Elementary School. I talked with students. They told me about what they were learning and why they loved their school. I saw firsthand how Federal funds help pay for their special education programs—programs that help ensure that every child counts, that every child has a chance to learn, to dream, to reach their full potential. It was a wonderful day. These were wonderful kids. And no one—no one—is made better off by having the funding for their special education programs jeopardized, frozen, or taken away.

Or perhaps, Mr. President, if you knew the Granite Staters who live in Berlin, in New Hampshire’s north country, you need not look further than the new breathing apparatus that they now have that sit ready for our bravest to grab as they run toward danger, to know why these grants matter and should not be frozen—because this act freezing these grants would prevent other stations from getting the help that the Berlin Fire Department received. Do you think it was a mistake that the Berlin Fire Department received this grant?

These are the people, the faces behind these grants, this Federal funding—our fellow Americans who live, breathe, and provide for their families within the margins of these budget lines, whose dignity and safety, whose

hopes and aspirations should be regarded as more than just the stitching of a political football.

Perhaps the administration will restore some or even all of this funding, but it shouldn't have to come to this. Even now, the American people don't know what funding is affected and what funding is not. The American people—the people whom the President serves—would like to know: Would this administration be inclined to make up their mind on precisely what funding they would like to freeze, what funding they would like to take away? The American people want to know what part of the American life is the President willing to devastate.

People's safety, their jobs, their health, their fire and police departments, their lives should not wait in the dock, subject to the confused wordings and impulsive whims of the next tweet, the next press release, the next ill-devised memo to be issued and reversed and reissued again. We work for the American people, and they deserve so much better.

President Trump's order will not only hurt the lives of Americans all across the country; the order is also illegal and at odds with our American belief in self-government. The President does not have the authority to freeze or take away funds that have already been allocated by Congress. It is Congress—not the President—who makes laws, and that is not a technicality. That is what separates democracies from authoritarian states, Presidents from Kings.

So even if the administration announces that they will restore every dollar of funding, even if they do not threaten any grant in the future, let's be clear: The money is not the President's to restore, freeze, or take away. It does not belong to him. It belongs to the American people.

If the President can unilaterally take away funds from any program he disagrees with, why should we pass laws at all? Why even have a legislature? When a President seizes legislative power for himself, it makes one wonder whether or not this President—a President who tried to overturn a free and fair election—truly believes in self-government.

Now, some of my Republican colleagues are inclined to give the President the benefit of the doubt, to voice their concerns but to dismiss the President's actions as perhaps confusing but not wrong. I think that, in a sense, sells the President short. He didn't issue this order by mistake. He is the President of the most powerful country on Earth, and his choices are his own.

The President's actions to grab power were not an elaborate accident. The President didn't pardon the January 6 rioters by accident. The President did not try to fire 17 inspectors general by accident. The President did not order the freeze of all Federal grants by accident. The President deserves the respect to be treated as a

leader who is responsible for his own actions.

If the White House didn't want confusion regarding the freezing of these funds, they wouldn't have issued the order. If the White House didn't believe that the President has the unilateral power to take away funds allocated by Congress, then they wouldn't insist that he has the authority to do so.

And let me be clear. Leaders who respect the values that define us as Americans—freedom, democracy, the rule of law—they don't confuse violent criminals with patriots. And leaders who intend to govern above reproach do not fire the people's watchdogs in the cover of night.

The President is using his opening days in office to test our society's capacity of outrage, to test the loyalty of the Republican caucus, and to push the limits of the rule of law and self-government to, in short, see how far he can go, perhaps even hoping that, in this relentless tumult, we become accustomed to the bending and breaking of the law.

I understand that my Republican colleagues support the President. I understand that they support much of his agenda. But this is a pivotal moment. My Republican colleagues need to decide just how far they are willing to go. If they are not concerned by the President's actions, I urge them to consider the precedent that President Trump is setting up.

Would they be comfortable with a future Democratic President purging the government of all of its watchdogs? Would they bestow on a Democratic President the power to unilaterally defund programs that Congress passed into law? Because this will not be the last time that President Trump will test the limits of what my Republican colleagues are willing to swallow.

That is, of course, the problem with appeasement. Once the bully is appeased, the bully simply demands more and more. And even if the President restores all of these grants, even if this entire episode is mere sound and fury, that restoration offers no promises for tomorrow. When a leader gains a power, history tells us that they are inclined to use it and they are certainly not inclined to give it away.

The decision to give the President the power of the legislature to control the purse will live on beyond this night. My Republican colleagues have to decide if abdicating their authority as the people's trusted representatives to make laws is a bridge too far or is merely a lamentable but acceptable burden to appease this President.

So it is unfortunate, to say the least, that we are mired in this chaos. We live in such a great country. America is positioned to outcompete our rivals. We have the best scientists, entrepreneurs, workers, and fighting force in the world. What more could we do, what great things could we accomplish if we were not devoting our energies to overcoming chaos of our own making,

of President Trump's own making, of devoting all of our hours to binding self-inflicted wounds?

I know that both parties and the President can find ways to work together. We have done it before during the President's first term—for instance, to end surprise medical billing, get more resources to tackle the fentanyl crisis, and to deliver for veterans. I am always willing to put in the work to do what is best for New Hampshire and the country.

In this moment, perhaps above all else, the people want us to work together to bring down high costs, and it is remarkable to me that the President and his party have declined so far to introduce a single piece of legislation to lower costs.

Make no mistake, pardoning violent criminals who attacked police officers doesn't lower costs for families, nor does removing the portraits of decorated generals from the Pentagon, nor does removing security details from the President's political foes, nor does firing the people's watchdogs or freezing funding for veterans, for police departments, for firefighters.

No one's rent will be easier to pay. No one's grocery bill will be any lighter. The President's actions will not bring down any costs for families. But that doesn't mean that they come without a price. The price is the millions an inspector general might have saved. The price is paid by the families who will be hurt. The price is paid by our police officers who may lose funding. The price is paid by the families of Capitol Police officers who the President of the United States has let down.

The price we the people are asked to pay is our commitment to self-government, our commitment to the notion that inspired delegates in a hall in Philadelphia that, in America, we do not seek to be ruled, that we are capable of solving problems and making decisions, and that no one is above the law because here we believe in government of, by, and for the people.

The price is, in short, all of the beliefs that inspired us who serve in this Chamber to enter public service. The price is nothing less than the very ideals that make us proud to call ourselves Americans.

As we near midnight, we will mark the birthday of another President: Franklin Delano Roosevelt. It was Roosevelt who, when speaking of the freedoms enshrined in our Constitution, said:

Those who have long enjoyed such privileges as we enjoy forget in time that men have died to win them.

We have come too far and sacrificed far too much for freedom and for the miracle of self-government for us to discard these ideals for political expediency, to dispense with the rule of law as the latest casualty of the President's self-described quest for retribution.

I hope my Republican colleagues tell the President that he went too far and

that they reverse course. But for now, the President should know that, no matter what he does, we are not going to grow accustomed to illegality. We will not resign ourselves to the lives of our fellow Americans being imperiled for his political gain.

If he wishes to fire the people's watchdogs in the black of night, then he can expect us to stand here on the floor and speak out as the clock strikes midnight. The President will do whatever he does, but he will not do so to a silent Chamber.

We still believe in self-government. It has been nearly 250 years since we declared our independence, but we have yet to gain an appetite for a King. In the "Live Free or Die" State, we remain a freedom-loving people. We know that problems get solved for real people, for real families; that prices get lowered; that people have a chance to build a future, to own a home, to save for retirement, to send their kids to college, to have a vacation, to live a life that they build in the way that is best for them.

We know that the way to do that is to ensure that our democracy serves the people, that our democracy preserves their power, that public servants are accountable to their constituents. That is how we make sure that the American dream continues.

I urge the President to reverse course, to get to work on a bipartisan basis, to stop the uncertainty and unpredictability that so many people are

faced with right now as they try to make decisions about keeping a daycare center open, hiring new police to keep our streets safe, hiring nurses to keep our rural hospitals open.

Those are the decisions, the day-to-day decisions that are being impacted by the President's recklessness. I urge the President again to reverse course, to get to work on a bipartisan basis, to do what he needs to do to listen to people, bring down costs, and deliver for the American people.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

TRUMP EXECUTIVE ORDERS

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, it is a somber night as we pray for safety and recovery and thank the first responders and we wrap up for the evening.

We will be back tomorrow and as long as it takes to reverse this Federal funding freeze. Today was a good day. It was a small victory for the reversal of this illegal act. But I think the most important thing for everybody to remember on both sides of the aisle is that nobody is unconstrained by the law.

We have three separate and coequal branches of government, and I think people on both sides of the aisle consider this President sort of unusually not constrained by political outcry or legal constraints.

I think the most important thing for all of us to remember is that the laws

of gravity apply to all of us, and the laws of the land apply to all of us. So if you are on the left and you are worried about what is going to happen, it is important to know public outcry works; the law still stands; the Constitution still stands.

If you are on the right, you should also remember that the door swings both ways in Washington, DC, and elsewhere. You probably want to be careful about how much power you delegate away from the Congress to the Chief Executive of the United States.

So we will be continuing to talk about this. This is not a 1-day thing. This is not a 1-week thing. This is not a 1-month thing. We are in this for the long haul.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 12 noon tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 11:02 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, January 30, 2025, at 12 noon.

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate January 29, 2025:

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

LEE ZELDIN, OF NEW YORK, TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, January 30, 2025 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

FEBRUARY 4

10:30 a.m.

Committee on the Judiciary

To hold hearings to examine the poisoning of America, focusing on fentanyl, its analogues, and the need for permanent class scheduling.

SD-226

2:30 p.m.

Select Committee on Intelligence

To receive a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters.

SH-219

FEBRUARY 5

10 a.m.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the real impacts of debanking in America.

SD-538

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Business meeting to consider S. 93, to amend the Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia Research and Control Act of 1998 to address harmful algal blooms,

S. 98, to require the Federal Communications Commission to establish a vetting process for prospective applicants for high-cost universal service program funding, S. 99, to require the Secretary of Commerce to produce a report that provides recommendations to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of Department of Commerce programs related to supply chain resilience and manufacturing and industrial innovation, S. 161, to require the Secretary of Transportation to issue rules relating to the testing procedures used under the New Car Assessment Program of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, S. 195, to amend the Visit America Act to promote music tourism, S. 216, to amend the Save Our Seas 2.0 Act to improve the administration of the Marine Debris Foundation, to amend the Marine Debris Act to improve the administration of the Marine Debris Program of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, S. 245, to require the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information to establish a working group on cyber insurance, to require dissemination of informative resources for issuers and customers of cyber insurance, S. 246, to protect the right of law-abiding citizens to transport knives interstate, notwithstanding a patchwork of local and State prohibitions, S. 257, to improve the resilience of critical supply chains, S. 258, to improve forecasting and understanding of tornadoes and other hazardous weather, S. 260, to amend the Bottles and Breastfeeding Equipment Screening Act to require hygienic handling of breast milk and baby formula by security screening personnel of the Transportation Security Administration and personnel of private security companies providing security screening, S. 278, to prohibit users who are under age 13 from accessing social media platforms, to prohibit the use of personalized recommendation systems on individuals under age 17, and limit the use of social media in schools, S. 281, to require sellers of event tickets to disclose comprehensive information to consumers about ticket prices and related fees, to prohibit speculative ticketing, S. 283, to require the Under Secretary of Commerce for Standards and Technology and the Administrator of National Oce-

anic and Atmospheric Administration to develop a standard methodology for identifying the country of origin of seafood to support enforcement against illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, S. 306, to establish and maintain a coordinated program within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration that improves wildfire, fire weather, fire risk, and wildfire smoke related forecasting, detection, modeling, observations, and service delivery, S. 314, to prohibit unfair and deceptive advertising of prices for hotel rooms and other places of short-term lodging, S. 315, to require the Secretary of Transportation to issue a rule requiring access to AM broadcast stations in passenger motor vehicles, and the nomination of Howard Lutnick, of New York, to be Secretary of Commerce.

SR-253

Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship

Business meeting to consider S. 68, to prohibit the suspension of collections on loans made to small businesses related to COVID-19, S. 273, to allow non-profit child care providers to participate in certain loan programs of the Small Business Administration, S. 298, to require the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to relocate 30 percent of the employees assigned to headquarters to duty stations outside the Washington metropolitan area, S. 300, to improve accountability in the disaster loan program of the Small Business Administration, an original resolution authorizing expenditures by the committee during the 119th Congress, committee rules, and the nomination of Kelly Loeffler, of Georgia, to be Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

SR-428A

10:30 a.m.

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

To hold hearings to examine farmer and rancher views on the agricultural economy.

SD-106

2:30 p.m.

Select Committee on Intelligence

To receive a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters.

SH-219

• This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

Daily Digest

HIGHLIGHTS

Senate confirmed the nomination of Lee Zeldin, of New York, to be Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S449–S499

Measures Introduced: Thirty-eight bills and four resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 288–325, and S. Res. 43–46.

Pages S479–81

Measures Passed:

National Catholic Schools Week: Senate agreed to S. Res. 45, supporting the contributions of Catholic schools in the United States and celebrating the 51st annual National Catholic Schools Week.

Pages S487–88

National Stalking Awareness Month: Senate agreed to S. Res. 46, raising awareness and encouraging the prevention of stalking by designating January 2025 as “National Stalking Awareness Month”.

Page S488

Burgum Nomination—Agreement: Senate resumed consideration of the nomination of Douglas Burgum, of North Dakota, to be Secretary of the Interior.

Pages S461–65

During consideration of this nomination today, Senate also took the following action:

By 78 yeas to 20 nays (Vote No. EX. 25), Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on the nomination.

Page S461

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the nomination, post-cloture, at approximately 12 noon, on Thursday, January 30, 2025, and that all time during morning business, recess, adjournment, and Leader remarks count post-cloture.

Page S488

Nomination Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nomination:

By 56 yeas to 42 nays (Vote No. EX. 24), Lee Zeldin, of New York, to be Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Pages S449–61, S499

During consideration of this nomination today, Senate also took the following action:

By 56 yeas to 42 nays (Vote No. EX. 23), Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on the nomination.

Page S455

Executive Communications:

Page S479

Executive Reports of Committees:

Page S479

Additional Cosponsors:

Page S481

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions:

Pages S481–87

Additional Statements:

Pages S478–79

Authorities for Committees to Meet:

Page S487

Privileges of the Floor:

Page S487

Record Votes: Three record votes were taken today. (Total—25)

Page S455, S461

Adjournment: Senate convened at 12 noon and adjourned at 11:02 p.m., until 12 noon on Thursday, January 30, 2025. (For Senate’s program, see the remarks of the Acting Majority Leader in today’s Record on page S499.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Appropriations: Committee announced the following subcommittee assignments for the 119th Congress:

Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies: Senators Hoeven (Chair), McConnell, Collins, Moran, Hyde-Smith, Fischer, Mullin, Rounds, Shaheen, Merkley, Baldwin, Heinrich, Peters, Gillibrand, and Ossoff.

Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies: Senators Moran (Chair), Murkowski, Collins,

Graham, Capito, Kennedy, Hagerty, Britt, Fischer, Van Hollen, Reed, Shaheen, Coons, Schatz, Merkley, Peters, and Gillibrand.

Subcommittee on Department of Defense: Senators McConnell (Chair), Collins, Murkowski, Graham, Moran, Hoeven, Boozman, Capito, Kennedy, Coons, Durbin, Murray, Reed, Schatz, Baldwin, Shaheen, and Murphy.

Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development: Senators Kennedy (Chair), McConnell, Murkowski, Graham, Hoeven, Hyde-Smith, Hagerty, Britt, Rounds, Murray, Durbin, Merkley, Coons, Baldwin, Heinrich, Peters, and Ossoff.

Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government: Senators Hagerty (Chair), Boozman, Collins, Mullin, Fischer, Reed, Durbin, Coons, and Van Hollen.

Subcommittee on Department of Homeland Security: Senators Britt (Chair), Murkowski, Capito, Kennedy, Hyde-Smith, Hagerty, Murphy, Murray, Shaheen, Peters, and Van Hollen.

Subcommittee on Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies: Senators Murkowski (Chair), McConnell, Capito, Hoeven, Fischer, Mullin, Rounds, Merkley, Van Hollen, Heinrich, Baldwin, Gillibrand, and Ossoff.

Subcommittee on Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies: Senators Capito (Chair), Graham, Moran, Kennedy, Hyde-Smith, Boozman, Britt, Mullin, Rounds, Baldwin, Murray, Durbin, Reed, Shaheen, Merkley, Schatz, and Murphy.

Subcommittee on Legislative Branch: Senators Mullin (Chair), Fischer, Rounds, Heinrich, and Ossoff.

Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies: Senators Boozman (Chair), McConnell, Murkowski, Hoeven, Collins, Hagerty, Fischer, Rounds, Hyde-Smith, Ossoff, Murray, Reed, Schatz, Baldwin, Heinrich, Peters, and Gillibrand.

Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs: Senators Graham (Chair), McConnell, Boozman, Moran, Hagerty, Britt, Mullin, Schatz, Durbin, Shaheen, Coons, Merkley, and Murphy.

Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies: Senators Hyde-Smith (Chair), Collins, Boozman, Capito, Graham, Hoeven, Kennedy, Moran, Britt, Gillibrand, Murray, Durbin, Reed, Coons, Schatz, Murphy, and Van Hollen.

Senators Collins and Murray are ex officio members of each subcommittee.

NOMINATION

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nomination of Howard Lutnick, of New York, to be Secretary of Commerce, after the nominee, who was introduced by Vice President Vance, testified and answered questions in his own behalf.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Environment and Public Works: Committee announced the following subcommittee assignments for the 119th Congress:

Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure: Senators Cramer (Chair), Lummis, Curtis, Graham, Sullivan, Ricketts, Wicker, Boozman, Alsobrooks, Merkley, Markey, Kelly, Padilla, Schiff, and Blunt Rochester.

Subcommittee on Clean Air, Climate, and Nuclear Innovation and Safety: Senators Lummis (Chair), Cramer, Curtis, Graham, Ricketts, Wicker, Boozman, Husted, Kelly, Sanders, Merkley, Markey, Padilla, Schiff, and Blunt Rochester.

Subcommittee on Chemical Safety, Waste Management, Environmental Justice, and Regulatory Oversight: Senators Curtis (Chair), Graham, Sullivan, Wicker, Husted, Merkley, Sanders, Markey, and Blunt Rochester.

Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, and Water: Senators Ricketts (Chair), Cramer, Lummis, Sullivan, Boozman, Husted, Schiff, Sanders, Kelly, Padilla, and Alsobrooks.

Senators Capito and Whitehouse are ex-officio members of each subcommittee.

NOMINATION

Committee on Finance: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nomination of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., of California, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services, after the nominee testified and answered questions in his own behalf.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on the Judiciary: Committee ordered favorably reported the nomination of Pamela Bondi, of Florida, to be Attorney General, Department of Justice.

NOMINATION

Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nomination of Kelly Loeffler, of Georgia, to be Administrator of the Small Business Administration, after the nominee, who was introduced by Senators Scott (SC) and Britt, testified and answered questions in her own behalf.

MAKING WASHINGTON WORK FOR SENIORS

Special Committee on Aging: Committee concluded a hearing to examine making Washington work for seniors, focusing on fighting to end inflation and achieve fiscal sanity, after receiving testimony from

Jeff Ferry, Coalition for a Prosperous America, Alexandria, Virginia; Alex Lawson, Social Security Works, and E.J. Antoni, The Heritage Foundation, both of Washington, D.C.; and Tarren Bragdon, Foundation for Government Accountability, Naples, Florida.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

The House was not in session today. The House will meet in Pro Forma session at 10 a.m. on Friday, January 31, 2025.

Committee Meetings

No hearings were held.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THURSDAY, JANUARY 30, 2025

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Armed Services: to hold hearings to examine the nomination of Daniel Driscoll, of North Carolina, to be Secretary of the Army, Department of Defense, 9:30 a.m., SD-G50.

Committee on the Budget: business meeting to consider the nomination of Russell Vought, of Virginia, to be Director of the Office of Management and Budget, 12 noon, S-216, Capitol.

Committee on Foreign Relations: business meeting to consider the nominations of Elise Stefanik, of New York, to

be the Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, with the rank and status of Ambassador, and the Representative of the United States of America in the Security Council of the United Nations, and to be Representative of the United States of America to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations during her tenure of service as Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, 10:25 a.m., SD-419.

Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine the influence of the People's Republic of China at home and abroad, focusing on recommendations for policy makers, 10:30 a.m., SD-419.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: to hold hearings to examine the nomination of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., of California, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services, 10 a.m., SD-562.

Committee on the Judiciary: to hold hearings to examine the nomination of Kashyap Patel, of Nevada, to be Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice, 9:30 a.m., SH-216.

Select Committee on Intelligence: to hold hearings to examine the nomination of Tulsi Gabbard, of Hawaii, to be Director of National Intelligence; to be immediately followed by a closed hearing in SH-219, 10 a.m., SD-106.

House

No hearings are scheduled.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

12 noon, Thursday, January 30

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

10 a.m., Friday, January 31

Senate Chamber

Program for Thursday: Senate will continue consideration of the nomination of Douglas Burgum, of North Dakota, to be Secretary of the Interior, post-cloture. Senators should expect votes on confirmation of the nomination of Douglas Burgum, and on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Douglas Collins, of Georgia, to be Secretary of Veterans Affairs during Thursday's session.

House Chamber

Program for Friday: House will meet in Pro Forma session at 10 a.m.



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