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No. 33

House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Friday, February 21, 2025, at 3:30 p.m.

Senate

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2025

The Senate met at 10 a.m. 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.

Almighty God, send Your peace into our hearts. Hasten the day when nations will live in friendship, united by their allegiance to You. May the Members of this body seek to build with You a world without dividing walls and partisan strife. Keep our lawmakers faithful in their efforts to unite our Nation and world.

Lord, strengthen them to work together for the common good as You place Your peace that passes all understanding in their hearts. Help them to set country above party and place Your will above all else.

We pray in Your great 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. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

SETTING FORTH THE CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET FOR THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 AND SETTING FORTH THE APPROPRIATE BUDGETARY LEVELS FOR FISCAL YEARS 2026 THROUGH 2034

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. Con. Res. 7, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 7), setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

NOMINATION OF KELLY LOEFFLER

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, the Senate will soon confirm Kelly Loeffler. She will then be the next Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

As a former colleague in the Senate representing Georgia, I know she understands the needs of small business in both rural and urban areas. I am very sympathetic to the needs of small businesses. These small businesses have experienced disruptions from the

pandemic, labor shortages, inflation, and supply chain issues. I meet with many small business owners as I travel throughout Iowa, and I hear about the policy issues that are important to them.

Small businesses are the backbone of our economy. During the past 20 years, small businesses have created 75 percent of the new private nonfarm jobs in the United States. We always hear about excessive taxes and regulations affecting small businesses standing in the way of small businesses making the investments that would drive even more job growth. I have consistently supported legislation and policies to keep small businesses robust and prosperous.

I look forward to working with Senator Loeffler to advance Iowa's small business priorities and improve the policies of the Small Business Administration.

I recently met with her in my office, and one of the items that I stressed was the importance of responding to congressional letters and queries. I didn't do that just because the Small Business nominee was before me. I do this with all the nominees that come to my office because we have this constitutional responsibility of checks and balances, doing proper oversight of the laws and money that we appropriate being handled by the executive branch of government because we all know Congress not only passes laws and appropriates money, but we have to make sure that the President faithfully executes those laws and spends the money appropriately.

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



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Oversight then allows us to hold bureaucrats accountable to the rule of law and, most importantly, keep faith with the taxpayers because if we have transparency in government, we have greater accountability. The public's business must be public.

I fully expect the new Administrator to respond to all congressional inquiries in a timely and responsive manner. I look forward, then, to working soon with Administrator Loeffler to support policies to keep our small businesses strong and to keep them productive.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

BUDGET RECONCILIATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, yesterday, every single Senate Republican signed their name onto Donald Trump's plan to cut taxes for their billionaire buddies. Republicans and pundits all seem to be focused on this dispute between one bill or two bills. Donald Trump keeps changing his mind. One day, he says two bills is OK, and then just this morning he wants one bill.

Trump and Republicans have been all over the lot, and this morning the confusion continues. But frankly, this is all a sideshow. Republicans could do 2 bills, 10 bills, 50 bills, 100 bills. It doesn't make a difference because Donald Trump and House and Senate Republicans are united where it matters most: They want to give their billionaire buddies a tax break and have the American people pay the cost, no matter how many bills.

This is going to be a long, drawn-out fight. The debate we begin this week will spill into next week and the week after and go on possibly further. We will have late nights here on the floor, exposing the Republicans' hypocrisy on healthcare, on national security, on job creation, on inflation, and most of all on where their main focus is, their North Star: tax breaks for their billionaire buddies.

Democrats are glad to have this debate with the Republicans. We are glad to expose the truth here on the Senate floor. No matter how Republicans spin it, their No. 1 goal is tax cuts for their billionaire buddies. They are laying the groundwork to defund Medicaid and raise healthcare costs for tens of millions of working families all so they can help their billionaire buddies with another tax break.

Republicans are preparing to cut nutrition programs that feed hungry kids so they can help their billionaire buddies with another tax break. Repub-

licans are making it harder for Americans to own a home so they can help their billionaire buddies with another tax break.

Republicans are preparing to slash NIH funding and reduce the chances that we get cures for so many illnesses that affect tens of millions. They are slashing NIH funding even as a measles outbreak is breaking out in Texas. All—all—so they can help their billionaire buddies with another tax break.

Republicans are getting ready to kill thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of clean jobs in order to put more money in the pocket of Big Oil executives all so they can give their billionaire buddies another tax break.

Of course, Republicans know how unpopular these tax cuts are. I don't hear them getting on the floor and saying we need to cut the taxes on the richest people in America. Oh, no. They will keep trying to divert and change the subject, just like when Donald Trump tries to change the subject by talking about the Gulf of Mexico; we are annexing Canada; we are building hotels in Gaza.

These are all distractions—distractions—to hide Donald Trump, Elon Musk, and the Republicans' real goal: Donald Trump, Elon Musk, and Republicans are trying to give their billionaire buddies a tax break and have you—you—pay the cost.

Republicans can do it in one bill. They can do it in two bills. They can do it in a whole bunch of bills. It doesn't matter. The endgame is the same: tax breaks paid for on the backs of working and middle-class families.

We will not relent. We are going to continue to expose Republicans for what they are doing in giving tax breaks for billionaires. We are going to do it in reconciliation, in the budget, and throughout the months and years ahead because the American people don't want it.

The Republicans are trying to hide it. We won't let them hide it. It is going to be front and center as we go through these debates.

UKRAINE

Mr. President. In a FOX News interview released last night, President Trump spoke about the war in Ukraine, and some of his comments sounded straight from a Russian propaganda playbook. Rather than speak the truth, rather than acknowledge Vladimir Putin's role in starting this war, President Trump amazingly blamed Ukraine for Putin's invasion.

To quote the President: "You should never have started it," he said. He was saying that to President Zelenskyy. This is disgusting—disgusting—after how this man has fought so hard and so valiantly, and it deliberately distorts the truth.

It is just awful to see an American President—it is disgusting to see an American President turn against one of our friends and openly side with a thug like Vladimir Putin. It is shameful to hear the President repeat Putin's prop-

aganda while laying the groundwork for negotiations that favor Russia at Ukraine's expense. The people of Ukraine did not start this war. Vladimir Putin did.

Ukrainians have fought and died on the battlefield to defend their home. The suffering and destruction of the Ukrainian country and the Ukrainian people that they have endured is staggering all because of Vladimir Putin.

Let's not forget, America—maybe there are some who say enough already—if we give in to Putin now, America will inevitably pay the price later. That is what history has shown. When you give in to thugs, when you give in to dictators, you pay the price. Hasn't Donald Trump and his allies learned the lessons of history?

This is not just about the security of another nation. This struggle is, in every way, about the ultimate security of the American people. Make no mistake, right now the Kremlin is overjoyed by what Donald Trump is saying and what he is doing. Every single Republican must be put on record for President Trump's dangerous and false statements about the war in Ukraine.

We have an obligation in the Senate to take a stand for the truth and take a stand against autocrats, and we will do it shortly. The American people deserve to know, Will Republicans take a stand for democracy and freedom around the world or will they cater to Putin and Russia like Trump is doing with ultimately bad consequences for all of us?

FAA

Mr. President, the more Donald Trump and DOGE indiscriminately hack away at public Agencies, the greater harm to Americans' well-being and even their safety. The FAA is a good example.

Just weeks after the deadliest plane crash in a long time and just as we see more incidents around the country, President Trump has fired hundreds of FAA workers, including air safety personnel. Firing people whose very job it is to keep air travel safe is nothing short of reckless.

Now, the White House accused us of linking the crash of the Minneapolis flight directly with FAA cuts and staffing. Nothing could be further from the truth. I simply said that when there are fewer FAA personnel, the skies are less safe.

Does Donald Trump deny that there are fewer FAA staffers? Does Donald Trump deny that when he fires FAA workers, including workers who focus on safety, it makes travel less safe? Of course, Donald Trump is obfuscating once again. He doesn't want the truth to come out, but he should correct course immediately and halt these firings because the safety of the skies is at risk.

Now, of course, we know that President Trump ignores the truth, but we need to speak the truth when people's safety is at stake. Here are the facts: Something went terribly wrong on the

flight that took off from Minneapolis. That is clear. An investigation is underway, and as I said yesterday, I await their results.

Similarly, something went terribly wrong a few weeks ago on the flight from Kansas to Washington, DC, that claimed 67 people's lives. Here are more facts: Donald Trump and Elon Musk have fired hundreds of FAA staffers, including safety specialists—the very people who keep our skies safe—all so Republicans can help their billionaire buddies with another tax break.

Why—why—at a time when incidents in the air and on the runways and in our airports seem to be increasing, why would we cut the very people meant to prevent them? Simple: Donald Trump and DOGE are doing it like they are doing so much else so they can help their billionaire buddies with another tax break.

I hope the results of these ongoing investigations into recent incidents will produce findings that Congress can implement to save lives and make the skies safer. In the meantime, we must prioritize Americans' safety and not cut vital FAA jobs.

These are the facts, plain and simple. Donald Trump may not like the facts. Donald Trump may not like the truth, but turning away from the facts will only hurt the American people and put lives in danger. That is a fact.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The majority leader is recognized.

NOMINATION OF KELLY LOEFFLER

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, later today, the Senate will vote to confirm former Senator Kelly Loeffler to lead the Small Business Administration.

Small business is in Kelly Loeffler's blood. She grew up on her family's fourth-generation farm in Illinois. In addition to the farm, her dad ran a small trucking company. And, as a young woman, Kelly Loeffler worked in the soybean fields and waited tables at small restaurants in the heartland. And she was the first person in her family to graduate from college, before embarking on a successful career in business herself. As Senator Loeffler put it, she has spent her life "working in small businesses, starting them, growing them, and helping them succeed."

Helping small businesses succeed, that is the work of the Small Business Administration. As a former staffer at the SBA under President Reagan, I know how important it is that this Agency be an effective partner and champion of small business, and I know that is how Kelly Loeffler will run the SBA.

Most of us know Kelly from her time serving here in the U.S. Senate. She may have only served for 1 year, but it was a critical year for small business policy.

Of course, in 2020, the mission was helping small businesses survive. Senator Loeffler worked to help Georgia's small businesses keep their doors open and their employees on the payroll. She sought to ensure critical support was getting to small businesses in her State and around the country. And she was a leader in SBA oversight, especially in ensuring that relief meant for small businesses wasn't going to abortion providers in violation of Federal law.

It has been a challenging few years for small businesses. First, there was the pandemic; then, inflation, workforce challenges, burdensome regulations. Natural disasters have struck many parts of the country, and small businesses suffered as SBA allowed its disaster loan account to run dry.

America's entrepreneurs are one of America's greatest assets, and they have a big role to play in our future prosperity. Senator Loeffler will be their champion. She will focus the SBA to be a more effective partner to small businesses, help entrepreneurs make their dreams reality, and help our entire economy grow by helping to grow Main Street. She plans to modernize the SBA and make it more responsive to the needs of the Americans it is supposed to serve, and she has pledged to bring accountability and transparency where it is sorely needed.

Kelly Loeffler knows there is nothing small about small business. Every decision an entrepreneur makes is a big decision. It is their livelihood, their dreams, and their future that are on the line.

Kelly Loeffler understands this, and I look forward to working with her to support small businesses and to strengthen our economy.

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

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

SECOND AMENDMENT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, 2 weeks ago, President Trump issued an Executive order titled "Protecting Second Amendment Rights." This Executive order reaffirmed constitutional rights of law-abiding citizens to keep and bear arms, which, of course, is part of the Bill of Rights—the most precious of those rights and liberties that have been protected since the beginning of our country.

This Executive order directs Attorney General Pam Bondi to review and develop a plan to rescind President

Biden's overreach when it comes to firearm regulation.

The President's Executive order comes on the heels of 4 years of President Biden's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives—otherwise known as ATF—from trampling on Americans' Second Amendment rights. It started in 2021 with the Biden administration's so-called zero-tolerance policy. President Biden's ATF used this policy to revoke the licenses of firearms licensees, or FFLs, over minor bookkeeping violations.

For decades, the ATF had a history of working with the FFLs to address minor, unintentional violations and actually help correct them. Historically, they would only revoke an FFL license in more extreme situations where the FFL had engaged in major, willful violations of the law and where these violations presented a threat to public safety.

But the Biden administration violated decades of precedent by directing the ATF to engage in a zero-tolerance policy by simply pulling the plug on any licensee who made an honest mistake on their paperwork.

Any of us who pay taxes, which would be most of us, know how tedious Federal processes can be. I can't imagine anyone who would want to be investigated for tax fraud for making a simple mistake on their tax forms if it could simply be cured or rectified. But this is essentially what the Biden administration did with their zero-tolerance policy at the ATF.

The truth is, it was just a start. In April of 2022, the Biden administration decided to target law-abiding citizens who exercised their Second Amendment rights to build their own firearms with the so-called ghost gun rule. What the Biden administration failed to recognize and failed to distinguish between were criminals or people who were suffering from mental illness and the rest of the law-abiding gun owners in America.

As the National Rifle Association pointed out, the policy of allowing private individuals to make their own guns as a hobby is a longstanding tradition that goes back to the colonial era.

Again, a gun in the hands of a law-abiding citizen is no threat to public safety, but the Biden administration didn't care, paying no heed to our country's longstanding history and traditions and instead preferring to please the gun control activists by issuing regulations to end this practice—again, even for law-abiding citizens.

The ghost gun rule is currently being challenged in the courts, but the Trump administration doesn't have to wait for the Supreme Court to weigh in before rescinding this illegal and unconstitutional regulation.

The Biden administration's rogue ATF continued down this path in January of 2023 when they finalized the so-called pistol brace rule. This action reclassified pistols with a stabilizing

brace as “short-barreled rifles,” something it is not. As a consequence, pistols would be subject to much more stringent regulations and penalties simply for being used with a stabilizing brace. This happened after the ATF had already previously determined that a stabilizing brace would not render a pistol a short-barreled rifle. So there is, obviously, inconsistency in the way they have approached this issue.

All this reckless back-and-forth from the Federal Government causes needless uncertainty and confusion for law-abiding citizen gun owners, who want to follow the law but are not quite sure what the law is since they are being whipsawed back and forth. As a consequence of this reclassification, millions of law-abiding gun owners were no longer able to purchase a stabilizing brace, including people like disabled combat veterans who cannot shoot heavy pistols without a stabilizing brace.

Overnight, law-abiding Americans who had lawfully purchased a stabilizing brace for their pistols became felons. This regulation is also being challenged in court, and multiple courts have found it to be what it is: arbitrary and capricious. I hope that, under the leadership of President Trump and Attorney General Pam Bondi, the ATF will act swiftly to end this disastrous and illegal regulation.

As if this weren't enough, in April of 2024, the Biden administration's ATF finalized a rule known as the “Engaged in the Business” rule. This was an attempt to rewrite a statute that was passed by the Congress and signed into law by the President of the United States; but this was an attempt to go further than what Congress and the White House had agreed upon in that statute. It was an attempt to impose a nearly universal background check on law-abiding citizens and was a direct affront to their constitutional rights. There are already background checks required by current law for anybody who purchases a firearm, but this was an attempt to go even further.

Once again, this rule presents a golden opportunity for President Trump and the Attorney General to reverse the tide of the Biden administration's unconstitutional attacks on the rights of law-abiding citizens under the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

I have long been a defender of Second Amendment rights for the 31 million people I have the honor of representing in Texas and for law-abiding citizens generally around the country. The Second Amendment is as much a part of our Constitution as the right of free speech or the freedom of the press. That is why it is included in the first 10 amendments, known as the Bill of Rights, to the Constitution.

This is why I introduced the Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act, which would allow people with concealed carry privileges to exercise those privileges in other States that allow con-

cealed carry. It doesn't change the law of the individual States. It just prevents a “gotcha” from occurring when a gun owner inadvertently crosses into another jurisdiction that doesn't have the same laws as their home jurisdiction. It would literally treat State concealed carry permits the same way we treat State-issued driver's licenses. If you have a driver's license from Montana or Texas or South Carolina and you drive to New York, you can't be arrested for the failure to have an appropriate license. Our Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act would act as a driver's license, in effect, for gun owners. If someone has a driver's license, as I said, from Texas, for example, it would allow that person to drive to another State as long as they follow that State's speed and road laws. It is the same way with this legislation.

In addition to introducing this legislation, I will very soon send a letter to the Deputy Director of the ATF, encouraging him to work with President Trump on rescinding many of these regulations in order to reverse the Biden administration's reckless attacks on the Second Amendment.

So while the last 4 years have been a lot of headache for law-abiding citizens who simply want to exercise their constitutional rights, I have no doubt that President Trump and Attorney General Pam Bondi will right this ship. I look forward to working with both of them to reform and redirect the energies of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives to safeguard, rather than to attack, the Second Amendment rights of American citizens.

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

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

CABINET NOMINATIONS

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, the world is seeing that President Trump's Cabinet picks are strong and that Republicans are confirming them and doing it very quickly. By the end of today, we will have confirmed 18 of President Trump's nominees. They are bold, and they are well-qualified. Now, this is more nominees than President Obama had confirmed by this time in 2009, and it is more than President Biden did in 2021—more than twice as many as Joe Biden did.

Americans voted for a bold, new direction. They wanted to see that here in Washington and across the country, and Senate Republicans are delivering.

Yesterday, the Senate confirmed Howard Lutnick to be the Secretary of Commerce. He is going to kick-start the golden age of American manufacturing.

We are also on track to confirm Kelly Loeffler today to be the Administrator

of the Small Business Administration. She is a former colleague of ours in the Senate, and she is a voice for Main Street America.

The Senate will soon vote, as well, to confirm Kash Patel. He is the nominee to be the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The United States is seeing increasing threats from terrorism. The previous FBI Director told the Senate a year ago “I see blinking lights everywhere.” On New Year's Day, 14 Americans were killed in a terrorist attack in New Orleans. That is why the Senate must act quickly to confirm Mr. Patel. We need to continue to act with speed and urgency.

Once confirmed, Mr. Patel will begin working to restore trust in one of America's premier law enforcement Agencies. Regrettably, today, only two in five Americans say they hold a favorable view of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. That needs to change. Kash Patel will reform and refocus the FBI to get it focused on its core mission, and that core mission is to fight crime. He is going to reshape the Bureau so it no longer is a tool for political attacks. He will rededicate the Bureau to keeping Americans safe.

He is a uniquely qualified nominee. He began his career as a public defender in Florida. He defended the constitutional rights of some of the most dangerous people in the country. He later joined the Obama Department of Justice as a counterterrorism prosecutor. He investigated and prosecuted cases that protected our Nation from very serious threats. He received several awards for excellence for bringing terrorists to justice. He saw the power of the FBI to keep Americans safe, and he also saw how the power of the FBI could be abused.

In Congress, Mr. Patel led the investigation that exposed that the FBI was spying unlawfully on President Trump's 2016 campaign. Special Counsel John Durham's investigation later backed up Mr. Patel's side of the story. Durham found “the FBI failed to uphold their mission of strict fidelity to the law.”

This abuse of power was a breach of Americans' trust in the FBI. Kash Patel is going to restore trust by returning the FBI to its core mission of investigating and fighting crime. At his confirmation hearing, he said he is going to work to cut in half the number of rapes, drug overdoses, and homicides in the country today. This is something that every law-abiding citizen in this country should welcome.

For Democrats, however, this seems to be unacceptable. They claim he wants to weaponize government. That is blatantly false. It was the Democrats who turned the FBI into a political attack dog against their political opponents. The FBI pressured social media companies to censor the Hunter Biden laptop story. It partnered with Joe Biden's Department of Justice in the targeting of concerned parents who

protested woke school board meetings. It targeted Catholics as domestic terrorists and spied on them at church. It put politics and personal gain over service to the country.

Mr. Patel will end the weaponization and restore transparency. He believes crime is bad, that two tiers of justice are unacceptable, and that equal justice under the law is good. To Democrats, that is taboo. To the rest of the country, that is common sense.

Americans want the FBI to fight crime. Kash Patel is the man to do it. If you want to defend our constitutional rights, confirm Kash Patel. If you want justice and accountability, confirm Kash Patel. If you want to keep our communities safe, we need to confirm Kash Patel. He is a man of integrity and fidelity to the rule of law. I look forward to voting to confirm him.

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.

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

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

NOMINATION OF KELLY LOEFFLER

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, in just a few minutes, we will be asked to decide whether the Honorable Kelly Loeffler should be confirmed as Administrator of the Small Business Administration. As chair of the Small Business Committee, I would like to strongly urge all of my colleagues to vote yes and support her nomination.

As a successful business leader, Kelly Loeffler is the perfect person to increase transparency and accountability at the SBA and prioritize the needs of small businesses.

Throughout the committee's rigorous nomination process, Senator Loeffler has been thoroughly cooperative and impressive. She passed out of the committee with a bipartisan vote of 12 to 7.

Over the course of her career, Senator Loeffler has shown how hard work, grit, and midwestern common sense can take you from Illinois soybean fields to CEO of your own company and, now, to lead a government Agency. I am confident that Senator Loeffler will ensure SBA once again works for all small businesses and ushers in a golden age for America's small businesses.

Senator Loeffler is the right person to lead the Small Business Administration. She understands the burdens facing small businesses and recognizes how Washington can often serve as a barrier and a hindrance to their success. I have no doubt that she will fight to make sure Main Street is heard.

Again, I urge all of my colleagues to support her nomination and confirm Senator Loeffler as Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RICKETTS). The Senator from Iowa.

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the previously rescheduled vote begin immediately.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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

The bill clerk read the nomination of Kelly Loeffler, of Georgia, to be Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

VOTE ON LOEFFLER NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Loeffler nomination?

Ms. ERNST. 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 bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) and the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN).

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 59 Ex.]

YEAS—52

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

NAYS—46

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

NOT VOTING—2

Moran	Sullivan
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The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to re-

consider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:47 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. BANKS).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

NOMINATION OF KASHYAP PATEL

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, soon, we will be voting on the nomination of Kash Patel to serve as Director of the FBI. I have spoken with my colleagues on this nomination within the last couple of days, but I want to spend a few more minutes urging my colleagues to vote for Mr. Patel's confirmation.

Mr. Patel's career shows that he is a man who will fight to defend the Constitution and fight to expose corruption. This is exactly the kind of experience the FBI Director needs.

For almost a decade now, Mr. Patel served as a public defender, defending the constitutional rights of some of the least popular people in America. After serving as public defender, Mr. Patel joined the Department of Justice under Democrat President Obama as a counterterrorism prosecutor in the National Security Division.

In this role, he investigated and he prosecuted many important cases, including the World Cup bombing in Uganda in 2010 for which he received the Award of Excellence.

In 2017, Representative Devin Nunes asked Mr. Patel to join the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence to uncover the truth about Russiagate, and Mr. Patel did uncover the truth. Through tireless work, in regard to that investigation, Mr. Patel showed that Crossfire Hurricane was based on fraudulent, even discredited information, actually paid for by the Democratic National Committee and the Clinton campaign.

After exposing the Russiagate scandal in Congress, Mr. Patel then went on to serve in senior national security positions in the National Security Council, then as a Deputy Director of National Intelligence and as Chief of Staff to the Acting Secretary of Defense.

Mr. Patel managed large intelligence and defense bureaucracies, identified and countered national security threats, and prosecuted and defended the accused.

He has done this while fighting for transparency and accountability in government. We all know that if things are transparent, the people connected with them are going to be more accountable, and we also know that the

public's business in this great democracy of ours ought to be public.

Mr. Patel's experience and Mr. Patel's vision is why he has been endorsed by organizations representing more than 680,000 law enforcement officers and by dozens of former and current FBI agents, State attorneys general, and U.S. attorneys.

These people understand law enforcement. These people understand the rule of law, and these people who have endorsed Mr. Patel trust that he will do the right thing, and we should as well today by voting for Mr. Patel.

I want to speak now to those who have viciously opposed Mr. Patel's nomination. At the heart of their opposition is the fear that he will act like Democrats did when Democrats were in power. So these Democrats are afraid that the FBI, under Mr. Patel's leadership, will use lawfare against political opponents like the FBI used lawfare against President Trump and others.

These Democrats are afraid he will use subpoena power and coordinate with the media to target those seeking accountability just like Democrats did against Mr. Patel and, also, against my own investigative staff.

These Democrats are afraid that he will deploy the FBI to conduct investigations and engage in surveillance against those who disagree like they did with Catholic families and parents expressing concern at school board meetings.

These Democrats are afraid that he will retaliate against whistleblowers like the Biden administration did against FBI and IRS agents who blew the whistle.

After reviewing Mr. Patel's record and listening to his testimony at his hearing, I am convinced that these fears that the Democrats have are unfounded. Mr. Patel's leadership will not be business as usual in the FBI as it has been in previous administrations when the FBI, the people on the 7th floor—not the local agents—were used for political weaponization.

Mr. Patel told us at our hearing he wants to reduce FBI involvement in politics and domestic surveillance. Mr. Patel wants to end political investigations and strengthen protections for whistleblowers. Mr. Patel wants to make the FBI accountable once again, get back the reputation that the FBI has had historically for law enforcement, and he wants to hold the FBI accountable to Congress, to the President, and most importantly, to the people they serve, the American taxpayer.

My Democratic colleagues often lament that Mr. Patel won't protect the independence of the FBI, but there is a fine line between independent judgment and being unaccountable. The FBI has been unaccountable all too long.

My Democratic colleagues decry the recent firing of FBI agents and somehow want to blame Mr. Patel for those personal decisions. That isn't fair, ob-

viously, because he is not running the FBI. As my oversight has shown, many of those fired agents were behind the retaliation against multiple FBI whistleblowers. They ruined lives and careers for their own political hands. They should be held accountable, and, yes, they should have been and have been fired.

The FBI has also kept too many secrets. It has hid from the duly elected Members of Congress the origins of the lawfare against President Trump, which we all know and which I have shown in my exposure of a lot of emails, was in large part from the anti-Trump agent, Timothy Thibault.

Now based on testimony from soon-to-be Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche, we know that the Biden DOJ and FBI violated process by not sharing evidence with Trump's defense team that could have helped Trump's case against the government.

If that happened—now, just think, if that happened on the Democrat side, you wouldn't hear the end of it. Yet, you can't hear a peep today from my Democratic colleagues. The government hid its investigations into those who dared to question the Democratic Party line.

But then, when it is convenient for political reasons, the FBI would leak or coordinate with the media to hide the truth and to smear people.

We need to restore transparency; we need to restore oversight; we need to restore accountability at the FBI, particularly on that top floor of the Hoover Building. Mr. Patel is exactly the man that can do that, and it is why those who benefit from the status quo have come so forcefully against him with a relentless smear campaign.

Mr. Patel is a reformer, and we need a reformer in the FBI. We need to restore the public trust, and we need to return the FBI to its core mission, which is to keep people on our streets safe.

The bottom line: It is the people doing the everyday work at the FBI, enforcing the law, solving crimes that the people on the 7th floor of the Hoover Building should be doing, instead of thinking about how we can get at our political enemies.

I will be voting to confirm Mr. Patel. I will urge my colleagues to do the same thing.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, as I hear the senior Senator from Iowa, it is like I am living in another world. I am not alleging that Mr. Patel has an enemies list. He is the one that has said that. I am not alleging that he would use law enforcement against Donald Trump's political enemies, he is the one that has said that.

And so I will be voting no, and I hope I am wrong.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. President, the price of just about everything is going up right now. Any-

one that has been to the grocery store in the past few weeks knows how hard it is to find a dozen eggs. Since the President was inaugurated, the price of eggs has gone up by 15 percent, which is the single biggest monthly increase in 10 years.

The price of coffee is up 25 percent since the start of the year, and everything from gas to housing to car insurance is getting more expensive.

But I don't want people to worry because Republicans are on it. Donald Trump knows that the main thing people elected him to do is lower prices, and, rest assured, he is working day and night to fix it. Everybody knows that the best way to lower costs for individual Americans is to cut taxes for billionaires. Everybody knows that. If eggs are 8 bucks where you are living, obviously, cut taxes for billionaires. If coffee is increasingly expensive, cut taxes for billionaires.

That is the very first thing that Republicans in the new Congress have decided to do is cut taxes for the richest people to ever exist, and they are going to do it by making regular people pay.

Now, that might sound like a partisan accusation, and, of course, on some level, it is. But if you are sitting at home listening to the chatter about one big, beautiful bill or two bills, and you are wondering what it all means, here is what they are doing. They want to cut taxes for billionaires to the tune of about \$4.5 trillion—\$4.5 trillion.

And because they already blew up the Federal deficit in 2017 and because there are some House Republicans and maybe some Senate Republicans who won't vote for a package that increases the deficit, they actually need to find some savings elsewhere.

It is very hard to find \$4.5 trillion worth of savings. So what are they doing? They are having to cut programs and services that help people on a daily basis, hundreds of billions of dollars in Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, the Affordable Care Act subsidies, and food assistance.

They are slashing funding for cancer research and disaster recovery and schools and national parks and VA clinics. They are laying off thousands of employees at Federal Agencies, one-third of whom are veterans.

And to be clear, this is not for the holy grail of efficiency. Food is rotting at the dock. Medicine is rotting. The National Park Service is already backed up. Normally, it takes 1 minute to get into a national park. In a lot of places—it is cold outside—it is taking 90 minutes to get into national parks. That is not efficiency.

They are laying off probationary people, but let's be clear what "probationary" means. It does mean new hires. It also means anybody who is getting a promotion. Someone who has performed well, the U.S. Government says: You are so good, we want you to do something even more important. So then you get put into this probationary category, and then you get laid off.

Why? Why? Because they need to find \$4.5 trillion worth of savings. That is what is going on.

As we speak, there are multiple outbreaks of diseases and illnesses within the United States. We are in the middle of the worst flu season in a decade, 13,000 Americans dead. Norovirus cases have skyrocketed by 340 percent this winter, and there have been 68 cases of the bird flu nationwide, not to mention that if you can find eggs at all, they are sometimes \$8 or \$10 for a dozen.

In Texas, 58 people—mostly children—have gotten measles, and that is to say nothing of Ebola and Marburg virus in eastern Africa. But don't worry. Trump is on it. And by "on it," I mean he is laying off the very people who are responding to these crises.

We learned yesterday that after DOGE fired officials at the Department of Agriculture who were working on containing the bird flu, they had to quickly backtrack to try to rehire them. Sometimes, they don't have these people's email addresses. Sorry, would you please come back? I don't know how to find you.

This is not efficiency. This is an arson job so they can generate savings so they can shovel \$4.5 trillion to the people on that stage at inauguration. That is what this is.

We are less than 2 months into the year, and we have already had four major deadly aviation disasters, including one right here in Washington over the Potomac. And Trump is firing hundreds of FAA employees, people who have jobs like maintenance mechanics, information specialists, safety assistants.

They actually asked a bunch of air traffic controllers to quit. We are short air traffic controllers. We have been short air traffic controllers for 6 or 7 years. As a matter of fact, when I was the chairman of the relevant committee, we worked on a bipartisan basis to put a lot of money behind hiring more air traffic controllers.

Now, you can be a conservative and think the government should be smaller or you can be a liberal and think the government should be bigger. I assume nobody thinks we should lay off air traffic controllers.

And if we are going to do that, it should be because something else even more urgent than air traffic control is at stake. But let's understand what is at stake. What is at stake is \$4.5 trillion in tax cuts for the wealthiest people to ever walk this planet.

We are less than a month away from the March 14 funding deadline to keep the government open, and we don't even have topline numbers yet, let alone full committee bills. We are nowhere near a defense bill. But the only thing that Republicans are focused on right now, immediately, urgently, is cutting taxes for billionaires.

People are dying because of the flu and the bird flu? Let's cut taxes for billionaires. Airplanes are falling out of the sky? Let's cut taxes for billionaires.

People are losing their homes in wildfires in Los Angeles and floods in Kentucky? Let's cut taxes for billionaires. Families can't afford their healthcare or housing no matter how hard they work? Let's cut taxes for billionaires.

Kids are falling behind in school, with a third of eighth graders lacking basic reading skills? Let's cut taxes for billionaires. Trump is illegally cutting funding for pediatric cancer research and disease prevention? Let's cut taxes for billionaires.

Thousands of National Park Service workers fired? I know what we should do. Why don't we shovel a bunch of money to a bunch of billionaires?

Millions of people—millions of people—are on the verge of starvation, disease, and death because Trump suddenly and illegally suspended one of our primary arms of foreign policy: USAID. What is their solution? Not to exert any pressure on the State Department or the OMB or the President himself, let's cut taxes for billionaires. Anything and everything comes down to this. Why? Because it is the main thing they think about.

There are so many smart people on the other side of the aisle, so many people who have accomplished so much in their careers, and they are lighting it on fire for this man. The solution to every problem big or small, domestic or global, complex or simple is to cut taxes for billionaires.

This is their project. This is their reason for being. Whatever else has motivated them to run for office in the first place, this is the first thing they are doing, instead of a bunch of other stuff.

It doesn't have to be like this. You can be a Republican and give them their Cabinet and their judges and Justices, but, my God, stand up for this place. Why would you run for office and then just remove your frontal lobe and do whatever this man thinks?

It doesn't matter how much harm comes to your hospitals or your schools or your roads or the one-third of Federal workers who are veterans, the solution always is to cut taxes for billionaires.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

MR. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, you know, it was just 30 days ago that President Trump took the oath of office just down the hall here in the Rotunda. Thirty days later, he continues to betray the promises that he made to the American people when he was on the campaign trail.

He promised he would focus on reducing prices and costs that the American people have to bear. In fact, costs are going up. He promised to fight for working Americans, the forgotten Americans, but with the help of the richest man in the world Elon Musk, he is actually going about cutting very important public services to the American people in order to make way for

and pay for tax cuts for the wealthiest in this country—people like Elon Musk.

I come to the Senate floor today because we are in the process of setting up the framework in which that is going to happen. Republicans are bringing to the floor—probably tomorrow—a budget resolution that will set in motion that process of providing tax cuts for the very wealthy at the expense of other Americans.

That is a great betrayal by the Trump administration. But before I talk about that great betrayal by Donald Trump, I want to talk about another betrayal that is going on as we speak, and that is his betrayal of the Ukrainian people and everybody who yearns for and fights for freedom and democracy around the world.

What we are witnessing is not "America first"; we are witnessing "America in retreat."

The Ukrainian people, for over 3 years now, have been fighting against the brutal onslaught by Vladimir Putin. They are fighting to protect their sovereignty, their way of life. President Trump is throwing the Ukrainian people under the bus and at the same time betraying people who fight for freedom around the world.

You know, Donald Trump likes to pick on people he perceives as weaker. We all know that he made fun of people with disabilities. He likes to pick on people who have differences. But when it comes to other bullies, he is a weak, weak person. He backs down. And that is what we are witnessing with respect to Vladimir Putin—Donald Trump is backing down.

In fact, he just today blamed the Ukrainians and President Zelenskyy for Putin's attack on the Ukrainian people. In fact, he called Zelenskyy, President Zelenskyy, a dictator, when it is Vladimir Putin that is the dictator and launched the assault on the Ukrainian people.

We should all be ashamed—ashamed, Mr. President. I met with President Zelenskyy at the Munich Conference over the weekend, along with many of my Senate colleagues, a bipartisan delegation. All of us, Republicans and Democrats, said to President Zelenskyy: You have our continued support. The Ukrainian people have our continued support.

But at that same conference, we saw Vice President Vance not even talk about the threat from Putin and our support for the Ukrainian people. In fact, we heard him lecture the people from Europe and others around the world gathered at that conference about their "weak democracy" and say that really what they needed to do was kowtow to the farthest right parties in Germany, neo-fascist parties in Germany, and then, after saying that, he went out and met with them. That is now the U.S. foreign policy in action, and all of us on a bipartisan basis should be standing up and saying that is wrong.

Yet the Secretary of Treasury arrived to extort Zelenskyy, saying: Unless you give us half of your rare mineral reserves to pay for past support, you don't get any additional support from the American people.

Imagine if during World War II, FDR had said to Churchill and our other allies: Hey, we are no longer going to support you in the fight against fascism, Nazis, and Hitler unless you sign over now half of your natural resources.

This is a shameful moment for the United States. We have stood up for freedom, we have stood up for democracy, we have stood up for the rule of law, and now, President Trump is throwing Ukraine and freedom-loving people around the world under the bus.

So I say to our NATO allies and other allies around the world and partners who believe in the rule of law and believe in democracy: You are going to have to carry this mantle for now.

A lot of people say: Oh, that is just President Trump saying these things. Watch what he does, not what he says.

What an American President says matters, and when President Trump talks about abandoning Ukraine and how President Zelenskyy is the dictator and how Ukraine started the war, not Putin, that is throwing Ukraine and our NATO allies under the bus.

So our European allies, our European NATO friends—they are going to have to step up and clearly carry that mantle, and I really urge my Senate Republican colleagues to do so at this moment.

You know, it was Donald Trump who, in speaking about Americans who lost their lives in combat, said, "They are losers and suckers." That is what the now President of the United States said about Americans who sacrificed their lives for our country. Folks may also recall that is what he said about our former colleague Senator McCain because he was taken prisoner.

So I really hope that those in this Senate, in both parties, will stand up and stand up for the principles the United States has stood up for—not perfectly, far from perfectly, but what we have stood up for since World War II and in that postwar period where we helped construct many of the institutions that helped set the rules of the road in the globe today.

Now, here at home, we are also experiencing a betrayal. You know, I just was earlier today at a rally in front of the Department of Health and Human Services. It was a rally to protect the public health and specifically to help protect medical research that is conducted at the National Institutes of Health and at institutions around our country, colleges and universities and other places where they do the research that leads to treatments and cures that save lives in America.

It is pretty simple: When you start slashing funds for the NIH and its programs and when you start slashing the research team at NIH, it means more

Americans will die prematurely of disease; it means more Americans will suffer for lack of treatments. Yet, that is what we saw the Trump administration do recently.

Fortunately, a Federal court has put a stay on those illegal actions, these actions to just unilaterally try to cut important public investments in medical research.

So let's not sugarcoat it. The consequence of doing that is very serious. They do important research in cancer, in Alzheimer's, heart disease, diabetes, and other diseases, diseases that plague probably every American family, and rare diseases. Firing NIH employees and canceling important grants and reducing support for medical research will mean more Americans will die early.

So what is going on? Well, it is the great betrayal because the reason we are seeing these efforts to slash important public investments across the board and to cut important positions in Federal Agencies is because they want to make room for a big tax cut for wealthy people.

You can see that the person that Donald Trump, President Trump, has chosen to do his dirty work is Elon Musk, the richest person in the world, who is in the process of conducting illegal raids on various government Agencies. And I say "illegal raids"—I have never seen the courts so busy. I mean, courts are issuing temporary restraining orders because there is a lot of lawbreaking going on. We have to fight this in the courts, and we have to fight it here, and the American people are fighting it around the country.

This is the most corrupt bargain in American history. Elon Musk paid \$280 million—\$280 million—to help elect Donald Trump, and Donald Trump has now turned the keys to the Federal Government over to Elon Musk. And make no mistake, this has nothing—nothing—to do with government efficiency. We all welcome any effort to make the Federal Government more efficient. But this has nothing to do with that, and this has everything to do with helping the Federal Government serve the already powerful at the expense of working Americans and to clear that way—make cuts to pay for tax cuts for the very, very wealthy.

You know, during the Presidential campaign, Candidate Trump talked about reducing prices, lowering costs for American families. When he was asked about Project 2025, he said: I don't know what that is. I don't know who those people are.

But as soon as he was sworn in down the hall here, he went about implementing Project 2025. Now, why, on the campaign trail, would he say he knows nothing about it? He knew it was very unpopular. That, however, is exactly what he is implementing right now. In fact, the person he installed in the White House as the head of Office of Management and Budget was Russ Vought. He is the author of Project 2025.

And just a reminder to our colleagues, OMB is like the command and control center for the entire U.S. Federal budget. So President Trump put the author of Project 2025 in the cockpit for the Federal budget and has Elon Musk running and doing the dirty work at Federal Agencies around the country.

If this were about government efficiency, you wouldn't start out by firing all the inspectors general. The inspectors general job is to be independent watchdogs. Their job is to look out for waste, fraud, and abuse. So if you want to get rid of waste, fraud, and abuse, you don't start by firing the inspectors general. In fact, that is what you would do if you wanted to have people look the other way or not see when people were committing waste, fraud, and abuse.

In fact, that is exactly what is happening now because if you look at what Elon Musk and his cronies are doing, they are going into Federal Agencies and taking and reviewing and have access to the most sensitive personal information of the American people. They did it at the Department of Treasury—Social Security numbers, bank accounts.

The acting head of the Social Security Administration, a career official, just quit because she said it was inappropriate to turn over sensitive Social Security Administration information to Elon Musk and the DOGE boys.

We have seen that in other Agencies, too, where career Federal civil servants whose loyalty is to the country are resigning rather than follow illegal orders. I commend them for not following illegal orders.

If this were about efficiency, why would the Trump administration tell the employees at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to stay home and not work? They continue to get paid, but they don't do their jobs. That is what they have been ordered. Why?

The CFPB is a Bureau that helps protect American consumers against people who are engaged in fraud and con artists and cheats. They have gone after a lot of powerful people, a lot of powerful organizations. And they have returned over \$1 billion to the American people—dollars that hard-working Americans were cheated out of. They went and got them back for them.

Yet here comes Trump in the name of "efficiency," telling people to no longer do their work, even though they are being paid for it. And their work is to go after fraudsters and cheats.

I think we know what is going on here. What is going on here is we have Elon Musk trying to create a government that helps the already powerful and cuts services that benefit every American—like what happened to the Veterans' Administration, the Social Security Administration, and, yes, NIH when it comes to medical research, to help clear the way for tax cuts for very wealthy people. That is what is going on here.

BUDGET RECONCILIATION

Tomorrow, we are going to begin to consider a budget resolution that creates the framework for providing those tax cuts to the very wealthy at the expense of all Americans. I serve on the Senate Budget Committee, and last week, we had a preview of all of this. We considered the budget resolution.

Those of us on the committee had an opportunity to propose amendments that would at least put up guardrails to protect the American people from deep cuts to services that are important to them to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy. And so I offered a number of those amendments. And we will have a chance on this full Senate floor to consider these amendments in the coming days.

One amendment I offered is very straightforward. It says:

It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider any bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, [or] amendment between the Houses . . . that cuts funding to Medicare or Medicaid benefits.

So if there is abuse going on in the Medicare or Medicaid Programs, absolutely go for it. But that is not what we are talking about here.

We said: Don't cut benefits to the American people. We had a vote on this in the Senate Budget Committee, and it was party line. Every Democratic Senator voted to protect Medicare and Medicaid. Every Republican Senator voted against it. I am sure we are going to have a chance to vote on this again on the Senate floor.

I would point out, I think it was this morning or last night, President Trump said that Medicaid would not be cut. He said Medicare would not be cut. I hope since the time my Republican colleagues voted against this in the committee and the vote we will have in the next couple of days, we will have a unanimous consent vote on this bill to protect Medicare and Medicaid because President Trump just said he has absolutely no intention of doing that. Let's see what happens.

I also offered an amendment in the Budget Committee to make sure that Medicare continued to have the authority to negotiate lower drug prices for people on Medicare. We had a fight for decades to allow the Medicare Program to negotiate lower drug prices for the American people. The pharmaceutical companies have fought it tooth and nail, but we got it done a few years ago.

As a result of what we did, this year, Americans on Medicare, seniors on Medicare, will have no more than \$2,000 of out-of-pocket costs for prescription drugs because we finally gave Medicare the authority to negotiate drug prices, just like insurance companies have that power. Medicare is a big insurance entity in one way. Yet they were prohibited by law from negotiating lower drug prices for the Medicare Program and the American people.

But we changed that. We gave them the authority to negotiate those lower

drug prices. And guess what. It saved the Medicare Program money and it saved American seniors money because they now have lower drug prices on a couple of classes of drugs and they are continuing to move forward on that.

I had an amendment in the Budget Committee simply to say it shall not be in order in the Senate to consider any proposal that undermines and undoes and destroys the power of Medicare to negotiate for lower drug prices.

Again, the vote was all Democrats in the Senate Budget Committee voting yes to protect the ability of Medicare to negotiate lower drug prices. Every Republican Senator voted no.

I had a couple of other amendments as well. Another one was an amendment to prohibit cutting. Again, these are cuts that a lot of us don't want to make because they are important to many working families, and we certainly don't want to make these cuts to clear the way for tax cuts for the very wealthy.

So I also proposed an amendment that it not be in order to consider any legislative vehicle that would cut funding from the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program. These are very important programs to make sure that every child in the classroom has the nutrition they need in order to succeed.

It is pretty basic: Let's make sure every kid in the school has the nutritious meal they need simply to sustain themselves and be able to, therefore, pay attention to what the teacher is saying rather than pay attention to an empty stomach.

So I thought, surely, our colleagues would agree that we shouldn't cut that program to make way for tax cuts for the very wealthy, but, unfortunately, the result on the vote was the same. Every Democratic Senator voted to prohibit these cuts, and every Republican Senator voted to green-light these cuts going forward.

I know our colleagues will have a chance to vote on this on the Senate floor in a couple of days because Senator HIRONO and I will be offering that amendment.

Just to close and summarize, it was 30 days ago that just down this hall, President Trump was sworn in. He said he was going to usher in a great golden age for America. Of course, sitting right behind him were the people he was talking about providing a golden age for—Elon Musk, already the richest man in the world, and other billionaire tech titans. And what we have seen in the 30 days since is that great betrayal.

President Trump is not focused on reducing prices or costs for the American people. No, he is focused on implementing the plan that he disavowed on the campaign trail—Project 2025. That is what he is focused on, the plan he knew would be very unpopular. And what that plan does is call for very deep cuts and slashing very important services that matter to the American

people, including Medicaid, in order to make room for tax cuts for the very wealthy.

So this is what the Elon Musk operation is all about, and it is all about the great betrayal. People around the country from all parties are waking up to this—not just Democrats, Republicans, Independents, people who voted against Donald Trump, and also those who voted for him thinking that he was going to deliver on those promises to cut costs—only to wake up and realize for the last 30 days that something very different is happening in America; that he is slashing and illegally slashing all of these important investments for the American people in order to take care of those people who were sitting right behind him on Inauguration Day—Elon Musk and the billionaires.

That is a betrayal.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip.

UKRAINE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it was nearly 3 years ago that the world watched in horror as Russia pursued a bloody, full-scale invasion of the sovereign nation of Ukraine.

I was in Vilnius, Lithuania, with my colleague Senator Chris Coons on that cold, dark morning in the airport when we heard reports first trickle out that the war was, again, starting in Europe.

Three years ago, the Russian invasion of Ukraine was not a partisan issue in the United States. Congressmen, Senators on both sides of the aisle agreed on the basic facts: Russia was waging an unprovoked, illegal war and must be stopped at all costs. And for the past 3 years, we have supported Ukraine with the funding it needed to beat back Russian aggression and defend the frontline of democracy in Europe. And the Ukrainian people have done just that. Forty-six thousand Ukrainian lives have been lost—46,000 defending their Nation against Putin.

We have joined with our NATO allies and many other countries around the world standing by Ukraine, and they have shown an extraordinary courage, a courage for the history books. But it turns out that the new President of the United States, Donald Trump, does not see this the same way as I do and as we have for 3 years.

The fact of the matter is that President Donald Trump is a pushover for Russian President Vladimir Putin. He has always been, and he will always be. Since Trump took office, he has played right into Putin's hands. The outrageous comments he posted today on Truth Social make that painfully clear. In the post, Trump attacked not Putin for the invasion but the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy—blaming him for Russia's invasion which, as I said, has killed more than 46,000 Ukrainians and displaced millions more.

It is disgusting to say that President Trump called Zelenskyy, the President

of Ukraine, a “dictator without elections.” Can you believe it? An American President is selling out a democratic leader who is bravely defending his country from an actual dictator, Putin—a former KGB apparatchik at that. It is insulting to say that—it is shameful—but from this President, it is no surprise. President Trump is doing nothing more than parroting criminal propaganda and spreading lies that Putin whispers into his ear.

I could call on Trump to apologize to the people of Ukraine, who have suffered so much because of this disruption to their nation, but it would be a waste of breath.

Let me be clear to President Trump: You don't make America great by selling out our Nation and our allies to a Russian dictator.

Most of my Republican colleagues know this. I have spoken with them over the years. They have joined me in a bipartisan coalition to be part of the Ukrainian Caucus in the Senate, but it is time now for them to speak up. I know they are politically fearful of Donald Trump and his power. If they say the wrong thing, he, with Elon Musk's money, will come in and take them out in the primary. But there has to be a point where they stand up and say what they really believe and have the courage to do it.

I am reminded of a quote from a fellow Illinoisan, our Nation's 16th President. It was 1865. Our Nation had been torn apart by the bloodshed of the Civil War. Ahead of his inauguration for a second term, President Abraham Lincoln addressed the Nation—right out there.

He said:

Both parties deprecated war; but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive . . . and the other would accept war rather than let it perish. And the war came.

Although President Lincoln was referring to the two factions of the Civil War, I believe it applies here as well. Putin has made war rather than let Ukraine survive, and Ukraine has had no choice but to accept war rather than see itself perish.

President Zelenskyy and the Ukrainian people have led that noble effort with strength, fortitude, and determination. As their ally and fellow democracy, which Putin certainly is not, and as a nation committed to freedom, the United States of America has an obligation to stand by Ukraine, not to appease Putin.

USAID

Mr. President, on a separate topic, this photo says it all. It shows the world's richest man Elon Musk—who has not been elected to anything and has taken the greatest pleasure in senselessly gutting U.S. food aid for some of the world's poorest people—somehow or another giving a tribute. I won't even try to describe it here.

This month, President Trump and Elon Musk attempted to dismantle the USAID—the largest distributor of humanitarian aid on this Earth.

Musk was gleeful when he said:

[We are] feeding USAID to the wood chipper.

USAID provides clean water in Haiti and Jordan; helps fight malaria and tuberculosis in Kenya and Uganda; and supports human rights programs in Burma, China, Iran, North Korea, and Sudan. It provides economic assistance in Central America to help address the root causes of migration and counter the flow of fentanyl into the United States. And it funds humanitarian operations in Syria, including for security at camps to prevent the resurgence of ISIS, as well as campaigns to counter disinformation from Russia and China—all programs critical to our national security.

Not only are these cuts to USAID a betrayal of American values to satisfy the narcissism of Elon Musk, but they hurt innocent people, and they hurt American farmers, while we are at it, who for decades have helped provide such critical and strategic food aid.

You see, despite the lies by Elon Musk and others about U.S. foreign aid, it accounts for about 1 percent of our Federal budget—1 percent—and the fact they conveniently leave out is that billions of these aid dollars actually flow back into the American economy. These programs have broad bipartisan support historically in Congress. They make America stronger, more influential on the global stage. And America, with these programs, is doing the right thing; that is, until President Trump's reckless and illegal freeze on such assistance already appropriated into law by Congress.

Look at this headline: “Gutting U.S. aid threatens billions of dollars for U.S. farms, businesses . . . including American farms dealing in rice, wheat, and soybeans purchased as food aid.” Yes, I come from a farm State, and I am proud of what my agricultural people do. We grow some of the best crops in the world, and God has blessed us with the land and climate to achieve that. They not only feed the world; they feed the poorest people in the world as well.

Not only is this sweeping U.S. aid cut illegal and counterproductive, but it hurts our farmers and people in America—in Illinois, Kansas, Louisiana, Nebraska, Iowa, Texas, Wisconsin, and many other States. American farms supply more than 40 percent of the food aid that USAID distributes around the world, and now, hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of such commodities are stranded in ports, rotting away at the direction of the new administration. Talk about waste.

DOGE, take a look. You are causing it.

Here is what the president of the Illinois Farm Bureau said recently:

It's not just food aid to developing nations, and the exercise of soft power . . . USAID has substantially benefited farmers by funding crop research that has produced useful varieties of corn and soybeans over many decades. Some of that research happens at places like the University of Illinois.

That is what the president of the Farm Bureau said about USAID programs.

But even in instances where American lives and livelihoods are not directly threatened, gutting USAID threatens Americans' safety. USAID-supported programs help stem pandemics, help failed states, and displacements from war—threats that don't respect borders. But because of this President's sweeping directive to pause international aid, bipartisan, congressionally appropriated funds to provide help and lifesaving humanitarian aid in places like Venezuela, Iran, and North Korea have ground to a halt.

Programs like PEPFAR have been a key example of humanitarian successes abroad. It was started under President George W. Bush—as a reminder, a Republican President—who wanted to curtail the AIDS epidemic ravaging many parts of the world, including Africa. PEPFAR and the Global Fund have saved more than 25 million lives so far, but because of President Trump's directive, it has been halted.

Make no mistake, sad as it is to say, people will die as a result of this political decision.

In the last decade, USAID clean water and sanitation programs have provided more than 70 million people with first-time sustainable access to clean drinking water—something we take for granted in America, which really decides a person's fate in the developing world. These programs have a 6-to-1 return in dollars saved in health, economic, and education; but because of President Trump's directive, innocent people across the world will suffer, and America's reputation will be weakened, not made stronger.

American defense officials, for generations, have supported these programs. These have always been bipartisan programs because they are far cheaper than military interventions and are clearly effective—proven so over the years.

Trump's first Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis said that if we don't fund foreign aid, “then I need to buy more bullets.”

When did saving the lives of innocent people, strengthening the American economy in the process, and growing our soft power presence around the world become a political issue? Under President Donald Trump and the “co-President,” Elon Musk.

Lastly, I want to highlight how lies about USAID have been spread online—some amplified by Russia, China, and other adversaries.

For example, there is a false video created by a private company which links to the Kremlin alleged celebrities who were paid by USAID to visit Ukraine. This Russian influence campaign was reposted on Twitter by Elon Musk—no surprise—and became a viral disinformation rallying cry against USAID. But it was false, like so many allegations of supposed outrage by

USAID. Yet this kind of nonsense is used by Mr. Musk to justify gutting entire congressionally appropriated, American soft power programs while many of my Republican colleagues—virtually all of them—sit silently.

Nations like China already sent strategic openings under President Trump's decisions to halt U.S. foreign aid. This Senate—Republicans and Democrats—cannot afford to roll over, play dead, and hand over congressional authority on these bipartisan programs and on larger constitutionally designated congressional appropriations powers.

I know foreign aid is misunderstood by many Americans. They think it is about 20 percent of the Federal budget when asked. As I said, it turns out to be 1 percent. I have seen it in action around the world. Some of the scenes that I have witnessed, I will never forget: a dusty village in India or the children who are given for lunch something that my kids would never have touched and the Presiding Officer's probably wouldn't either. It was like a dough ball that they used for catfish bait in my part of the world.

You look at that ball, and you think: You are going to eat that? Sure, it is full of good grains and nutrients, but it doesn't look very appetizing.

They ate it like it was their last meal, but they didn't eat it quickly. They hesitated and stopped for a moment and bowed their heads in prayer, then lifted up and started eating their lunch.

I asked the person who was running the program: What was the prayer about? They said they were thanking the United States of America for sending this food to them because, otherwise, they would have nothing.

I take great satisfaction in that experience and memory. It says a lot about these programs and what they mean to people around the world, and it said a lot about America. This was one of our priorities, too. The nameless, faceless kids somewhere around the world got something eat to keep them alive because America cared. That defines America and its values, as far as I am concerned.

The notion of "feeding [the] USAID [program] to a wood chipper" may be a big laugh for Elon Musk, but it is a sad commentary on the values of Mr. Musk and this administration. For goodness' sake, let's stand by American values. A lot of people depend on them.

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.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to call atten-

tion to the Trump administration's unconscionable disregard for air safety.

Last month, here in Washington, we saw the deadliest commercial aviation event on U.S. soil in over 23 years, and while this loss of life was horrifying, it was, unfortunately, not unimaginable. In recent years, near misses at airports across the country have increased, and the incident at DCA illustrated just how quickly these dangerous situations can take a turn for the worse. Several times last year, runway incidents were narrowly avoided due, in no small part, to the heroic actions of the certified, professional air traffic controllers who staff our towers. These controllers are hard-working Americans. They often log 6-day weeks and 10-hour days, and that is on a good week.

So even before this week's misguided and frankly stupid—I mean, I have to stay, I think it is a stupid decision to lay off hundreds of FAA workers and air traffic controllers who have been overworked and understaffed.

This is not a new problem; we have known about it for years. For years in Congress, we have been sounding the alarm about the need to invest in our air traffic control workforce. In last year's FAA reauthorization bill, we worked in a bipartisan fashion to address this issue—to support our air traffic control workforce so they can do their vital, often lifesaving jobs effectively.

By partnering with the national air traffic control union and the FAA, we successfully adopted a new staffing model in the reauthorization bill. They have been making good progress, but, of course, we have more work to do.

It is important to acknowledge that any response to the tragedy at Reagan National Airport must include a commitment to reinforce all parts of our aviation safety workforce. Controllers would be the first ones to tell you that they don't work in a vacuum. The equipment they use is maintained by hundreds of dedicated support personnel who go through years of highly specialized training.

Many towers and facilities operate in buildings and on equipment that is 5, 10, even 15 years old. When something goes wrong, they need to know that there is someone on call to fix things because lives literally depend on it.

Americans need to know that the skies are secure and that their safety is a top priority. Sadly, I can't say that the actions we are seeing from this administration does any of that.

Secretary Duffy said he wants to surge air traffic controller hiring, and I agree with him on that. We can and we should hire more air traffic controllers but not at the expense of the rest of the FAA's workforce. We could hire any number of air traffic controllers tomorrow, but without the dedicated support staff that make their work possible, it wouldn't matter.

So how is the administration responding to the American people's distress over increasingly frequent close

calls and indeed crashes—sadly, like the one we saw in Toronto this week? Well, over the weekend, this administration fired nearly 400 FAA employees, some of them in my State of New Hampshire.

We heard an outpouring of concern over the weekend from controllers, pilots, airlines, and passengers who want to know that they are going to be safe when they fly. I am sure the administration must be hearing this, too. But when asked about the impact of the irresponsible and reckless effort, this is what Secretary Duffy had to say:

Zero critical safety personnel were let go.

So I am not sure I understand this. We are telling the American people that if a communications system goes down while the plane is approaching the runway, the person who knows how to get it back up and running isn't critical? That if the power goes out at an en route facility while 747s are flying overhead, the 18 fired maintenance personnel who know how to turn the lights back on won't be necessary? That the staffers who develop innovative safety and flight procedures every time there is an incident to make sure your plane takes off on time and arrives safely are fair game to be fired? Because we just lost 13 of them.

To anyone who is worried about our national security—good news. According to this administration, the FAA employees working on a classified radar system to detect cruise missiles aren't all that important either. They also were fired.

So I am going to say that again because this administration thinks that the civil servants at the FAA's National Airspace System Defense Program are apparently not critical to our safety. None of this makes me or my constituents sleep better at night, but I will bet you it makes our enemies happy.

The administration has tried to defend this by saying that everyone who was fired was probationary. They would like you to believe these are all brandnew employees—sort of the philosophy that the last one in is the first one out. That is not how the system works, and it sure as heck isn't how you keep Americans safe. In fact, employees who were promoted based on stellar performance within the last year—many of them who have been with the FAA for 10 or 15 years—are also labeled as "probationary employees" when they start their new positions. So, in fact, the administration just fired some of the people with the most experience, not the least.

This speaks to what is a bigger problem. Time and again, we are seeing this happen with so-called government efficiency experts. Listen, like most of us in this Chamber, I think we should do everything we can to make government run efficiently and effectively, but indiscriminately freezing hiring across the board and pushing out thousands of civil servants make that problem worse, not better.

Last week, hundreds of employees at the National Nuclear Security Administration were fired without warning. This week, the administration is scrambling to try to hire most of them back because they didn't realize they oversee our nuclear stockpile.

The Department of Energy fired more than 1,000 employees, including three-quarters of the State and Community Energy Programs Office. Now, I don't know if the people who are making these decisions in the administration even know what that office does, but I can tell you that in New Hampshire, we depend on them because they help keep weatherization programs up and running, and they support emergency operations in the wake of disasters.

With folks in New Hampshire dealing with some of the highest home heating costs and worried about how they are going to keep themselves warm this winter and States around the country still recovering from floods and fires and winter storms, I can't imagine why anybody would think that it is a good idea to get rid of the people who are helping make sure those programs operate.

Then on Monday, we found out that dozens of USDA employees—the Department of Agriculture—who have been working to prevent bird flu were fired, and then the White House realized what they had done. They panicked, and they tried to bring them back. Now, that is on top of all of the people around the globe who have been monitoring the bird flu potential epidemic who have already been fired with the closure of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Just this afternoon, we heard that nearly 500 employees at the National Institute of Standards and Technology would be fired, including almost 60 percent of the CHIPS Office. So the effort that we stood up—that this Congress stood up—to try to make sure we could compete with China, with Taiwan in the production of semiconductors, which are included in almost everything we use, from our cell phones to our refrigerators, to our cars—60 percent of those people are now gone. So who is going to provide that effort we need in order to compete with China? These are the staff that make sure our high-tech semiconductor manufacturing industry stays competitive.

Example after example shows that the firings that Elon Musk has taken credit for have not been thought through. Either he is doing it deliberately in an effort to undermine the United States or he is doing it because he is so ignorant, he has no idea what any of these people do or what the operations do. Either way, it is inexcusable.

I heard from a constituent this week who worked for the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department for 24 years, and she just took a job as a wildlife biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service last year. Her job focused on implementing the Pittman-

Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act. As my colleagues on both sides of the aisle know, this involves conserving bird and wildlife habitat, hunter education, and shooting ranges. Its funds come not from taxpayer dollars but from excise taxes on firearms, ammunition, and archery equipment. Yet her job was terminated under the guise of government efficiency.

She has a mortgage. She has kids in college who need healthcare coverage. But her main ask to me was to help put a stop to these firings and to simply help her get her job back because, like most of our public servants, she cares about the mission of her work.

Over and over, we are seeing this administration take out irresponsible, reckless initiatives, with devastating consequences for critical positions, without taking a second to think through or learn about what those positions do. When things inevitably break as a result, they don't own up to their mistakes. Instead, they try to convince you that keeping the lights on at control towers or inspecting airplane engines, making plans to manage some of the busiest airspace in the country really isn't critical to your safety. Well, I don't believe that, and I don't think you should either.

For the sake of the American people, we can and we must do better.

I don't think people elected Donald Trump to dismantle this country's air traffic control system. I think they elected him because they wanted to see inflation go down, they wanted to see their grocery prices reduced, they wanted to see help with rental costs, with mortgage rates, with energy costs. What have we seen in the weeks since Donald Trump got inaugurated? No effort to address any of those things. All we have seen is an effort at retribution against his perceived enemies, at firing and undermining services and programs within the government that serve the American people.

For the sake of our citizens, we must do better. I am calling on this administration to right this wrong as quickly as possible before it is too late.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY

MR. WELCH. Mr. President, I would like to speak about the importance of FEMA, the importance of fixing it but not destroying it. Mother Nature, this week, provided yet another reminder of the devastating impacts of natural disasters.

In Kentucky, we had catastrophic flooding that inundated communities and led to thousands of evacuations. At least 14 are dead, and all of us, our hearts break for the people of eastern Kentucky. To my colleagues from the Commonwealth, I offer all of my support in getting the aid that you need to help recover.

That is the same commitment I have offered to our colleagues in Hawaii, North Carolina, California, and Flor-

ida, and it is also the commitment many of my colleagues made to me and Senator SANDERS after Vermont's devastating floods in July of 2023 and 2024.

What we know in Vermont is the disasters that have afflicted us all over the country, they don't care whom you voted for. They don't respect county or State lines. They are indiscriminate and unpredictable, and the storm metes out its suffering in a bipartisan way. There is no escaping it, but we need FEMA. That is what we learned in Vermont.

When the storm arrived, FEMA was there. In the immediate aftermath when people had seen literally their homes swept down a river, when the crops and farms had been destroyed, when businesses were ruined, FEMA was there to help in the immediate aftermath.

But we also experienced something that I have heard from my colleagues in FEMA-related situations, and that is that in the longer term recovery, you run into the frustration of a distant bureaucracy that can't make quick turnaround decisions and such things as granular as whether you can install a 24-inch culvert instead of a 16-inch culvert.

That is why the reform we need is focused on empowering local communities to have much more decision-making and implementation authority in executing the recovery that takes, oftentimes, well over a year or 2 years.

You simply can't have that done by folks not in the community. Those folks in the community are totally invested in getting their community back on its feet, helping its businesses, helping the folks who lost their homes, and helping the farmers who lost their crops.

So the reform that we need in FEMA is definitely there, and we can do that and must do it together because any of these natural disasters are going to come our way at some point, regardless of which side of the aisle you represent.

It is one of the reasons I am absolutely so concerned about what is happening at FEMA now. There has been a DOGE invasion. I use that explicitly. What does Elon Musk know about the suffering in these communities? Where does he get the authority—where does he get the callousness to say FEMA should be destroyed? Something, by the way, the President himself has said.

When I think about all the folks in Vermont, all the folks now in Kentucky, all the folks in California from the fires, Hawaii and the fires, to be told that the response of the Federal Government, when a catastrophic event happened in their community, without any responsibility on their part—they were on the receiving end of Mother Nature making its decision to hit that community at that time. Why do Trump and Musk say we ought to get rid of the Agency that is on the scene as the storm arises and stays there, hopefully, until people get back on their feet?

The other thing that is happening with DOGE going into FEMA is that they are getting access and accumulating very personal information. If you are in the path of the storm and you seek FEMA aid, you have to give a significant amount of your own personal information, but that is solely for the purpose of evaluating your claim.

We now have the DOGE folks. These are very young people. We don't know what their credentials are. We don't know what the use is that they are going to put this information to—getting the personal information of people in all of these communities around the country. They have no right to do that. They have no need to do that. It doesn't facilitate the reform or the destruction of FEMA. It is just an invasion of privacy.

We need FEMA. We can fix it. We can reform it, but I have talked to many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, and they know that most of our States, really all of our States, are simply not set up and equipped to deal with a catastrophic event. Oftentimes, as in the case of Vermont, a once-in-a-100-year-storm that came 2 years in a row, but we don't have the infrastructure of an emergency response to deal with that.

We need the help of the Federal Government. That is exactly the role the Federal Government should play. It has a fiscal capacity that none of our States have, and the definition of an emergency is something that couldn't have been prevented by the actions of the State.

So we need to recommit ourselves to assuring the American people in each of our communities that if and when there is a disaster, FEMA will be there. But we also have an obligation to make it work better so in that long-term recovery that is so essential, both emotionally and physically, that we will give the local communities much more authority to make their decisions and empower them with much more control of the funds needed to meet that recovery as quickly as possible.

We not only can work together to improve FEMA, the only way we will is if we do work together. How in the world is it a partisan issue when you are talking about the folks you represent or I represent who find themselves in the path of a fire, in the path of a flood, in the path of a hurricane or a tornado? We come together to help each other when that happens.

That is the responsibility we have, but more than that, it is really a wonderful opportunity to serve, where we are in a position to help Americans, regardless of where they live, regardless of what their political persuasion is, but because we respect them, the lives they have built, and we want to help them after a destruction of things that are really important to them and their community. We want to help them get back on their feet.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHMITT). The Senator from Tennessee.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, today, after 4 years of reckless spending and decades of high inflation under the Biden-Harris administration, our national debt now sits at \$36.4 trillion. In many ways, this number represents one of the biggest threats to our Nation, as interest payments on the debt now eclipse our country's total defense spending.

Think about that. The debt—interest on the debt—is costing the hard-working taxpayer more of their money. It is taking a greater share of their tax dollars than we are spending to provide for the common defense.

It is astounding that that is where we are, but this problem has gotten worse through the years. During the last few months of the Biden administration, October to December of last year, our country ran a deficit of more than \$710 billion, up 39 percent from the same period in 2023.

The American people know this is unsustainable. Among many other reasons, that is why the American people showed up in record numbers and gave a mandate to Donald J. Trump as the President of the United States, winning the electoral college and the popular vote.

The American people know full well they are overtaxed. Government is overspent. And they are tired of it.

And since Inauguration Day, the President has been hard at work on this issue, getting the economy under control. And one of the first things he did, back in office, was to establish the Department of Government Efficiency. It is being led by Elon Musk, and the agency is working to uncover and eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse from the Federal Government. And to no one's surprise, DOGE has found a lot of waste, especially with programs that should never have been put on the books in the first place.

Now, in recent weeks, the agency, working overtime to find ways to save money for the taxpayer, they found \$33 million in Education Department grants to groups that push far-left ideas like critical race theory and \$44.6 million in canceled leases for unused office space and \$45 million in scholarships for students in Burma and \$182 million in Department of Health and Human Services contracts that had nothing to do with health—nothing. They even found \$168,000 for a museum exhibit for Anthony Fauci, and a billion dollars in DEI programs.

Now, when you scoop all of that together, you have a pretty good savings for the U.S. taxpayer, who has been funding all of this. Removing these programs and recouping those dollars, that is the right thing to do.

In addition, DOGE has worked to reform the mismanaged U.S. Agency for International Development. We call this USAID. Under the last administration, the Agency used its \$40 billion budget to support leftwing and anti-

American causes around the world, including terror-tied extremist groups in the Middle East.

As DOGE uncovers the left's abuse of taxpayer dollars, Washington Democrats have tried desperately to paint the agency as unaccountable to the American people. But the exact opposite is true. DOGE, which reports directly to President Trump, is restoring government accountability by reining in the Federal Government and reining in the bureaucracy. By the way, they are unelected.

That is why, last week, President Trump issued an Executive order to support DOGE, directing Federal Departments to work with the agency to reduce the size of the Federal workforce. A downsize is desperately needed. The government employs more than 2.4 million civilian employees at a cost of hundreds of billions of dollars each year.

To support these efforts, I recently introduced a package of bills called the DOGE Acts, which would hold the Federal Government accountable for managing taxpayer dollars. Now, all of these bills would help to drain the swamp. And these are bills that I have proposed over the last several years, but we brought them together under the heading of the DOGE Acts. It would implement a hiring and salary freeze, direct Agencies to reduce the size of their workforce by 5 percent within 3 years, and establish a commission to report to Congress on moving non-national-security Agencies outside of Washington, DC.

In addition, the legislation would create a pilot program to determine Federal employees' compensation based on merit, not seniority, something that is so important to do because, right now, the longer someone holds a job, the more they are going to make. Let's move that to how well they do their job and how well they perform in fulfilling the responsibilities that are given to them.

And it would require Agencies to reinstate their pre-COVID telework policies, a measure that is especially crucial after just 6 percent of Federal employees worked in an office full time during the Biden administration.

Tennesseans go to work every day. They are working full time in order to get a full-time paycheck, and they are astounded when they hear that under the last administration—the Biden administration—6 percent of Federal employees worked full time. But do you know what? They all got a full-time paycheck courtesy of the hard-working U.S. taxpayer.

Perhaps most importantly, the DOGE Acts would cut nonsecurity discretionary spending by 5 percent by fiscal year 2028 and every following year, saving taxpayers billions of dollars. When it comes to government spending, Tennesseans—and certainly Americans—demand accountability. With DOGE, Republicans are delivering it.

BIRTH TOURISM

Mr. President, in one of his first acts back in office, President Trump defended our country's cherished principle of equal citizenship by ending birth tourism. For years, foreign tourists have abused our Nation's birth-right citizenship by visiting America with the sole purpose of having their children here.

These tourists have no intention of staying here or of even raising their children in America. Instead, they return to their home country to rear their children, who now have the benefit of American citizenship but no ties or loyalty to our Nation. This abuse of our citizenship is wrong. Yet Democrat-aligned groups are trying to stop President Trump's order in the courts.

When you look at the numbers, you realize how much is at stake with this Executive order. According to one estimate, birth tourism results in 33,000 births to women on tourist visas each year. Think about that—33,000. That is tens of thousands of people each year who claim American citizenship and all its benefits, while having nothing at stake in the future of our country. To no one's surprise, birth tourism has spawned a multimillion-dollar industry, and it is rife with fraud and criminal activities.

In China, traffickers charge clients tens of thousands of dollars to coach them on lying to Customs and Border Protection, obtaining a visa, and reaching our country.

In fact, the problem has gotten so bad that airlines in Asia are turning away pregnant passengers to America over birth tourism concerns.

This cannot go on, which is why I fully support President Trump's efforts to bring this terrible practice to an end.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, the idea that men and women citizens are bound by a common set of laws that are applied consistently and universally, regardless of one's income or political power or political affiliation, is a fairly modern invention because, for thousands of years, laws were simply what rulers used to impose and maintain power, to control people. Laws were applied or crimes were invented for the ruler's critics, and laws were ignored or waived away for those in favor with the regime.

Now, early Americans had watched the British Kings apply laws selectively, both in Britain and in the Colonies, and our Founders sought to create a nation where all men were equal in the face of the law and that the law was applied uniformly and justly.

That idea, equal justice—the law applies to everybody regardless of whom you support politically or whom you are aligned with politically—was in many ways the Founders' most vital check against tyranny. That is the dif-

ference between a democracy made of equal citizens and an autocracy, where the law is simply whatever the ruler decides. It is a foundational principle of American constitutional democracy. It is not something we can take for granted.

Now, I will admit that likely every President has made a decision or decisions that compromised that belief in the rule of law. Often, those decisions were related to one of the maximalist powers that the President possesses; that is, the power of the pardon. I, for instance, did not agree with President Biden's decision to issue pardons to his family members. I thought that was excessive. I thought that compromised the rule of law. But this President's contempt for the rule of law—Donald Trump's contempt for the rule of law—is unprecedented.

What we are all watching right now is Donald Trump throw away the idea that laws apply to everyone equally, and it is astonishing to watch so many of my Republican colleagues fall in line. Some of them may be on board for the destruction of the rule of law because they want the Trump family to rule forever, but many of them know that this is wrong, what is happening, and their silence is heartbreaking.

Donald Trump issued a statement over the weekend:

He who saves [the] Country does not violate any Law.

That is a quote attributed to one of the most notorious dictators of the last half-millennium, Napoleon Bonaparte. It is a stunning claim that Trump—not the law or Congress—decides what is legal and illegal.

If he had said that in 2017, maybe we could just write it off as Trump being Trump, as just bluster, trolling, but this time, he has actually implemented a methodical campaign to seize control of the law and apply it differently depending on whether you support him or oppose him.

Take for example what happened on Friday night. Trump ordered the Department of Justice to cut a deal with the indicted mayor of New York City, Eric Adams. The deal was simple: If Adams pledged loyalty to Trump and agreed specifically to cooperate with Trump's immigration raids in the city, Trump would look the other way regarding Adam's corruption. The charges would be dropped, and Adams could keep stealing money as long as he was politically loyal to Trump.

They didn't hide this deal. Adams and a high-ranking Trump official literally went on TV to announce that they had formed an alliance based upon the release of charges in exchange for political loyalty.

But when Trump told the highest ranking Justice Department employees in New York City to execute the corrupt deal, they wouldn't. The top official resigned rather than take part in the corruption and so did the next in the chain of command. By the time Trump found someone who would im-

plement the deal, seven DOJ lawyers and four of Adams' deputy mayors had resigned because what was happening in plain view was a fundamental challenge, a fundamental corruption to the rule of law—a rule of law that up until today, Republicans and Democrats had both revered.

Meanwhile, other parts of Trump's team are engaging on the other side of the ledger, targeting and harassing—using the law—the President's critics, because that is what happens in a nation without the rule of law. Law enforcement lets loyalists like Adams off the hook and is overzealous in targeting critics.

Let me give you just one example of what is happening right now as we speak. Last month, Trump's new FCC Chairman opened an investigation into a single radio station that had the audacity to simply file a news report about an ICE raid that was happening locally. Multiple other sources filed similar reports with similar footage, but only one investigation was opened, and—you guessed it—it was against the radio station that was owned by a high-profile critic of Donald Trump, George Soros.

So the game is clear. Like, we can see it. They are not even hiding it. There is not a rule of law anymore; there is one set of law for people or entities who are loyal to Donald Trump, and there is one set of law for people who dare criticize him. That is not democracy.

If we don't find a way—Republicans and Democrats—to come together to defend the rule of law, if we don't say that what is happening today—deals being cut with corrupt politicians in exchange for their pledges of loyalty to Donald Trump—if we can't speak with one voice about that kind of corruption, well, then our democracy is cooked.

NOMINATION OF KASHYAP PATEL

Mr. President, that brings us to the pending nominee to lead the FBI, Kash Patel. If your plan is to destroy the rule of law and turn the Department of Justice into a political weapon that rewards loyalty and punishes dissent, then Kash Patel is the perfect person to lead the FBI, and that is likely exactly why he was chosen.

Listen. Kash Patel is a joke. Many of my Republican colleagues know this. He has spent the last 4 years taking the most extreme positions inside the world of MAGA in order to make money for himself.

For instance, he says that he can provide proof beyond a reasonable doubt that the FBI was behind the January 6 invasion of this building. Let me say that again. The man that my Republican colleagues are about to vote to lead the FBI believes that there is irrefutable proof that the Agency he is about to lead secretly organized the violent assault on the Capitol. That is bananas. My Republican colleagues know that. That is a lie. And we are about to put this guy in charge of the

FBI, an Agency that he claims organized a secret plot to invade the Capitol?

He wrote a book called “Government Gangsters,” and at the end, he added an appendix entitled “Enemies List”—like straight out of the McCarthy era. He has a list—he wrote it down—of people he believes are enemies of America, and—shocker—they are all Democrats or Republicans who dared speak out and criticize Donald Trump.

You are going to put at the head of the FBI—the Agency that can arrest anyone they want, put people in jail—a man who thinks that anyone who disagrees with Donald Trump politically is an enemy of the United States?

Patel has further suggested that anybody who administered the 2020 election could be subject to arrest. Why? Because he believes in his heart that the election was rigged, despite the fact that Joe Biden won by 7 million votes—far, far more than Trump won by in 2024. So anybody that helped “rig” the 2020 election is, in his mind, a potential criminal.

This is off-the-wall stuff. Of course it is. Because while he believes this, he also knows that there is a money-making opportunity in all of this. This is his logo: “K\$H.” He is a brand. He says all of these things because he believes them but also because it makes him a hero to the gullible conspiracy theorists inside MAGA. He uses them. He sells stuff to them—sweatshirts, T-shirts, lapel pins. K\$H.

Now, if you buy this sweatshirt for \$55, it says: “All net profits go to the Kash Foundation.” But you know what we found out, unsurprisingly, is that in 2023, by selling all these sweatshirts and merch, the K\$H foundation had \$1.3 million in revenues. Now, it purports to support heroic conservative whistleblowers with legal services and other support services. Do you know what percentage of that \$1.3 million went to actual services? Less than 15 percent. Kash Patel pocketed almost all the money he made from selling these T-shirts.

He even hocks a COVID vaccine-reversal pill. Let me say that again. The incoming Director of the FBI, in addition to selling T-shirts and pocketing most of the proceeds, also sells a vaccine-reversal pill that is just, like, pure snake oil. But if there are enough people loyal to Donald Trump to buy anything Trump’s lieutenants sell on the internet, then fair game.

To top it all off, just recently, after his confirmation hearing, we also found out that Kash Patel has been a fashion consultant to a shadowy holding company controlled, it seems, by members of the Chinese Communist Party—like, honestly. Honestly. How on Earth are we going to let someone lead the world’s most important, most revered law enforcement Agency who is secretly in business with the Chinese Communist Party, who believes that the FBI organized the invasion of the Capitol, who runs a fake charity, and

who has a brand in order to make money off of his affiliation with Donald Trump? He has an enemies list. He thinks that people who helped elect Joe Biden are criminals.

This is a really dangerous moment. It is a really dangerous moment. This deal that Donald Trump just cut with the mayor of New York—it is a big deal. It is a big deal.

I admit that prior Presidents have made decisions that compromise the rule of law, but we have never seen anything like this so brazen and out in the open, that the mayor of New York and a Trump official would go on national TV to announce that they had made an arrangement in which Mayor Adams could continue his corruption as long as he was politically loyal to Donald Trump. They did that out in the open on TV because it is a signal to everybody else out there that the law will be applied differently to you if you are loyal to the President and that the law will be zealously applied to you, maybe in excess of the letter of the law, if you are a critic of the President. That is why they went on TV, to show the world the corruption as a signal that things are different now, that the law is not the law; the law is what President Trump decides the law is.

The law loses all meaning when it becomes simply what the President, what the leader on any given day decides.

This is the worst possible moment to put a person like Kash Patel in charge of the FBI. It is heartbreaking to see so many of my Republican colleagues—many of whom I admire—put loyalty to Donald Trump ahead of loyalty to this country and, more specifically, loyalty to that sacred principle, the rule of law.

My prediction is that if you vote for Kash Patel, more than any other confirmation vote you make, you will come to regret this one to your grave.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

BUDGET RECONCILIATION

Mr. LUJÁN. Mr. President, over the past week, Elon Musk and Donald Trump have fired thousands of Federal workers, many of them in New Mexico, without warning. The calls that I get to my office from constituents all across New Mexico are expressing concern, surprise, alarm, not knowing what is going to happen next, worried about a project. A professional whom I spoke to who works for the Bureau of Indian Education, who has a responsibility to help diagnose and support students with disabilities, asked: Do I stay and help these kids? What is going to happen with this stuff?

Whether it is our neighbors who work to support the National Labs to keep us safe or our friends who work at the U.S. Department of Agriculture helping our farmers and ranchers feed our Nation—these illegal mass firings are impacting communities across every corner of New Mexico.

To sum this up, what I keep hearing from New Mexicans every day is:

Please help me. Speak up. Say something. Do something. Bring attention to what is happening to the harm that is being caused in our communities, for all of our constituents.

This isn’t about Democrats or Republicans; it is about right or wrong. It is about real people.

Now, instead of protecting these jobs and helping our fellow Americans, Senate Republicans are pursuing a partisan budget resolution that will make it even harder for families to afford their healthcare, put food on the table, or get an education for their students, for their kids.

This is, quite frankly, chaos. And it is chaos that the American people cannot afford. New Mexicans and Americans from all walks of life rely on the programs that Republicans are now attacking. These are programs that feed seniors, veterans, children, the disabled. These are programs that house our veterans, that keep folks warm during these winter months.

And why are Republicans ripping these services away from people who need them? To fund this Trump tax scam. Now, it is 2.0. The American people and constituents across New Mexico are the ones who told me back in 2017: This really feels like a scam.

What Republicans are saying is middle-class families are going to get everything in here when it comes to a tax cut. But what we saw play out is: If you are making millions of dollars, you did OK, you got the brunt of everything that was in this tax scam.

Lying to the face of the American people is what happened in 2017, and it certainly feels the same now.

Let’s talk about one possible outcome of this budget resolution. In New Mexico, Medicaid covers 75 percent of births, supports around 92,000 children in my home State. Across the country, nearly 40 percent of babies are born with the help of Medicaid. For these babies and pregnant women, this program is vital, offering a chance to grow up healthier and have the best opportunity to succeed. We should all want that for our constituents. That is not partisan.

Unfortunately, Republicans have made it clear that they are determined to slash Medicaid. They tried it in 2017. What I hear from my Republican colleagues when they are being interviewed and being asked the question “are you going to cut Medicaid,” they certainly attempt to try in every form and fashion to say: No, no, no. We are not going to touch it. We are just going to leave it up to the States.

Let me translate what that means. What Republicans in Congress are going to do is work to eliminate every Federal dollar with Medicaid. There is this acronym FMAP. It is a Federal matching program to make Medicaid work across America. That is what they are going after. And if you visit with anyone across America who knows anything about how this program works, they will all tell you,

without these Federal dollars, this program goes away.

This Republican budget resolution sets the stage for dismantling Medicaid, which could result in pregnant moms and babies losing healthcare. That is just one possible outcome.

As I said earlier, the American people deserve honesty and transparency. Look, I understand if my Republican colleagues want to do this. Just own up to it. Tell the American people what you want to do. Let them know. Just be honest with them. That is the least that the American people deserve.

Last week in the Budget Committee, I offered a number of commonsense amendments to help lower costs for families, to strengthen border security, safeguard healthcare, promote American manufacturing and businesses, and invest in public safety. And top of mind for many Americans, I offered an amendment to ensure that Elon Musk and his companies are not profiting off the same government that he is dismantling. Elon Musk, who was not elected by the American people, is pursuing an extreme agenda to serve his own interests and greed. All while the American people are paying the price for it.

If Republicans are serious about tackling the issues and lowering costs, let's work together. You have partners here ready to do this for the American people.

But my Republican colleagues know better than I that what is happening under this President and Elon Musk is the cost of goods continues to go up. I don't know how many of you were at the grocery store this weekend in this Chamber, but if you haven't been, go by it. Go by and try to buy some eggs. You are going to see a sign that limits you to maybe a dozen, maybe 2. And you are going to see the costs going up and up and up—milk, butter. You look at it, you see it, you name it—it is all increasing in price.

What happened to President Trump saying on day one he was going to lower the cost of these goods for the American people? It is not happening.

Look, to sum this up, Americans will not be able to make ends meet if Senate Republicans dismantle the programs that make our country strong and secure to advance yet another tax scam.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, we may not be in a quorum call, but I can tell you this, we are in the midst of a 1,200-year drought in the American West that challenges us in extraordinary ways—from vast new insect and disease outbreaks to catastrophic wildfires. Instead of having fire seasons, there are many people now who observe that it has become trite, I would say, to observe, as the fire season lasts all year.

Our national forests in Colorado and throughout the Rocky Mountain West are the headwaters of America. In

those forests is the origin of the streams and rivers that flow to the rest of the Western United States. In the case of just the Colorado River Basin alone, 40 million people rely on it. It is the lifeblood of the American West, the lifeblood of the Western United States, and of every town and every community no matter how big and no matter how small. In Colorado and on every farm and ranch across the American West, they depend on this water, and they depend on the forests where this water stops. The critical aspect of this, I think, is that everybody who is downstream from us needs to care about the health of our forests and also our public lands.

As many people know, since COVID ripped through the United States of America, our public lands have become a place for the American people to find refuge, for the American people to be able to get away from each other, for families to have the time to also be together on America's public lands. And as many people now say, our public lands are being loved to death. We have had Americans from all over the world come and discover the public lands in Colorado and throughout the West, but it has created new pressures on our communities, new pressures on the lands themselves and also on the communities that are surrounding them.

Now, when we find ourselves in a place where we are facing these challenges and where we have done a little bit of work just over the last few years because of the money we were able to get into the bipartisan infrastructure bill, it is not the forests that we are thinning; it is the Forest Service staff that has been clearcut by what the Trump administration is doing and has proposed to do.

Even before the Trump administration began their across-the-board cuts on the Forest Service, the Forest Service had 30 percent less of a workforce than it had 30 years ago. Think about that. While the stresses and strains have grown, while the effect of that 1,200-year drought and climate change has grown, now we find ourselves in a place where the Forest Service is getting whacked by the administration.

Last year, even before the Trump administration came back to town, I met with Forest Service employees in Colorado—actually, not just the Forest Service but the other western public land Agencies from the Western Slope of Colorado to the Eastern Plains of our State—who told me that they can't hire anybody to work for these Agencies because Federal pay has not kept up with the cost of housing.

They were the best jobs in our communities years ago. You could live on one person's salary. You could have a household. You could raise kids in a community. You never had to leave the community you grew up in if you had one of these jobs. Today, nobody can afford housing in Colorado. That is a huge problem for America, not just for my State, but it is certainly true of the

public employees in the Forest Service. To add insult to injury, it takes months and months and months of bureaucratic nightmares to hire people.

Now, Donald Trump has come here without any understanding of the needs on the ground of the American people and of our States and of our watersheds, and he has decided to impose across-the-board cuts that, I suppose, he is going to use in the end to try to justify the \$4.6 trillion in tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans. You heard that right. At a time when we have had the worst income inequality than we have had since the 1920s, Donald Trump wants to extend his tax cuts for the wealthiest while he is doing things like cutting the Forest Service across the board. Forty-five percent of the benefit of that bill goes to the top 5 percent of Americans. I never understood the priority the last time he cut taxes for the wealthiest people and claimed it was a middle-class tax cut, but I especially don't understand it when he is slashing the Forest Service.

This isn't about the Forest Service employees, although I think they should be treated better; it is about the people whom they serve. They are public servants who are doing the work we need them to do in our forests. It is already challenging enough to do it without these cuts. To level an across-the-board cut—terminating 3,400 employees, including at least 90 in Colorado—is the wrong thing to do.

These unfounded layoffs are just the latest offense to an Agency that is already working, struggling to keep up with the demands of the American people and the reality on the ground.

In the last few days, my office has heard from a number of Forest Service employees who were fired last week. We heard from a Forest Service program manager whose first Forest Service job was as a wildland firefighter at just 19 years old. That is a very, very common way for people to come into the Forest Service. And she recently returned to the Forest Service to manage high-priority recreation and restoration projects for one of the busiest national forests in the United States and help the management plan process for the Camp Hale National Monument, which honors our World War II veterans.

I have also heard from a 40-year career civil servant who has worked for multiple Agencies in rural Colorado, including over 25 years in the Forest Service. As a result of her vast experience and years of service, she was recently promoted which put her in probationary status, not because she was a new employee but because she was—with all of her vast experience, she had been elevated, she had been promoted. But she was, nevertheless, a probationary employee because of the way the bureaucracy works. Over the weekend, she was let go; and she worries that she will never have her well-earned position. These people have done absolutely nothing wrong.

We heard from a lifelong Coloradan who is a national leader for forest conservation and deeply respected in our community. This person moved across the State for a position with the Forest Service. Their work informed local efforts to reduce wildfire risks and restore forest health, creating a safer landscape for wildland firefighters to work in when a fire does break out, which, by the way, is almost all the time these days.

Ironically, the administration fired a member of a Colorado National Forest leadership team—get this, Mr. President—who was actually involved in planning for staff reduction. But it wasn't the across-the-board reduction that came from Washington, DC; it was the thoughtful reduction that you can only do if you are close to the local level.

Our forests look nothing like Central Park, and I am not sure President Trump understands that.

This person was responsible for teams of people working on energy production, wildfire prevention, and the responsible use of our public forests. And there are countless other stories already of people who recently signed up for seasonal work to help manage recreation, rangeland, and wildlife habitat who are now unemployed.

Trump and Musk's actions aren't about increasing efficiency or repaying American taxpayers. These cuts don't root out fraud or government waste, but these actions do place an immense burden on the citizens of Colorado, on the citizens on the West. We are hanging out communities to dry all over—all over—the American West.

I am glad my colleague from Oregon is here, the former chairman of the Finance Committee, who also has had to watch these crazy tax cuts—which by the way, Mr. President, I will say to my colleague: That is not even a speech I was supposed to give. It is about the across-the-board layoffs of people in our forests who already are totally undermanned and aren't able to keep up with the demands of the public. But, really, for what? So you can pass a tax bill—not you but these guys on the other side—where 45 percent of the benefit goes to the richest people in America, or more?

Cutting staff that put out unattended campfires, that manage timber sales and support wildland firefighting efforts means that our communities will face much more wildfire risk come spring.

These cuts undermine businesses that require permits to operate on our public lands—from outfitters and guides to oil and gas companies—and mean fewer boots-on-the-ground staff to manage visitation—from clearing trails to cleaning bathrooms. That means we the American people risk losing our access to our most cherished public lands. Our Federal workers have devoted their careers to making our communities and our country better. They put the American people first, and I am grateful for their service.

Does that mean they couldn't do their job better? No. Does that mean they couldn't do it in a more efficient manner? No. In fact, that is one of the reasons why we have fought to put more money in the budget for fighting fires themselves, because waiting until the fire happens is the most expensive way you could possibly deal with it; but the second most expensive way would be to lay off the very people who help prevent the conditions from arising that are going to lead to those fires, which, by the way, cost \$50,000 an acre to fight.

The Forest Service employees throughout the West are fundamental to our economy and to our communities in Colorado. In fact, the fact that it has been hard to hire them has compromised our communities in really fundamental ways, and we ought to double down on the Forest Service's mission, investing in wildfire resilience, watershed health, recreation management, rooting out waste, and cutting redtape to make the Agency a better partner for rural communities across the country. That is what we would be doing.

Instead, President Trump and Musk's actions to eviscerate the Federal workforce take a torch to that approach and tear at the fabric of our communities. It is an insult to Colorado and all Americans. There is no reason they should do it, and they should rescind these cuts.

With that, Mr. President I thank my colleagues for their indulgence.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

BUDGET RECONCILIATION

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I am down here on the floor this afternoon with my colleague Senator Kaine from Virginia and the ranking member of the Finance Committee, Senator Wyden, to talk about the spending and tax bill that is coming before the Congress, driven by Republicans and the Trump administration. Whether it is one bill or two bills, it doesn't really matter. It is the centerpiece of Donald Trump's economic agenda.

It is really important to talk about the impacts that this spending and tax package will have on the American public. Well, there will be some new spending for defense and some new spending on immigration policy. The heart of this spending and tax package will be familiar to many Americans because they remember it from 2017, during the first Trump administration.

The heart of this Republican economic proposal is a massive tax cut for the very, very wealthy and for corporations and, this time, not borrowed to be paid back later by middle-class taxpayers. This time, it is paid for by immediate cuts to some of the programs that regular ordinary Americans, many frail seniors, depend on, like the Medicaid Program.

Just for a little bit of context, it does appear to a lot of Americans that this

whole thing feels a bit like a scam. This is a government that is being handed over to the billionaire class in order to operationalize government to make money for the very, very wealthy and for the rest of us to pay the price.

The cost of gas is going up, the cost of groceries continues to go up. Meanwhile, Donald Trump and his billionaire crowd are doing better than ever. Just a couple examples: Since Elon Musk, the richest man in the universe, has taken control of the government with Donald Trump, the value of his business has gone up by 30 percent. Tesla stock has gone up by 30 percent. Of course, it has. Of course, it has, because Elon Musk is now able to get inside the government to arrange things to benefit his companies.

For instance, the NLRB is gone. They fired the Democrat on the board. He is unable to muster a quorum. It is not coincidental that the NLRB had several open investigations of Tesla.

Our foreign policy has been monetized to support people like Elon Musk. It just broke yesterday that Vietnam is really worried about Trump's tariff policy, and so the way they are going to try to get some help from the Trump administration is to give some help to Elon Musk's businesses; that they are going to get Elon Musk a Starlink contract. And they believe that by doing that, they will be able to get help from the Trump administration on tariffs.

So Elon Musk and the billionaires are able to operationalize and monetize our foreign policy. Of course, Elon Musk has access to the data, especially the data inside Treasury that is going to help him gain an advantage on his competitors, whether he is trying to set up a new tax payment system or he is trying to set up a new universal payment capacity on Twitter. So it is not shocking that the value of Musk's business has gone way up because he now controls the Federal Government in a way that could benefit his business.

But Trump is doing very well, too. He made \$100 million off of a meme coin—a meme coin where we have no idea as Americans who is buying it. It is very likely foreign actors trying to influence the administration who could secretly buy the meme coin and then whisper to Donald Trump that “we got your back when you needed it.” Also, \$40 million from Amazon for a new documentary of the First Lady. Legal settlements from ABC News, Meta, and X—all, shockingly, settled with cash payments to the Trump family after the election.

And the monetization of foreign policy for Donald Trump, just like the monetization of foreign policy for Elon Musk. News this week that the PGA and the Saudis were meeting with the President to try to settle their disputes. It is not coincidental to the fact that Donald Trump is in business with one of those golf leagues.

So it just appears to many Americans like this administration puts the billionaires, the corporations, those

that are loyal and friendly to Donald Trump first and all the rest of us second.

The apex of this effort to turn our government and government policy over to the billionaires is this tax cut. Again, this tax and spending package has a lot of elements to it, but the centerpiece is a tax cut that is 852 times bigger for the top 1 percent of earners in this country than for low-income families. That is a number that is a little hard to get your head wrapped around, so I just wanted to put it on this chart. That is what 852 times looks like.

The rates go down for folks who make more than \$600,000 a year, but they don't move for folks who make under \$600,000 a year. I mean, they are not trying to hide what is going on here. Rates are coming down if you make a whole ton of money. Rates are staying the same if you are middle income or lower income.

Another way to tell this story is that if you are in the top 1 percent, your average tax cut is about \$70,000. That is a lot of money. That is a lot of money. But if you are making \$30,000 a year—and there are a whole bunch of people in this country that are making \$30,000 a year, especially when Republicans refuse to support the minimum wage going above \$7.25 an hour. If you make \$30,000 a year, you are going to get about \$130. \$70,000 if you are doing really, really well; \$130 for everybody else. That doesn't make sense. Why do people making \$600,000 a year need \$70,000 while only 100 bucks goes to everybody else?

The corporations are in the mix here too. They came to Congress in 2017 and said: We need a lower tax rate. And then Trump and his Republican allies gave them a tax rate even lower than they asked. And they made this claim that all this extra money going to the corporations was going to be passed down to workers. They had a specific claim that it was going to result in \$4,000 more in income to every American, because that is how trickle-down economics works in the brains of Republicans. You give a whole bunch of money to corporations, and they are going to be generous, and they are going to give that money to workers in extra income.

Well, we now have 8 years of experience since that first tax cut that they are looking to reauthorize. We know what happened. The study shows that it wasn't \$4,000 of extra income; it wasn't \$3,000; it wasn't \$2,000; it wasn't \$1,000; it wasn't \$500; it wasn't \$400; it wasn't even \$200. It was zero. The tax cut resulted in an increase in salary to those people who worked for those corporations that got the big tax cut. The salary increase was zero.

It is a scam. Trickle-down economics is a scam. When you put this much money into the hands of the wealthy, it does not trickle down to everybody else. When you give corporations those enormous tax cuts, it does not trickle

down to everybody else. It stays in the pockets of the wealthy. The corporations use it in order to do stock buybacks, in order to inflate CEOs' salaries. It just separates the rich from the poor. It is a scam. It is a scam.

The last thing I will say before turning it over to Senator Kaine is that this version of the giant billionaire and corporate tax cut is so much worse than the first version. It is still a tax cut for the wealthy that is 852 times bigger than for folks at the bottom of the income scale, but whereas in 2017, it was all borrowed—and that is bad because that money has to be recouped somehow.

That means that everybody eventually is either going to pay higher interest rates or have their taxes raised or their services cut to service all that debt—trillions of dollars' worth of debt. This time, Republicans are contemplating not borrowing the money but instead just taking it from poor people and middle-class people—just take it from them to give it to the billionaires and the corporations.

The cut that they are contemplating in the House of Representatives is a cut to Medicaid. Now, they are also thinking about cuts to Medicare, your parents' primary health insurance. They are contemplating cuts to the Affordable Care Act. That is the program that insures 20 million working Americans, but they are really zeroed in on Medicaid.

They are contemplating such devastating cuts to Medicaid that it would eviscerate the program. And maybe you can say: Well, I mean, it is Medicaid for poor people, and that is not me. Well, I think we have an obligation to try to make sure that everybody in this country—even poor children—have access to healthcare, but Medicaid also pays for your parents' or your neighbors' nursing home costs.

If you cut the amount of money that they are talking about out of the Medicaid Program, you are literally talking about nursing homes shutting down and seniors being out on the street. That is not hyperbole. That is what happens if you make these massive cuts to Medicaid.

So what they are talking about this year is not just running up a credit card bill in order to fund the tax cuts for the wealthy, they are literally talking about putting seniors out on the street in order to fund the tax cut for the wealthy.

The whole thing feels like a scam: the favors being given to billionaires that are inside the government; the tax cut that benefits the very, very wealthy at the expense of everybody else; the cutting of services that help regular people in order to finance the tax cut.

And whether it ends up being one bill or two bills, the centerpiece is still the centerpiece: the transfer of resources and wealth from regular people, from the middle class, from poor people to the very, very wealthy, the millionaire and billionaire class, the corporations.

So we are going to tell this story here on the Senate floor, all over the country, while this bill moves its way through the process, either as one bill or two bills, because regardless of the process, the story is still the same: a scam to take money from regular people to make the lives of the rich and powerful even more lavish.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MORENO). The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. Kaine. Mr. President, I rise to follow my colleague from Connecticut to talk about the impending business before the Senate, the 2025 budget resolution.

My colleague talked about this discussion and the Republican proposal as a scam. I am going to use a slightly different term, but I bet we all know a "Trojan horse"—a Trojan horse. We all know the story about the Battle of Troy when the invaders created this beautiful gift of a horse that they then gave to those in the besieged city, but it turned out it wasn't a gift. It was an agent of destruction, and that is what this budget deal is.

If the Republican majorities here and at the House cared about the budget, we would have an appropriations deal. There was an appropriations deal on the table to be taken at the end of the last calendar year, but after the election result, the Republican majority just decided, we don't want to negotiate with Democrats in the Senate. We will kick it into next year, and we will come up with a budget deal that we write.

We would have had an appropriations deal before the end of last year. We would have an appropriations deal by March 14. Instead, what Democrats are hearing is that the Republicans don't want to do the traditional appropriations budget. They want to do a continuing resolution, which would be very harmful.

If my Republican colleagues cared about the budget, they would complain about Elon Musk and Donald Trump unilaterally violating past appropriations deals that we all voted for and that the President signed. If they cared about the budget, that would matter to them because a deal is a deal, especially a deal that we voted on.

Instead, my Republican colleagues are quietly acquiescing to Head Start Programs closing, to community health clinics closing or reducing services, to veterans hospitals and clinics grappling with serious staff shortages.

Why would my colleagues quietly acquiesce to those kinds of violations of appropriations bills you voted for if you cared about the budget? This discussion is a Trojan horse. The advertised purposes of the bill that is pending before the Senate now are twofold: border security and defense.

Let me take defense first as a member of the Armed Services Committee. Do you need to use reconciliation to do defense spending? We not only do hundreds of billions of dollars a year in defense spending in a bipartisan way, but

twice in the last calendar year, we did supplemental appropriations to defense, once in April as part of a supplemental security deal and once at the end of calendar year 2024 as part of a continuing resolution.

We spent 850 billion, and we added to it twice with a bipartisan vote. You don't need reconciliation for that. You don't need reconciliation to find spending on border security. I have been here since 2013. We did a border security bill that was bipartisan that spent money in this Chamber. The House Republican majority killed it. In 2018, we did a bipartisan border deal in this body that spent tens of billions of dollars on border security. President Trump urged everyone to vote against it.

My colleague from Connecticut played a key role in a tough bipartisan border security deal just last year. President Trump said vote against it. All of those bills had significant budgetary resources to invest in border security. Donald Trump and House Republicans opposed them.

So if there is a track record of being able to do defense spending in a bipartisan way, border security spending in a bipartisan way, then why are we claiming—why are my Republican colleagues claiming that this reconciliation bill is about those two items? It is not what it is about. My colleagues have done a good job of explaining it.

This is about an effort to dramatically cut spending programs that support everyday Virginians and everyday Americans and then to take those dollars and use them to fund tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans and the biggest corporations, taking from people who rely upon community health clinics, rely upon Medicaid, rely upon student loans, taking those dollars and then using them to fund tax cuts for the wealthy.

My colleague from Connecticut talked in particular about the fixation that Republicans have had in slashing Medicaid. We saw it in 2017. The Republican priority during Donald Trump's first year was to kill the Affordable Care Act, but it went much further than just killing the Affordable Care Act.

Republicans made attack on the core of the Medicaid Program a key element, and that is why they ended up losing on the floor of the Senate in one of the most dramatic votes I have ever participated in. Medicaid is about our neighbors and parents in nursing homes.

Medicaid pays for more than half of the births in this country. The hospitals are reimbursed by Medicaid. Fifty percent of the Medicaid budget goes to children—I am sorry. Fifty percent of Medicaid recipients are children. Only 20 percent of the budget of Medicaid goes to kids, but 50 percent of the recipients.

When you go after Medicaid, you are going after folks with disabilities. You are going after our parents and grandparents in nursing homes. You are

going against kids. You are going against low-income mothers delivering children in American hospitals.

The tax cuts for the wealthy are not necessarily part of the proposal that is before us in the Senate right now, but the House GOP has given away the game. The big beautiful bill that is being urged on both House and Senate Republicans by the Vice President and the President contains the tax cuts for the wealthy that my colleague Senator MURPHY has described.

We need to have \$4½ trillion in tax cuts, and just as was the case in 2017, they will go to folks at the top. In fact, almost half of the benefits of these tax cuts would go to the top 5 percent of taxpayers. That is the end result of the process of reconciliation that we are starting on today.

So I would just say: Let's be candid about what is going on here. We can't trick people. We can't convince people, oh, this is about border security and national defense. We have got a demonstrable bipartisan track record to be able to advance in those areas.

The people that are out there whom the GOP are trying to trick in this effort, they are the ones in communities that are complaining about Head Start Programs being closed. They are the ones that see health clinics reduced or clinics laid off. They are the ones that are getting punched because they are veterans.

The indiscriminate layoffs that are being pushed by the DOGE brothers and President Trump hit veterans. Thirty percent of the Federal workforce are veterans. It is only about 3 percent of the civilian workforce, but if you do mass and indiscriminate layoffs of Federal employees, whom do you hurt disproportionately? You are hurting people who have served this country and are entitled to respect and gratitude. They don't deserve to be treated, in Donald Trump's words, as losers in the way that they are being treated with these indiscriminate layoffs.

These are the people who are being affected thus far by these policies of the President. So that is what we are fighting about, and that is whom we are fighting for.

We are going to offer amendments during vote-arama to clarify what is going on to try to protect Medicaid and children's nutrition and other safety net programs, and we will battle to try to convince some Republicans to join us in those amendments.

But let's just be clear about what this is: It is a Trojan horse-effort to amass savings off the backs of everyday people to pour into tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans who don't need help. We need to resist it in every way we can. I look forward to joining my colleagues in doing so.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I want to thank my colleagues Senator MURPHY

and Senator Kaine for very strong speeches, and I look forward very much to working with them in this fight.

My colleagues have raised a host of important issues that I want to touch on, and I am going to start with the big picture of what is going on in America as the Senate careens toward a budget showdown.

Donald Trump, as of today, seems to consider himself royalty. Elon Musk seems to believe he calls the shots. They are trampling over the Constitution and violating laws as they try to rip apart so much of what makes America special, and they are clearing the way for financial predators and financial scammers to steal from innocent Americans.

They are gutting medical research. Days after the deadliest airplane crash on American soil in decades and when more plane crashes seem to be happening by the hour, they fire hundreds of people who work on airline safety.

They are slashing the university system, which is the envy of the world and a huge source of economic growth and opportunity in America. They fired hundreds of people who manage our nuclear arsenal because whomever in DOGE ordered those fired didn't seem to have any idea what the Department of Energy does.

The national parks closed because they don't have enough staff, and that is going to be a disaster for rural communities that depend on tourism. Farmers missed payments they are owed. Nobody I know voted for this chaos.

Now, I heard firsthand from Oregonians this past weekend at townhall meetings. Thousands of Oregonians, according to the press, were in attendance. They shared their real fears and legitimate concerns about how this slash-and-burn approach we are seeing from Trump and Musk is a recipe for a lower quality of life in America and people will lose their lives as a result of these attacks on healthcare and medical research.

Unfortunately, there has barely been a peep from Republicans. In fact, I have heard more support for Trump than criticism of this lawlessness from the other side, and it is business as usual here in the Senate.

What is so important to my colleagues on the other side that they are letting Trump and Musk get away with this destruction? It is another round of breaks for billionaires and big corporations. That, colleagues, is the Republican prize at the end of this process. That is Trump's plan to pay back his supporters who bought the election for him.

Now for some specifics. The centerpiece of the plan is extending his 2017 tax law at a cost of more than \$4 trillion. Ultrawealthy individuals who rake in millions each year would get tax breaks of hundreds of thousands of dollars. Families who live paycheck to paycheck, as my colleagues have been talking about this afternoon, would be

lucky to get enough to cover groceries for a week. What an outrageous imbalance.

Trump and Republicans want typical Americans to be satisfied with peanuts compared to the growing fortunes of Elon Musk and Trump's other billionaire donors, and it is not just a bunch of extensions. Trump wants even more breaks for big, profitable corporations. Senate Republicans want new giveaways to the ultrawealthy.

How would it be paid for? By booting tens of millions of Americans off their health insurance, increasing child hunger, laying off hundreds of thousands of manufacturing workers, and raising the cost of living here.

The Republican chair of the House Budget Committee had a whole list of destructive proposals a few weeks ago. Dozens of pages long, item after item, it looked like the kind of plan you would design if your goal was to wipe out the middle class in America and push tens of millions of families into poverty.

But this was a real document from a Republican committee chair. A couple of lowlights stuck out to us on the Senate Finance Committee. Trump and Republicans want to take a wrecking ball to the Medicaid Program. It is a devastating prospect for tens of millions of Americans, and I heard about it in Oregon all this weekend.

Medicaid pays for two out of three nursing home beds. Where do American families turn when nursing homes no longer accept Medicaid due to these Republican cuts? What my colleagues are saying is who is going to take care of our parents and our grandparents?

Medicaid covers 30 million kids. That includes half of all American kids with special needs. Cuts to Medicaid will set these kids back for the rest of their lives. Hospitals, nursing homes, other providers in rural communities all over America barely hang on. They depend on Medicaid. If the Republican cuts go through, rural America is going to become a healthcare desert.

The clean energy tax cuts, which I worked on for a full decade, are another disaster in the making. Republicans are looking at wiping out a host of tax incentives for clean energy to pay for a big chunk of their handouts to the top.

Nobody is rooting harder for Republicans to succeed on this than the Chinese Government. That is because if Republicans follow through and gut the clean energy tax credits that we passed in 2022, it will be a total surrender to China on clean energy. Hundreds of thousands of American jobs would be destroyed. Energy prices will jump, and that will hurt working families and small businesses.

The jobs and investment we have attracted to America over the last few years, that goes to China and other countries that win the clean energy arms race at our expense.

If you look at that document from the House Budget Committee chair, it

is one item after another that is going to clobber typical families and communities across the land. They are looking at a tax increase on single moms. They are considering a tax increase that will raise the cost of owning a home. They are considering cuts to infrastructure that will hurt local economies. They are even considering taxing scholarships for kids looking to go to college.

The only people who won't feel the pain of these hardships are the ultrawealthy, people like Donald Trump and Elon Musk. There is a game of hide the ball happening here in the Senate, with this first resolution that hides all the unpopular plans in the second bill that comes down the pike.

Over in the House of Representatives, they are trying to cram it all into one bill. In the end, the process here in Congress won't really matter to the people whose lives are made worse by the painful cuts Republicans are preparing to inflict on the country.

The reality is, this agenda goes hand in hand with the lawlessness we are seeing from Elon Musk and Donald Trump. My view is, this amounts to pillaging the government. They are breaking vital programs at Agencies, and there is no sign they care about the people who are hurt so greatly along the way.

Donald Trump even admits out in the open that it is causing pain—his words, not mine. And here in the Senate, Republicans are getting ready to add to the cuts, and they are getting ready to give even more tax handouts to the top: Donald Trump, Elon Musk, and the billionaire donors who support them.

As my colleagues have said this afternoon so eloquently, we are going to shine a light on this floor on the destructive agenda of the Republicans as the debate continues. The American people do not support what is happening here in the Senate or what Donald Trump and Elon Musk are doing to their government. We are going to do everything we can to stop that. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I was here to speak on the across-the-board cuts that the Forest Service is facing in Colorado, but I was so glad to hear my colleagues from Connecticut and Virginia and Oregon talking about this tax bill. I want to add just a couple of thoughts to it.

First of all, I appreciate so much what they were saying because the American people are struggling, and it is not just with inflation. It is with an economy that, for 50 years, has worked incredibly well for the wealthiest people in our country and hasn't worked for anybody else.

It used to be the American dream. That is how we knew our country was working—when, if you worked hard, you could get ahead. Even more important to most Americans, when you

worked hard, you knew your kids were going to get ahead. And we are at a moment in American history, for the first time, when our kids, people that are 30 years old, are going to earn—half of them are going to earn—less than their parents. And people all over the country are looking at it and saying: That is not the America that I recognize. That is not the American dream.

And it is not the American dream.

Today, in the United States, the top 1 percent of people own 20 percent of our income. The bottom 50 percent own 10 percent. The bottom 50 percent own half of what the top 1 percent have.

Some people might say: Oh my God, that is just a natural feature of the way our economy works or the way capitalism works.

It is not, even in this country. Twenty-five years ago, that wasn't true; it was reversed. Twenty-five years ago, the bottom 50 percent earned twice as much income as the top 1 percent. And that has flipped since Ronald Reagan came here with his trickle-down economics that my colleague from Connecticut was talking about, with a tax policy that was all about rewarding the wealthiest people and the folks who were outsourcing jobs from the United States of America.

And now Donald Trump is here to do it again, as he did when he was President the last time. He went to the Mahoning Valley in Ohio, after passing that tax bill, and said: You are welcome for your middle-class tax cut.

But 50 percent of it went to the wealthiest 5 percent in our country. He gave a little tip, as the Senator from Connecticut was saying, to working people in our country to obscure the fact that what he was doing was giving massive tax cuts to the wealthiest people.

And I will finish just by saying this. Sometimes people say: That is not surprising, Michael. They are the richest people. So maybe they pay the most in taxes; maybe they should get the biggest benefit.

The reality is very different because somebody is going to have to pay for this bill. It is either going to be the cuts that they are going to make to Medicaid, which are cuts to a program for healthcare coverage for people in this country that are poor or working poor, or they are not going to pay for it at all.

And if they don't pay for it at all, the people who are going to have to pay for it are the kids of police officers and firefighters all over our country who are going to have to pay the debt that is incurred by Donald Trump's tax bill, which is what happened the last time.

The chairman will remember that. They didn't pay for it the last time. And when they didn't pay for it the last time, every working person in America is having to pay for it because of the interest rates that are on our national debt.

My friend from Virginia was the mayor of Richmond. This tax policy is

one—and I know my colleague from California wants to go; so I am going to stop. But this tax policy is equivalent to the mayor of Richmond waking up one morning and saying: I am going to borrow more money than we have ever borrowed in the city's history.

And I would say to him: I am worried about that. What are you going to do with that money? I am worried about what you might spend it on. Tell me what you are going to spend it on.

Are you going to spend it on parks?

No.

Are you going to spend it on infrastructure?

No.

Are you going to spend it on mental health, which we desperately need all over the country?

No.

Early childhood education, K-through-12 education, the university in our community?

No, no, no.

What are you going to do with all this money that you are borrowing?

Well, I am going to give it to the two richest neighborhoods in Richmond, VA, and I am going to expect that it will trickle down to everybody else in Richmond.

You would be run out on a rail for doing that, which is why no mayor in America has ever done that. No Governor in America has ever done that. And Donald Trump is about to try to do it for the second time—for the second time.

And I hope that people in this body won't be fooled by it, because we saw it before.

And we could get a big bipartisan vote in this Senate to begin to reestablish a set of economic rules that is actually lifting the fortunes of the vast majority of people in this country, instead of giving these tax cuts to the people in America who need it least.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. President, it is a great day to be a billionaire in America; for the rest of us, not so much. Egg prices are the highest they have ever been. Rent is through the roof. Prescription drug costs are squeezing families and seniors. But billionaires like Elon Musk—billionaires—are doing just great. In fact, they are about to be doing a whole lot better because, if Donald Trump and my Republican colleagues have it their way, they are about to get another massive hand-out—a \$4.5 trillion handout, to be precise—yes, trillion with a “t”—and one that will explode the national debt.

This bill, the one we will all, but certainly soon, consider on this very floor, reads like a thank-you card to the ultrawealthy. It supercharges the President's 2017 billionaire windfall.

But how, we should ask, are we going to pay for it? Well, we already know; don't we? They are going to come after Medicaid. Forty-four percent of their proposed cuts to fund this tax cut for billionaires are to Medicaid.

They are going to come after Medicare and healthcare generally. They are going to come after the services that keep our veterans housed, our communities healthy, our children educated. All of it—all of it—is on the chopping block, and here is the thing: They are already chopping away.

So let's be crystal clear about what Republicans are asking us to consider. It is a smash-and-grab, targeting not the local store but the national Treasury—a cash grab from the programs that keep so many hard-working families afloat and what will be the biggest wealth transfer in modern American history, and in exactly the wrong direction, from the working and middle-class families to the uber-rich, at a time when billionaires need it the least. Now, don't get me wrong. I am all for people succeeding beyond their wildest imagination. But like everyone else, they should earn it through hard work, not by stealing it from working people.

All of this comes as Elon Musk and Donald Trump seek to co-opt every lever of government to go after anyone who dares stand up to them. When I called out Musk for seeking access to Americans' personal banking and financial data from the IRS, he retweeted one of the replies and aimed it at—well, me, yours truly.

It read:

He's not trying to snoop around my personal finances. He's trying to snoop around yours—

Meaning mine.

They are not even hiding it anymore. The goal has never been to cut government waste or make government more efficient. No, the goal is to help their wealthy friends and go after anyone who dares criticize them or holds them accountable. They plan to use a weaponized IRS, a weaponized DOJ, and a weaponized FBI to investigate and prosecute and persecute Donald Trump's enemies, not just elected officials like myself but anyone who steps out of line: business owners, big or small, who could be next in line for an audit if they express their opposition to the President and what he is doing to hurt them with tariffs or anything else, or journalists who write stories that the President doesn't like—anyone—because anyone standing up to them is standing in the way of their very simple, well-demonstrated goal: One-man rule—give Donald Trump all the power, so he can take from the poor and give to the rich to feed his ego and bank account and that of his pals.

Remember the winter of 2023? Donald Trump stood at the gold-plated Mar-a-Lago podium and told a room full of the richest people in America:

You're all people that have a lot of money. . . . You're rich as hell. . . . We're going to give you tax cuts.

Most of my California constituents are not “rich as hell”—far from it—and Donald Trump couldn't care less about them. The vast majority of them make less in a decade than it costs to pay the million-dollar membership fee at Mar-

a-Lago, let alone the amount necessary to get a gold-plated promise from the now-President that their taxes will get lowered.

But for this administration, it has never been about ordinary Americans. And if you look at what Donald Trump is proposing here, the priority is exceedingly clear. If you look at what Elon Musk has done over the last few weeks, his priority is pretty damn clear as well.

A single mother choosing between paying rent and buying groceries, that is not the priority. A veteran wondering if the housing assistance that helped them get off the street is going to dry up, that is not their priority. But that billionaire who wants another yacht, now that is their priority. When a CEO wants another corporate loophole, that is the priority.

Now, of course, they won't put it that way. They will tell you this is about spurring investment or creating jobs or unleashing the power of the free market. We have heard that story before. Remember 2017, when Donald Trump gave trillions to the wealthy and promised these tax cuts would pay for themselves? Guess what—and you won't believe this. They didn't. They didn't pay for themselves. In fact, they exploded the deficit by as much as \$2 trillion. And now they are telling us the only way to fix the hole they dug is by cutting services for the Americans who actually need them and, of course, more tax cuts for rich people.

We all heard it when they told us: If we just cut corporate taxes a bit more, the savings are sure to trickle down to working families. Well, they didn't. Corporate profits hit record highs. CEO bonuses soared, but wages—wages for regular people—they barely budged, to the point where it would take an average worker at an S&P 500 company almost 200 years to make what their CEO made last year. Just think about that for a moment. It would now take an average worker at an S&P 500 company almost 200 years to make what their CEO made last year.

How is that right? How is that fair? How is that good economics? And how could they possibly want to make that worse?

What is their goal? To provide another tax cut for the wealthy so that it will now take 300 years for an average worker to make what their CEO makes?

We are hearing the same pitch all over again, but, I will tell you, what has changed since 2017, since that last big give-away? Nothing. Nada. Bubkes. They want you to believe that we can afford to shower the wealthiest people and corporations with even more tax breaks, but we can't afford to pay Federal workers, including a ton of veterans who dedicated their lives to serving this country at home and abroad.

Now, we can hand trillions to millionaires and billionaires, but we can't afford to help families afford childcare, or hire firefighters, or fund critical

cancer research—that the real problem, they would have you believe, in the richest country in the world is the program that helps seniors retire with dignity.

At the end of the day, governing is about choices. The choices aren't always easy. There are very few clear choices in a complex and robust democracy, but this should not be a hard choice, because today we are not asked what we can afford. We are asked what we choose to afford. We could choose to invest in our children, in our workers, in our future; or we can choose to hand the wealthiest Americans another tax cut they don't need. We can choose to honor the commitments we made to seniors, to veterans, to families struggling to get by; or we can choose to break those commitments just to make sure that Elon Musk's tax bill stays as low as humanly possible. After all, launching your car into space isn't cheap.

We could choose to build an economy that works for everyone, or we could choose to keep writing blank checks to those who already have more than they could spend in a hundred lifetimes or 200 or 300.

Donald Trump has made his choice. Elon Musk has made his choice. What will we choose?

Donald Trump and Elon Musk would have you believe that America is broke.

America isn't broke, but it is broken for so many people who actually do the work.

So, no, it is not a great day to be a teacher struggling to pay the rent or a nurse working a double shift just to afford groceries. It is not a great day to be a retiree watching Social Security and Medicare under attack. But it is a great day to be a billionaire in America, and that, my colleagues, is exactly the problem.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JUSTICE). The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, when I immigrated to this country from Japan, as a young girl, I spoke no English. But when I enrolled at Koko Head Elementary, I met Ms. Petri, the school librarian who read to us every week. It was Ms. Petri who helped me learn English and instilled in me a lifelong love of reading. The public education I received at school at Koko Head Elementary, gave me—a girl from very humble beginnings—the opportunity to get ahead.

My story is not unique. Our public education system has enabled generations of Americans to get ahead and has been essential to our country's economic success and global leadership. But despite their promises to make life better for working Americans, Donald Trump, Elon Musk, and their billionaire buddies have set their sights on gutting support for public education. Trump has made no secret of his desire to eliminate the Federal Department of Education altogether.

Thankfully, the Department of Education was created by Congress, and only an act of Congress can eliminate it. But, even so, Trump's assault on the Federal Government is already undermining the Department's ability to meet its mission of supporting our Nation's students and teachers. And in their quest to give trillions in handouts to Trump's billionaire buddies, Republicans are poised to gut the Department of Education and programs on which millions of American children rely. They have no problem eliminating Federal funding for programs that support low-income students, low-income schools, students with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, and much more.

Just look at Project 2025. They want to eliminate funding for title I schools, which supports low-income students. We are talking about funding for 49,000 title I schools throughout the country, including 170 schools in my State of Hawaii.

They have no problem coming after Federal funding for programs that provide afterschool care, childcare, and even school meals. None of this is hypothetical. Cutting afterschool programs could make life even harder for working parents already struggling to make ends meet.

Republicans don't seem to give a rip about the millions of children in their schools. They care about one thing and one thing only: delivering for their billionaire buddies. But Democrats care about you, about your family, and about your children's fundamental right to a quality public education. That is why Senator PETERS and I will be introducing a series of amendments to this massive, misguided budget proposal to fund a giveaway for billionaires at the expense of our kids. Our amendments will protect our schools and the services children and families rely on, including an amendment to protect school meals.

This is a simple amendment. It would prevent any reduction in funding for the National School Lunch Program and Breakfast Program, which have been wildly successful in feeding 29.6 million children at 95,000 schools nationwide every single day, including 93,000 children in Hawaii, 102,000 children in South Dakota, 518,000 children in South Carolina, and many, many more. Every single State has thousands of children who rely on the school meals paid for by the Federal Government.

From coast to coast and beyond, these programs keep our kids from going hungry. For many kids, school meals are the only meals they can count on all day. I can't believe we are standing here fighting over whether or not kids have the right to eat, but apparently even that is controversial to my Republican colleagues.

So here we are. It is simple, Mr. President. We have no business depriving our kids of lunch to fund massive giveaways to Trump and his billionaire buddies. It is that simple.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Ms. ROSEN. Mr. President, I rise today to speak on an issue that will affect millions of hard-working families, seniors, children, veterans, and any American who relies on essential services.

As we will soon see, Republicans are going to use the budget reconciliation process—a tool that was originally designed to help rein in wasteful spending and lower the national debt—to pass massive new tax cuts for billionaires and the ultrawealthy. To pay for these tax breaks, they are proposing devastating cuts to vital programs that people in my State of Nevada rely on, including Medicaid, SNAP, supplemental programs for women, infants and children.

Let me say that again. Congressional Republicans are going to cut critical government programs like Medicaid and SNAP in order to give the wealthiest Americans even more tax cuts. You got that right.

Their policies are, well, billionaires win and families lose. This isn't fiscal responsibility; it is moral negligence. This isn't just about economic policy; this is about the livelihoods of everyday Americans.

At a time when Nevadans are already grappling with economic hardship and the rising cost of living, these actions by my Republican colleagues are just plain wrong. They are just out of step. Instead of using this budget process to provide relief for hard-working families, Republicans are exploiting it to push through policies that benefit billionaires like Elon Musk while leaving millions of Americans—I will say everyday, hard-working families, regular people, everyday people—leaving them all behind, leaving you in the lurch. Again, their motto seems to be “billionaires win, families lose.”

Let's remember what Senate Democrats did with the budget process when we were in the majority. Anybody remember? Well, we gave Medicare the power to negotiate for lower prescription drug prices. We capped the cost of insulin at \$35 a month. We helped hard-working Americans who are being crushed by high costs. We stood up to corporate interests on behalf of the middle class. Now my Republican colleagues are in the majority. What do they want to do? Well, again, billionaires win, families lose. They want to give additional billions in tax breaks to the wealthiest Americans while the rest of us are footing the damn bill.

The numbers tell the story. Extending these tax cuts would give the top 1 percent of earners—those making roughly \$750,000 a year or more—a tax cut averaging more than \$60,000 a year. I am going to put that in perspective for a moment. The tax cut that the top 1 percent would get is more than the total income of most families who rely on Medicare or SNAP or just most families in general. It is the top 1 percent.

The two programs Republicans are planning to cut, Medicare and SNAP, they are going to cut them in order to pay the tax cuts—trillions of dollars—for who? Elon Musk and their billionaire buddies. So you heard that right. These expanded tax cuts will cost the Federal Government \$4.2 trillion.

You might be asking yourself, wait, so how are Republicans going to pay for all of this? In order to help offset some of that cost, they are going to decrease funding for Medicaid, SNAP, and other services that support people with disabilities and elderly individuals.

Medicaid alone provides health coverage to almost 80 million Americans, including children, seniors, and people with disabilities, like I said. And these cuts would directly harm some of the most vulnerable people in our society, making it harder and harder for them to get the kind of lifesaving care or just any care that they may need.

In my State of Nevada, more than 800,000 people rely on Medicaid for their healthcare—800,000. Any reduction in its funding would leave these individuals—some of them our friends, our neighbors; they go to church with us—a reduction in funding is going to leave these individuals without access to affordable healthcare or the ability to see a doctor.

Similarly, SNAP is a lifeline for millions of families seeking to feed their children—just feed their children. It feeds our seniors. It helps our working parents. It is estimated that more than 40 million people rely on SNAP just to put food on the table. Nearly one in six people in Nevada benefited from SNAP last year, the majority of whom are children. You have that right—one in six people benefited from SNAP in Nevada. The majority of them are children.

So we are talking about parents who rely on this program to make sure that their kids don't go to bed hungry or that they have breakfast before they go to school. They are feeding hungry kids. But Republicans are proposing cuts to SNAP that would affect millions of families, driving up food insecurity, placing an additional burden on those who can least afford it.

On top of these cuts, you have to consider the cuts that the Trump administration has already made, actions that are hurting veterans' services, healthcare, and good-paying jobs rebuilding our infrastructure.

The Trump administration has already made cuts to the staff of the Department of Veterans Affairs, including the people that staff the Veterans assistance hotline. These cuts are going to have a severe impact on our veterans. They served our country with honor. They deserve the best possible care when they return home. Cutting doctors and nurses and counselors and people who answer the help line—how is that helping those who protected us, who keep our homeland safe? We owe them that. Well, these cuts aren't showing that at all.

The administration has already targeted Medicare for staffing cuts that could undermine healthcare access for seniors across the country. Nearly one in five seniors depends on Medicare for their healthcare needs, and for many, it is their only source of care. Letting go of Medicare employees will impact seniors' ability to access this literal lifeline.

We have also seen attacks from the Trump administration on job-creating infrastructure projects like those authorized in the bipartisan infrastructure law, the Inflation Reduction Act. These projects—well, what I want to tell you is that they support good-paying, American jobs—good-paying jobs in construction and engineering and public works. They fix our roads and our bridges and our trains, our grid. It matters. They build the rail systems that help connect our communities. These are American jobs on American roads, on American rail, on American bridges. We should be keeping these jobs and investing in our infrastructure. These are the folks who help modernize our airports. I can tell you, in my State of Nevada, they support our travel and tourism jobs—a top industry for us.

These jobs modernizing our airports and our infrastructure help everyone across this country, every American—American jobs in America for Americans.

We should be investing in our infrastructure, but the cuts made by the Trump administration mean that projects all over the country are in limbo. Even delayed projects are going to cost jobs and make it harder to rebuild our Nation's infrastructure.

In Nevada, we know how important infrastructure investments are to keeping our economy moving and our communities safe. We are talking about jeopardizing projects to build new solar energy installations and even expanding access to high-speed internet. For us, that is nearly half a billion dollars' worth of Federal funding that has been allocated for Nevada to connect rural communities across our State to just reliable internet.

The loss of funding for projects like this one just doesn't stop at people accessing the internet; it will hurt people who are counting on the jobs a project would create, particularly in our rural communities.

The numbers here are staggering, and the impact is undeniable. We are talking about cuts that have the potential to impact millions of people—people who are working hard every day to make ends meet, to provide for their families, and to ensure they can live with dignity.

These existing cuts, coupled with the Republicans' proposed budget cuts, are just going to be devastating for American families, and the fact that these cuts are being made to give billionaires even more tax breaks—well, it is unconscionable.

The American people deserve better. They deserve a government that works

for them, that works for our families, not for the ultrawealthy.

At the end of the day, Republicans have to decide who they are fighting for because right now, with this budget proposal, they are fighting for billionaires and the largest corporations that have already benefited from their 2017 tax cuts.

We cannot and we must not turn our backs on the American people. We cannot allow billionaires to get richer on the backs of everyday Americans. We cannot let the motto be for this administration "billionaires win and families lose" because families are the backbone of America—families are the backbone of America—and they deserve respect and attention, and we cannot allow the billionaires to break their backs.

So I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to come together and put the American people first—people over billionaires. Let's work together to strengthen our economy, protect our vital programs, and ensure that everyone, regardless of their wealth or status, has an equal opportunity to succeed.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

RECOGNIZING THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AMPHIBIOUS LANDING ON THE JAPANESE ISLAND OF IWO JIMA DURING WORLD WAR II AND THE RAISINGS OF THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES ON MOUNT SURIBACHI

MR. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be discharged from further consideration and the Senate now proceed to S. Res. 53.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 53) recognizing the 80th anniversary of the amphibious landing on the Japanese island of Iwo Jima during World War II and the raisings of the flag of the United States on Mount Suribachi.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

MR. THUNE. Mr. President, 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.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 53) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of February 4, 2025, under "Submitted Resolutions.")

PROVIDING FOR A JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS TO RECEIVE A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H. Con. Res. 11, which was received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 11) providing for a joint session of Congress to receive a message from the President.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to and that the motion 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 concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 11) was agreed to.

RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TODAY

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following Senate resolutions, which were submitted earlier today: S. Res. 84 and S. Res. 85.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolutions en bloc.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolutions be agreed to, the preambles be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, all en bloc.

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

The resolutions (S. Res. 84 and S. Res. 85) were agreed to.

The preambles were agreed to.

(The resolutions, with their preambles, are printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

MORNING BUSINESS

CONFIRMATION OF HOWARD LUTNICK

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I rise today to speak in support of the nomination of Howard Lutnick to be Secretary of the Department of Commerce.

When I met with Mr. Lutnick, I stressed two related issues to him. The first was the importance of being responsive to Congress.

I view listening to whistleblowers and sending letters to Agencies as part of my oversight responsibility to bring transparency to the American people.

Agencies in turn have a responsibility to respond to congressional letters to remain accountable.

I also stressed the impacts that trade retaliation can have on domestic industries, something that Iowa farmers know well.

As international trade continues to heat up in the administration, I expect timely responses from Agencies like Mr. Lutnick's to provide transparency to the American people.

I look forward to working with Mr. Lutnick to foster more fair trade with America's trading partners while remaining transparent with the American people.

TRIBUTE TO RAYMOND LANG

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, for the past five decades, Americans have relied on Amtrak to travel our great Nation. From shuttling President Biden between Delaware and Washington during his early days as a Senator to giving people across the country a way of getting to work and special destinations, Amtrak is an invaluable service to our Nation. And Raymond Lang, who recently retired from Amtrak after 30 years of service, has been an invaluable part of Amtrak.

Ray's career at Amtrak started from humble beginnings, as an intern in Amtrak's government affairs office in 1994. From the start, he was hard-working, reliable, and he loved the work. So, when Amtrak created business units, Ray saw an opportunity to join the company full time, and in 1996, he was dispatched to the Chicago-based intercity business unit's government affairs office. His territory was broad and challenging to manage, with many relationships that required careful attention. At the time, Amtrak was experiencing significant financial challenges, resulting in reduced service. But Ray worked tirelessly—almost always traveling by train—to meet with local and State officials, bringing their perspective and experiences back to Amtrak leadership. In the end, Amtrak restored much of their service.

Ray carried this specialized knowledge with him for the rest of his career with Amtrak. Learning about the communities his company served helped them to become some of the strongest advocates for the future of rail. There were very few mayors, city managers, State legislators, or rail advocates in towns served by Amtrak who did not know Ray. He and his team were ambassadors for rail, mobilizing mayors to speak up on behalf of expanding and improving Amtrak service and making station revitalization a priority in their communities.

Over the years, Ray left his mark on Amtrak, resulting in promotions into positions with greater responsibility and authority. He was integral to keeping the legendary Southwest Chief—a long-distance route between Chicago and Los Angeles—on its current route, thereby keeping rail service in several Kansas, Colorado, and New Mexico towns. He provided testimony to State legislatures and formed partnerships

with State departments of transportation staff and leadership. He helped inaugurate service on countless routes and was instrumental in helping Illinois double its service in the 2000s. And, by the early 2000s, he was running the Chicago government affairs office, later becoming responsible for all State and local government affairs and leading a staff based in New York, New Orleans, Seattle, and Oakland.

Ray was a visible, respected, and accessible leader. And he truly cared about Amtrak and all of the communities it served. He worked for eight CEOs, all of whom relied on Ray for guidance across the network. Ray, always sharply dressed, would escort them to meetings, hearings, and local communities. On one such trip, Ray was traveling to communities along the California Zephyr route with CEO David Gunn. Visiting a mayor in Mount Pleasant, IA, Gunn chose to wear a shirt and slacks while Ray wore a suit and tie. When the mayor welcomed them, he went straight to the man in the suit, shook Ray's hand first, and said: "It is a pleasure to meet you, Mr. Gunn."

In 2020, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, Amtrak promoted Ray to be vice president of State supported services. His vast experience and relationships with communities across the country made him the right person for the job, and he was a steadying hand through Amtrak's pandemic recovery. Highlights of his tenure in leadership include new service in Virginia, Wisconsin, and Minnesota.

Ray's career has been nothing short of exceptional. He has been a trusted partner to my office over the years, and Amtrak is better off because of Ray's leadership—as are the millions of Americans who depend on Amtrak. I wish Ray and his wife Brenda the best of luck in this next, well-deserved chapter of their lives.

ARMS SALES NOTIFICATIONS

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act requires that Congress receive prior notification of certain proposed arms sales as defined by that statute. Upon such notification, the Congress has 30 calendar days during which the sale may be reviewed. The provision stipulates that, in the Senate, the notification of proposed sales shall be sent to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In keeping with the committee's intention to see that relevant information is still available to the full Senate, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the notifications that have been received. If the cover letter references a classified annex, then such an annex is available to all Senators in the office of the Foreign Relations Committee, room SD-423.

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

DEFENSE SECURITY
COOPERATION AGENCY,
Washington, DC.

Hon. JAMES E. RISCH,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, we are forwarding herewith Transmittal No. 24-110, concerning the Air Force's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of Romania for defense articles and services estimated to cost \$84 million. We will issue a news release to notify the public of this proposed sale upon delivery of this letter to your office.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL F. MILLER,
Director.

Enclosures.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 24-110

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended

(i) Prospective Purchaser: Government of Romania.

(ii) Total Estimated Value:

Major Defense Equipment * \$41 million.

Other \$43 million.

Total \$84 million.

Funding Source: National Funds

(iii) Description and Quantity or Quantities of Articles or Services under Consideration for Purchase:

Major Defense Equipment (MDE):

Four hundred (400) Guided Bomb Unit (GBU)-39B Small Diameter Bombs (SDB-I). Two (2) GBU-39 (T-1)/B inert practice bombs with fuze.

Non-Major Defense Equipment:

The following non-MDE items will also be included: GBU-39 tactical training rounds; Common Munitions Built-In-Test (BIT)/Reprogramming Equipment (CMBRE); ADU-890E Computer Test Set Adapter Groups; containers, weapons system support, and support and test equipment; training aids, devices, and spare parts; consumables and accessories, and repair and return support; publications and technical data; personnel training and training equipment; warranties; transportation support; site surveys; U.S. Government and contractor engineering, logistics, and technical support services; and other related elements of logistics and program support.

(iv) Military Department: Air Force (RO-D-YAB).

(v) Prior Related Cases, if any: None.

(vi) Sales Commission, Fee, etc., Paid, Offered, or Agreed to be Paid: None known at this time.

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology Contained in the Defense Article or Defense Services Proposed to be Sold: See Attached Annex.

(viii) Date Report Delivered to Congress: February 18, 2025.

*As defined in Section 47(6) of the Arms Export Control Act.

POLICY JUSTIFICATION

Romania—GBU-39B Small Diameter Bombs

The Government of Romania has requested to buy four hundred (400) Guided Bomb Unit (GBU)-39B Small Diameter Bombs (SDB-I), and two (2) GBU-39 (T-1)/B inert practice bombs with fuze. The following non-MDE items will also be included: GBU-39 tactical training rounds; Common Munitions Built-In-Test (BIT)/Reprogramming Equipment (CMBRE); ADU 890E Computer Test Set Adapter Groups; containers, weapons system support, and support and test equipment; training aids, devices, and spare parts; consumables and accessories, and repair and return support; publications and technical

data; personnel training and training equipment; warranties; transportation support; site surveys; U.S. Government and contractor engineering, logistics, and technical support services; and other related elements of logistics and program support. The estimated total cost is \$84 million.

This proposed sale will support the foreign policy goals and national security objectives of the United States by improving the security of a NATO Ally that is an important force for political and economic stability in Europe.

This proposed sale will improve Romania's capability to meet current and future threats by increasing its ability to deter and defend against all threats and to participate in NATO coalition air operations. Romania will have no difficulty absorbing these articles and services into its armed forces.

The proposed sale of this equipment and support will not alter the basic military balance in the region.

The principal contractor will be The Boeing Company, located in St. Louis, MO. At this time, the U.S. Government is not aware of any offset agreement proposed in connection with this potential sale. Any offset agreement will be defined in negotiations between the purchaser and the contractor.

Implementation of this proposed sale will not require the assignment of any additional U.S. Government or contractor representatives to Romania.

There will be no adverse impact on U.S. defense readiness as a result of this proposed sale.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 24-110

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act

Annex Item No. vii

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology:

1. The Guided Bomb Unit (GBU)-39 Small Diameter Bomb Increment 1 (SDB-I) All Up Round (AUR) is a 250-pound GPS-aided conventional air-to-ground precision glide weapon with an inertial navigation system and small autonomous, day or night, and adverse weather capabilities able to strike fixed and stationary targets from standoff ranges. It is intended to provide aircraft with an ability to carry a high number of bombs. Aircraft are able to carry four SDBs in place of one 2,000-pound bomb.

2. The GBU-39/B inert practice bombs with fuze are identical to a live tactical weapon except that the live warhead is replaced with an inert fill. These bombs are suited for training missions where a flight termination system or collection of telemetry data is not a necessity.

3. Common Munitions Built-In-Test (BIT)/Reprogramming Equipment (CMBRE) is support equipment used to interface with weapon systems to initiate and report BIT results, and upload and download flight software. CMBRE supports multiple munitions platforms with a range of applications that perform preflight checks, periodic maintenance checks, loading of Operational Flight Program (OFF) data, loading of munitions mission planning data, loading of Global Positioning System (GPS) cryptographic keys, and declassification of munitions memory.

4. The ADU-891 Adapter Group Test Set provides the physical and electrical interface between the CMBRE and the bomb.

5. The highest level of classification of defense articles, components, and services included in this potential sale is SECRET.

6. If a technologically advanced adversary were to obtain knowledge of the specific hardware and software elements, the information could be used to develop countermeasures that might reduce system effectiveness or be used in the development of a

system with similar or advanced capabilities.

7. A determination has been made that Romania can provide substantially the same degree of protection for the sensitive technology being released as the U.S. Government. This sale is necessary in furtherance of the U.S. foreign policy and national security objectives outlined in the Policy Justification.

8. All defense articles and services listed in this transmittal have been authorized for release and export to the Government of Romania.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING SWEETHEART BAKERY AND HOMER'S DELI

• Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, as chair of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, each week I recognize an outstanding Iowa small business that exemplifies the American entrepreneurial spirit. This week, it is my privilege to recognize Sweetheart Bakery and Homer's Deli of Clinton, IA, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

In 1950, Sweetheart Bakery began as a small family-owned operation when real-life sweethearts Charlie and Florence Thornton opened their first storefront on Main Avenue. Their son Charles J. Thornton joined the business, learned the beloved recipes, and eventually took the reins when his father passed away. In 1978, Charles, along with his wife Joanne moved Sweetheart Bakery one block west, expanding the business into its current storefront in the Lyons business district. After decades of success, the third generation of the Thornton family officially took over in 1998 when Charles' son Chuck and his wife Brenda purchased the Main Avenue shop. Upon taking over, they merged the family bakery with Homer's Deli, the next-door restaurant that the two also owned and managed.

With each generation, the bakery has evolved while maintaining its family values. Today, Sweetheart Bakery and Homer's Deli remain a family-owned and operated small business, and the fourth generation is already working alongside the business' 33 community-based employees. Chuck and Brenda's children Shauna and Derek help manage daily operations and are part owners of the company. The bakery remains committed to crafting everything from scratch, including its famous cakes, seasonal cookies, pastries, and handmade candy. Their homemade breads and buns, crafted from Grandpa Thornton's 75-year-old recipes, remain customer favorites, as do their world-famous Blarney Stones. Homer's Deli complements the bakery, offering fresh sandwiches and soups, making the establishment a go-to spot for the Clinton community, as well as local organizations looking to cater.

Beyond their commitment to quality food and baked goods, the Thornton

family actively supports the Clinton community. Chuck and Brenda play leading roles in the North River Drive project, working to revitalize the Lyons Business District and bring additional success to their neighboring small businesses. Brenda led many initiatives across the community in her role as president of the Clinton Area Chamber of Commerce, which changed its name to Grow Clinton in 2022. Additionally, while on the board of Mercy One Hospital, Brenda worked to bring essential oncology equipment to Clinton. Chuck previously served as the president of the Lyons Business Association and partnered with the local middle school to teach Junior Achievement for many years. Today, Shauna currently serves as the secretary of the Lyons Business Association and leads as cochair of the annual chili cook-off and the Clinton Christmas Walk. In March, the Thornton family will celebrate the 75th anniversary of Sweetheart Bakery and Homer's Deli in Iowa.

With a legacy spanning over seven decades, Sweetheart Bakery and Homer's Deli's commitment to family values, incredible baking, and community service is clear. I want to congratulate the Thornton family and their entire team for bringing family baked goods, sandwiches, and more to communities across Iowa. I look forward to seeing their continued success.●

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. CRUZ, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, without amendment:

S. Res. 82. An original resolution authorizing expenditures by the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

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. SCOTT of Florida (for himself and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. 626. A bill to improve the communications between social media platforms and law enforcement agencies, to establish the Federal Trade Commission Platform Safety Advisory Committee, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. SCHMITT (for himself, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. TUBERVILLE, Mr. KAINE, Mrs. BRITT, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. COONS, Mr. MORAN, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. FETTERMAN, Mr. WARNOCK, Mr. SULLIVAN, and Mr. KELLY):

S. 627. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make certain provisions with respect to qualified ABLE programs permanent; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina (for himself, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. BUDD, and Mr. MORENO):

S. 628. A bill to suspend the entry of covered aliens in response to the fentanyl public

health crisis; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. FISCHER (for herself, Mr. LUJÁN, and Mr. SCHIFF):

S. 629. A bill to amend the Agricultural Credit Act of 1978 to remove barriers to agricultural producers in accessing funds to carry out emergency measures under the emergency conservation program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. MULLIN (for himself and Mr. LANKFORD):

S. 630. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Treasury to make payments to the Quapaw Nation and certain members of the Quapaw Nation in accordance with the recommendation of the United States Court of Federal Claims, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mrs. CAPITO (for herself and Mr. WARNER):

S. 631. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to enhance the rehabilitation credit for buildings in rural areas; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. CORTEZ MASTO (for herself and Mr. MULLIN):

S. 632. A bill to amend the Indian Health Care Improvement Act to allow Indian Health Service scholarship and loan recipients to fulfill service obligations through half-time clinical practice, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Ms. CORTEZ MASTO (for herself, Mr. CRAMER, and Mr. ROUNDS):

S. 633. A bill to amend title 31, United States Code, to require the Secretary to mint and issue certain Presidential and First Spouse coins; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Ms. DUCKWORTH (for herself, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. KAINE, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. PADILLA, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. REED, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. WELCH, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. SMITH, and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 634. A bill to ensure due process protections of individuals in the United States against unlawful detention based solely on a protected characteristic; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. TUBERVILLE (for himself and Mr. SCOTT of Florida):

S. 635. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to recognize nurse registries for purposes of the Veterans Community Care Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. HICKENLOOPER (for himself and Ms. HASSAN):

S. 636. A bill to provide collective bargaining rights for public safety officers employed by States or their political subdivisions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. LUJÁN (for himself, Mr. CURTIS, and Mr. HEINRICH):

S. 637. A bill to amend the Northwestern New Mexico Rural Water Projects Act to make improvements to that Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Ms. SMITH (for herself and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 638. A bill to amend the Act of June 22, 1948; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mrs. BRITT (for herself and Ms. HASSAN):

S. 639. A bill to allow a period in which members of the clergy may revoke their exemption from Social Security coverage, and

for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. LUJÁN (for himself and Mr. HEINRICH):

S. 640. A bill to amend the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 to make a technical correction to the Navajo Nation Water Resources Development Trust Fund, to amend the Claims Resolution Act of 2010 to make technical corrections to the Taos Pueblo Water Development Fund and Aamodt Settlement Pueblos' Fund, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. KING, Mr. MERKLEY, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mr. WELCH):

S. 641. A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to allow for the personal importation of safe and affordable drugs from approved pharmacies in Canada; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. PETERS (for himself and Ms. SLOTKIN):

S. 642. A bill to provide compensation to the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community for the taking without just compensation of land by the United States inside the exterior boundaries of the L'Anse Indian Reservation that were guaranteed to the Community under a treaty signed in 1854, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. CRUZ:

S. Res. 82. An original resolution authorizing expenditures by the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation; from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. SCHATZ (for himself and Ms. HIRONO):

S. Res. 83. A resolution designating February 2025 as "Hawaiian Language Month" or "Ōlelo Hawai'i Month"; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. FETTERMAN (for himself, Mr. MCCORMICK, Mr. COONS, Mr. KIM, and Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER):

S. Res. 84. A resolution congratulating the Philadelphia Eagles on their victory in Super Bowl LIX in the successful 105th season of the National Football League; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. WICKER (for himself and Mrs. HYDE-SMITH):

S. Res. 85. A resolution congratulating the Jackson State University Tigers for winning the 2024 Celebration Bowl; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 94

At the request of Mr. CRAMER, the names of the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST) and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) were added as cosponsors of S. 94, a bill to award 3 Congressional Gold Medals to the members of the 1980 United States Olympic Men's Ice Hockey Team, in recognition of their extraordinary achievement at the XIII Olympic Winter Games where, being comprised of amateur collegiate

players, they defeated the dominant Soviet ice hockey team in the historic “Miracle on Ice”, revitalizing morale in the United States at the height of the Cold War, inspiring generations, and transforming the sport of ice hockey in the United States.

S. 121

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 121, a bill to extend the statute of limitations for violations relating to pandemic-era programs to be 10 years.

S. 160

At the request of Mr. SHEEHY, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 160, a bill to amend the Wildfire Suppression Aircraft Transfer Act of 1996 to reauthorize the sale by the Department of Defense of aircraft and parts for wildfire suppression purposes, and for other purposes.

S. 291

At the request of Mr. PADILLA, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. GALLEGO) was added as a cosponsor of 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.

S. 307

At the request of Mrs. BLACKBURN, the names of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. JUSTICE) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY) were added as cosponsors of S. 307, a bill to address sexual harassment and sexual assault of Bureau of Prisons staff in prisons, and for other purposes.

S. 366

At the request of Mr. PADILLA, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 366, a bill to posthumously award a Congressional Gold Medal to Muhammad Ali, in recognition of his contributions to the United States.

S. 371

At the request of Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 371, a bill to require certain reports on small business disaster assistance to be published on the website of the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes.

S. 401

At the request of Mr. CRAMER, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. HUSTED) was added as a cosponsor of S. 401, a bill to amend the Federal Reserve Act to prohibit certain financial service providers who deny fair access to financial services from using taxpayer funded discount window lending programs, and for other purposes.

S. 419

At the request of Mr. HAWLEY, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. SHEEHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 419, a bill to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of

1968 to reauthorize grants to support law enforcement officers and families, and for other purposes.

S. 540

At the request of Mr. TUBERVILLE, the names of the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT) and the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) were added as cosponsors of S. 540, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the consideration of continuity of health care in determining best medical interest under the Veterans Community Care Program, and for other purposes.

S. 546

At the request of Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, the names of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) and the Senator from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 546, a bill to amend the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 to make a technical correction to the water rights settlement for the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Reservation, and for other purposes.

S. 583

At the request of Mr. LEE, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. SHEEHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 583, a bill to amend chapter 9 of title 5, United States Code, to reauthorize the executive reorganization authority of the President and to ensure efficient executive reorganization, and for other purposes.

S. 593

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 593, a bill to amend the Clean Air Act to modify Reid Vapor Pressure requirements and to provide for the return of certain retired credits, and for other purposes.

S. 605

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the names of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) were added as cosponsors of S. 605, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to increase the maximum age for children eligible for medical care under the CHAMPVA program, and for other purposes.

S.J. RES. 10

At the request of Mr. KAINE, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 10, a joint resolution terminating the national emergency declared with respect to energy.

S.J. RES. 18

At the request of Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 18, a joint resolution disapproving the rule submitted by the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection relating to “Overdraft Lending: Very Large Financial Institutions”.

S. RES. 53

At the request of Mr. YOUNG, the names of the Senator from North Caro-

lina (Mr. BUDD), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER), the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. RICKETTS), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KELLY), the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO), the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) and the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 53, a resolution recognizing the 80th anniversary of the amphibious landing on the Japanese island of Iwo Jima during World War II and the raisings of the flag of the United States on Mount Suribachi.

S. RES. 72

At the request of Mr. GRAHAM, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 72, a resolution affirming that Hamas cannot retain any political or military control in the Gaza Strip.

S. RES. 75

At the request of Mr. TILLIS, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 75, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that member countries of NATO must commit at least 2 percent of their national gross domestic product to national defense spending to hold leadership or benefit at the expense of those countries who meet their obligations.

S. RES. 81

At the request of Mr. RICKETTS, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 81, a resolution calling on the United Kingdom, France, and Germany (E3) to initiate the snapback of sanctions on Iran under United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231 (2015).

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 82—AUTHORIZING EXPENDITURES BY THE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. CRUZ submitted the following resolution; from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration:

S. RES. 82

Resolved,

SECTION 1. GENERAL AUTHORITY.

In carrying out its powers, duties, and functions under the Standing Rules of the Senate, in accordance with its jurisdiction under rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate, including holding hearings, reporting such hearings, and making investigations as authorized by paragraphs 1 and 8 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation (in this resolution referred to as the “committee”) is authorized from March 1, 2025, through February 28, 2027, in its discretion, to—

- (1) make expenditures from the contingent fund of the Senate;
- (2) employ personnel; and
- (3) with the prior consent of the Government department or agency concerned and

the Committee on Rules and Administration, use on a reimbursable or nonreimbursable basis the services of personnel of any such department or agency.

SEC. 2. EXPENSES.

(a) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2025.—The expenses of the committee for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025, under this resolution shall not exceed \$6,259,693, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$100,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$100,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of the committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(b) EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 PERIOD.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026, under this resolution shall not exceed \$10,730,903, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$100,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$100,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of the committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

(c) EXPENSES FOR PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 28, 2027.—The expenses of the committee for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027, under this resolution shall not exceed \$4,471,210, of which amount—

(1) not to exceed \$100,000 may be expended for the procurement of the services of individual consultants, or organizations thereof (as authorized by section 202(i) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 (2 U.S.C. 4301(i))); and

(2) not to exceed \$100,000 may be expended for the training of the professional staff of the committee (under procedures specified by section 202(j) of that Act).

SEC. 3. EXPENSES AND AGENCY CONTRIBUTIONS.

(a) EXPENSES OF THE COMMITTEE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), expenses of the committee under this resolution shall be paid from the contingent fund of the Senate upon vouchers approved by the chairman of the committee.

(2) VOUCHERS NOT REQUIRED.—Vouchers shall not be required for—

(A) the disbursement of salaries of employees paid at an annual rate;

(B) the payment of telecommunications provided by the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper;

(C) the payment of stationery supplies purchased through the Keeper of the Stationery;

(D) payments to the Postmaster of the Senate;

(E) the payment of metered charges on copying equipment provided by the Office of the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper;

(F) the payment of Senate Recording and Photographic Services; or

(G) the payment of franked and mass mail costs by the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper.

(b) AGENCY CONTRIBUTIONS.—There are authorized to be paid from the appropriations account for “Expenses of Inquiries and Investigations” of the Senate such sums as may be necessary for agency contributions related to the compensation of employees of the committee—

(1) for the period March 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025;

(2) for the period October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026; and

(3) for the period October 1, 2026, through February 28, 2027.

SENATE RESOLUTION 83—DESIGNATING FEBRUARY 2025 AS “HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE MONTH” OR “‘ŌLELO HAWAI‘I MONTH”

Mr. SCHATZ (for himself and Ms. HIRONO) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 83

Whereas the Hawaiian language, or ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i—

(1) is the Native language of Native Hawaiians, the aboriginal, Indigenous people who—

(A) settled the Hawaiian archipelago as early as 300 A.D., over which they exercised sovereignty; and

(B) over time, founded the Kingdom of Hawai‘i; and

(2) was once widely spoken by Native Hawaiians and non-Native Hawaiians throughout the Kingdom of Hawai‘i, which held one of the highest literacy rates in the world prior to the illegal overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i in 1893 and the establishment of the Republic of Hawai‘i;

Whereas the Republic of Hawai‘i enacted a law in 1896 effectively banning school instruction in ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i, which led to the near extinction of the language by the 1980s when fewer than 50 fluent speakers under 18 years old remained;

Whereas, since the 1960s, Native Hawaiians have led a grassroots revitalization of their Native language, launching a number of historic initiatives, including—

(1) ‘Aha Pūnana Leo’s Hawaiian language immersion preschools;

(2) the Hawaiian language immersion program of the Hawai‘i State Department of Education; and

(3) the Hawaiian language programs of the University of Hawai‘i system;

Whereas the Hawaiian language revitalization movement inspired systemic Native language policy reform, including—

(1) the State of Hawai‘i recognizing ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i as an official language in the Constitution of the State of Hawai‘i in 1978;

(2) the State of Hawai‘i removing the 90-year ban on teaching ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i in public and private schools in 1986;

(3) the enactment of the Native American Languages Act (25 U.S.C. 2901 et seq.) in 1990, which established the policy of the United States to preserve, protect, and promote the rights and freedom of Native Americans to use, practice, and develop Native American languages; and

(4) the State of Hawai‘i designating the month of February as “‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i Month” to celebrate and encourage the use of the Hawaiian language; and

Whereas the enactment of the Native American Language Resource Center Act of 2022 (20 U.S.C. 7457) in 2023—

(1) reconfirmed a Federal commitment to revitalizing Indigenous languages, including the Hawaiian language; and

(2) resulted in the Department of Education awarding the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo a 5-year grant to establish the first National Native American Language Resource Center: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates February 2025 as “Hawaiian Language Month” or “‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i Month”;

(2) commits to preserving, protecting, and promoting the use, practice, and development of ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i in alignment with the Native American Languages Act (25 U.S.C. 2901 et seq.); and

(3) urges the people of the United States and interested groups to celebrate ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i Month with appropriate activities and programs to demonstrate support for ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i.

SENATE RESOLUTION 84—CONGRATULATING THE PHILADELPHIA EAGLES ON THEIR VICTORY IN SUPER BOWL LIX IN THE SUCCESSFUL 105TH SEASON OF THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

Mr. FETTERMAN (for himself, Mr. MCCORMICK, Mr. COONS, Mr. KIM, and Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 84

Whereas, on Sunday, February 9, 2025, the Philadelphia Eagles defeated the Kansas City Chiefs by a score of 40 to 22 to win Super Bowl LIX in New Orleans, Louisiana;

Whereas the Eagles made their fifth Super Bowl appearance and won their second Super Bowl;

Whereas the Eagles took the lead with under 7 minutes remaining in the first quarter via a 1-yard rush by Eagles quarterback Jalen Hurts utilizing the “Tush Push”;

Whereas the Eagles never relinquished their lead for the duration of the game;

Whereas the combined efforts of the Eagles offensive line, the tallest and heaviest starting offensive line in NFL history, paved the way for 135 total rushing yards in the game;

Whereas Eagles quarterback Jalen Hurts completed 17 of 22 pass attempts for 221 yards and 2 touchdowns, rushed 11 times for 72 yards and 1 touchdown, and was named Super Bowl LIX’s Most Valuable Player;

Whereas Eagles kicker Jake Elliott went 4-for-4 in field goal attempts and 4-for-4 in point-after-touchdown attempts, including a 50-yard field goal;

Whereas Eagles running back Saquon Barkley of Coplay, Pennsylvania, rushed 25 times for 57 yards, adding to his overall rushing total of 2,504 yards for the 2024–2025 NFL season and postseason, the most rushing yards in a single season of any running back in NFL history;

Whereas wide receiver Devonta Smith led the Eagles with 4 receptions for 69 yards and 1 touchdown;

Whereas defensive end Josh Sweat led the Eagles defensive line with 2.5 sacks of Patrick Mahomes and 2 tackles for loss;

Whereas Eagles cornerback Cooper DeJean intercepted a pass from Patrick Mahomes and returned the pass for a touchdown in the first quarter, the first interception return for a touchdown by a rookie player in Super Bowl history;

Whereas linebacker Zack Baun led the Eagles defense with 7 tackles and intercepted another pass from Patrick Mahomes with less than 2 minutes in the first half;

Whereas the Eagles defense held the Chiefs offense to 0 points in the first half;

Whereas the entire roster of the Eagles contributed to the Super Bowl victory;

Whereas the victory of the Philadelphia Eagles in Super Bowl LIX instills a sense of pride for Eagles fans across the country; and

Whereas people all over the world are saying, “Go Birds!”: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates the Philadelphia Eagles and their entire staff and fans everywhere of the Philadelphia Eagles for their victory in Super Bowl LIX; and

(2) respectfully directs the Secretary of the Senate to transmit an enrolled copy of this resolution to—

(A) the chairman and chief executive officer of the Philadelphia Eagles, Jeffrey Lurie;

(B) the executive vice president and general manager of the Philadelphia Eagles, Howie Roseman, and the head coach of the Philadelphia Eagles, Nick Sirianni; and

(C) the senior advisor to the general manager and chief security officer for the Philadelphia Eagles, Dom DiSandro.

SENATE RESOLUTION 85—CONGRATULATING THE JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY TIGERS FOR WINNING THE 2024 CELEBRATION BOWL

Mr. WICKER (for himself and Mrs. HYDE-SMITH) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 85

Whereas, on Saturday, December 14, 2024, the Jackson State University football team won the 2024 Celebration Bowl, which is played every year between the conference champions of the Southwestern Athletic Conference and the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference;

Whereas the Celebration Bowl is widely respected as a national title game for Historically Black Colleges and Universities, succeeding the previous Pelican Bowl and Heritage Bowl;

Whereas the Jackson State University Tigers defeated the South Carolina State University Bulldogs 28-7 and claimed the Celebration Bowl trophy for the first time in program history;

Whereas the Jackson State University football team only lost 2 games during the 2024 college football season, finishing the season with a record of 12-2 and the first-ranked team in the Southwestern Athletic Conference;

Whereas the Jackson State University football team averaged 36.43 points per game during the 2024 season;

Whereas the Jackson State University football team completed a ground-breaking run through the postseason, finishing on top of 17 other universities in the Southwestern Athletic Conference and the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference;

Whereas running back Travis Terrell Jr. was named the 2024 Southwestern Athletic Conference Freshman of the Year and Special Teams Player of the Year;

Whereas running back Irv Mulligan was named the Southwestern Athletic Conference Offensive Player of the Year;

Whereas head coach T.C. Taylor was named the Southwestern Athletic Conference Head Coach of the Year;

Whereas head coach T.C. Taylor, having led the Jackson State University football team for 2 seasons as its 22nd head coach, carried the team to a 19-6 record for the past 2 seasons;

Whereas the Jackson State University football team's home stadium, the Mississippi Veterans Memorial Stadium, honors military veterans and their families who have sacrificed their lives in service to the State of Mississippi and the United States; and

Whereas the Jackson State University football team displayed outstanding dedication, teamwork, and sportsmanship, bringing tremendous pride and honor to—

(1) Jackson State University;
(2) loyal fans of the Jackson State University Tigers; and
(3) the entire State of Mississippi: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates Jackson State University, as well as its athletes, coaching staff,

administration, faculty, students, and alumni, for winning the 2024 Celebration Bowl;

(2) recognizes Jackson State University for its excellence as an institution of higher education; and

(3) respectfully requests that the Secretary of the Senate transmit an enrolled copy of this resolution to—

(A) the president of Jackson State University, Dr. Marcus L. Thompson;

(B) the athletic director of Jackson State University, Ashley Robinson; and

(C) the head coach of the Jackson State University football team, T.C. Taylor.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 98. Mr. WHITEHOUSE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 99. Mr. HEINRICH submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 100. Mr. HEINRICH submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 101. Mr. HEINRICH submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 102. Mr. HEINRICH submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 103. Mr. HEINRICH submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 104. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 105. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 106. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 107. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 108. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 109. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 110. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 111. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 112. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 113. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 114. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the

concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 115. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 116. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 117. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 118. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 119. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 120. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 121. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 122. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 123. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 124. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 125. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 126. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 127. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 128. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 129. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 130. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 131. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 132. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 133. Ms. HIRONO (for herself and Mr. PETERS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 134. Ms. HIRONO (for herself and Mr. PETERS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 135. Ms. HIRONO (for herself and Mr. PETERS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 136. Ms. HIRONO (for herself and Mr. PETERS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 137. Ms. HIRONO (for herself and Mr. PETERS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 138. Ms. HIRONO (for herself and Mr. PETERS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 139. Ms. HIRONO (for herself and Mr. PETERS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 140. Ms. HIRONO (for herself and Mr. PETERS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 141. Ms. HIRONO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 142. Mr. REED submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 143. Mr. REED submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 144. Mr. REED submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 145. Mr. REED submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 146. Mr. REED submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 147. Mr. REED submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 148. Mr. REED submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 149. Mr. REED submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 150. Mr. REED submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 151. Mr. REED submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 152. Mr. REED submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 153. Ms. HIRONO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 154. Ms. HIRONO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 155. Ms. HIRONO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 156. Ms. HIRONO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 157. Ms. HIRONO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 158. Ms. HIRONO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 159. Ms. HIRONO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 98. Mr. WHITEHOUSE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 48, strike lines 13 through 18.

SA 99. Mr. HEINRICH submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title IV, add the following:

SEC. 4. POINT OF ORDER AGAINST INCREASING THE COST OF CONSUMER GOODS.

(a) POINT OF ORDER.—It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider any bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, amendment between the Houses, or conference report that would increase the costs of consumer goods and services bought for consumption by households in the United States as measured by the Consumer Price Index published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Department of Labor.

(b) WAIVER AND APPEAL.—Subsection (a) may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under subsection (a).

SA 100. Mr. HEINRICH submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title IV, add the following:

SEC. . POINT OF ORDER AGAINST LIMITING VETERAN-OWNED BUSINESSES ACCESS TO SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION LOAN PROGRAMS.

(a) POINT OF ORDER.—It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider any bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, amendment between the Houses, or conference report that limit veteran-owned

businesses access to Small Business Administration loan programs.

(b) WAIVER AND APPEAL.—Subsection (a) may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under subsection (a).

SA 101. Mr. HEINRICH submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. . DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO FUNDING FOR GRANTS AWARDED BY THE OFFICE ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to providing funding for grants awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women of the Department of Justice that are designed to develop the capacity of the United States to reduce domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking by strengthening services to victims and holding offenders accountable, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

SA 102. Mr. HEINRICH submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO ACCEPTABLE PROOFS OF UNITED STATES CITIZENSHIP FOR TRIBAL CITIZENS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to protecting Tribal citizens from immigration enforcement efforts by requiring that the Secretary of Homeland Security consult with Indian Tribes and issue guidance to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Indian Tribes on forms of Tribal identification that are acceptable proofs of United States citizenship by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

SA 103. Mr. HEINRICH submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, add the following:
SEC. ____. **DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO HIRING THE NECESSARY NUMBER OF MEAT INSPECTION STAFF.**

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to providing funding for the Department of Agriculture to establish and implement policies that result in increased staffing capacity for the Food Safety and Inspection Service to maintain the highest levels of food safety in the meat and poultry supply chain by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2029 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

SA 104. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, add the following:
SEC. ____. **DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO AMERICAN MANUFACTURING JOBS AND ENERGY SECURITY.**

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to requiring Executive Branch agencies to disburse funds to grantees that have signed legal obligations with the Federal Government to obtain funds that have been legally appropriated by Congress, which may include funds made available by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Public Law 117-58; 135 Stat. 429), to create American manufacturing jobs and increase the energy security of the United States by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

SA 105. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. ____. **DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO AFFORDABLE, CLEAN ENERGY FOR AMERICAN FARMERS AND RURAL SMALL BUSINESSES.**

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to requiring Executive Branch agencies to disburse funds to grantees that have signed legal obligations with the Federal Government to obtain funds that have been legally appropriated by Congress to deploy cheap, clean energy for American farmers and rural small businesses, which may include funds made available under Public Law 117-169 (136 Stat. 1818) (commonly known as the “Inflation Reduction Act of 2022”), by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

SEC. ____. **SENSE OF THE SENATE.**

It is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) funds described in the immediately preceding section should be released to farmers, agriculture producers, and rural small businesses to reimburse costs already incurred on projects that have been constructed;

(2) continuing to hold those funds risks putting significant financial strain on those farmers, agriculture producers, and rural small businesses because of their inability to recoup funding to which they are legally entitled; and

(3) at a time when the rural economy of the United States needs financial certainty, the Federal Government should not be sending more shockwaves through the rural economy and food producers.

SA 106. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3 ____. **DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO THE REINSTATEMENT OF FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION WORKERS.**

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to the reinstatement of Federal Aviation Administration workers who have been terminated since January 20, 2025, without cause nor based on a performance review or conduct in the workplace, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

SA 107. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States

Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3 ____. **DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO REQUIRING FEDERAL AGENCIES TO DISBURSE FUNDS THAT HAVE BEEN LEGALLY APPROPRIATED AND OBLIGATED UNDER THE INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AND JOBS ACT.**

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to requiring Federal agencies to disburse funds to grant recipients that have signed legal obligations with the Federal Government to obtain funds that have been legally appropriated by Congress, which may include funds made available by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Public Law 117-58; 135 Stat. 429), by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

SA 108. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3 ____. **DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO PUBLIC HEALTH AND BIOSECURITY.**

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to safeguarding United States public health and biosecurity, which may include restoring United States leadership in global efforts to monitor, prevent, and respond to infectious disease outbreaks, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

SA 109. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3 ____. **DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH.**

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this

resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to promoting global public health, which may include restoring long-standing efforts to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and neglected tropical diseases, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

SA 110. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO LOWERING THE PRICE OF EGGS FOR AMERICAN CONSUMERS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to lowering the price of eggs for American consumers, which may include reversing cuts to the critical programs and personnel responsible for efforts to monitor and respond to outbreaks of avian influenza, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

SA 111. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO PROHIBITING THE CLOSURE OR RELOCATION OF FEDERAL AGENCIES WITHOUT CONGRESSIONAL AUTHORIZATION.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to prohibiting the closure or relocation of Federal agencies without congressional authorization by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2029 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

SA 112. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S.

Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO PROTECTING CLASSIFIED AND SENSITIVE INFORMATION ON PROGRAMS AND INDIVIDUALS OF THE UNITED STATES FROM BEING ACCESSED BY DOGE EMPLOYEES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to protecting classified and sensitive information on programs and individuals of the United States from being accessed by employees of the U.S. DOGE Service Temporary Organization established under Executive Order 14158 (90 Fed. Reg. 8441; relating to establishing and implementing the President's Department of Government Efficiency) by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2029 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

SA 113. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title IV, add the following:

SEC. 4. POINT OF ORDER AGAINST RECONCILIATION LEGISLATION DURING PENDENCY OF CERTAIN LITIGATION.

(a) POINT OF ORDER.—It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider a reconciliation bill or a reconciliation resolution pursuant to section 310 of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 644), or an amendment to, conference report on, or amendment between the Houses in relation to such a bill or resolution, during any period in which there is litigation pending against the President or another Federal officer alleging a violation of section 1202 or 1211 of title 5, United States Code.

(b) WAIVER AND APPEAL.—Subsection (a) may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under subsection (a).

SA 114. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title IV, add the following:

SEC. 4. POINT OF ORDER AGAINST RECONCILIATION WHEN ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE LIMITATIONS HAVE BEEN EXCEEDED.

(a) POINT OF ORDER.—It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider a reconciliation bill or a reconciliation resolution pursuant to section 310 of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 644), or an amendment to, conference report on, or amendment between the Houses in relation to such a bill or resolution, if, during the calendar year in which that consideration occurs, any employee has been placed in administrative leave for more than a total of 10 work days in violation of section 6329a(b)(1) of title 5, United States Code.

(b) WAIVER AND APPEAL.—Subsection (a) may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under subsection (a).

SA 115. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO PROHIBITING CUTS TO CRITICAL HEALTH PROGRAMS, WHICH MAY INCLUDE PREVENTING THE INSTITUTION OF A MEDICAID PER CAPITA CAP POLICY.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to prohibiting cuts to critical health programs, which may include preventing the institution of a Medicaid per capita cap policy, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2029 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

SA 116. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title IV, add the following:

SEC. 4. POINT OF ORDER AGAINST ANY RECONCILIATION LEGISLATION THAT WOULD INCREASE HEALTH CARE COSTS FOR CHILDREN RECEIVING MEDICAID.

(a) POINT OF ORDER.—It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider a reconciliation bill or a reconciliation resolution pursuant to section 310 of the Congressional

Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 644), or an amendment to, conference report on, or amendment between the Houses in relation to such a bill or resolution that would increase health care costs for children receiving Medicaid.

(b) **WAIVER AND APPEAL.**—Subsection (a) may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under subsection (a).

SA 117. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO PROTECTING DULY-ENACTED APPROPRIATIONS FROM UNCONSTITUTIONAL CANCELLATION BY THE PRESIDENT.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to protecting duly-enacted appropriations from unconstitutional cancellation by the President by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2029 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

SA 118. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title IV, add the following:

SEC. 4. POINT OF ORDER AGAINST CONSIDERATION OF ANY NEW SPENDING OR REVENUE LEGISLATION.

(a) **POINT OF ORDER.**—It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider any bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, amendment between the Houses, or conference report provides new budget authority for any fiscal year or that would increase or decrease revenue for any fiscal during any period during which there is an ongoing violation of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974, as determined by the Comptroller General of the United States.

(b) **WAIVER AND APPEAL.**—Subsection (a) may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under subsection (a).

SA 119. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title IV, add the following:

SEC. 4. POINT OF ORDER AGAINST CONSIDERING RECONCILIATION LEGISLATION.

(a) **POINT OF ORDER.**—It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider a reconciliation bill or a reconciliation resolution pursuant to section 310 of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 644), or an amendment to, conference report on, or amendment between the Houses in relation to such a bill or resolution, during a period during which there is an ongoing violation of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974, as determined by the Comptroller General of the United States.

(b) **WAIVER AND APPEAL.**—Subsection (a) may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under subsection (a).

SA 120. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title IV, add the following:

SEC. 4. POINT OF ORDER AGAINST RECONCILIATION LEGISLATION THAT WOULD RESCIND OBLIGATED OR AWARDED AMOUNTS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER THE INFLATION REDUCTION ACT OF 2022.

(a) **POINT OF ORDER.**—It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider a reconciliation bill or a reconciliation resolution pursuant to section 310 of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 644), or an amendment to, conference report on, or amendment between the Houses in relation to such a bill or resolution, that rescinds amounts made available under Public Law 117-169 (136 Stat. 1818), commonly known as the “Inflation Reduction Act of 2022”, that have been obligated or awarded.

(b) **WAIVER AND APPEAL.**—Subsection (a) may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under subsection (a).

SA 121. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and

setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title IV, add the following:

SEC. 4. POINT OF ORDER AGAINST CONSIDERING FUNDING LEGISLATION FOR THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT WHILE THERE IS PENDING LITIGATION ALLEGING A VIOLATION OF THE TAKE CARE CLAUSE.

(a) **POINT OF ORDER.**—It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider any bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, amendment between the Houses, or conference report that provides new budget authority for the Office of the President or the White House Office during any period during which there is litigation pending against the President or another officer or employee of the executive branch alleging a violation of the requirement under article II, section 3 of the Constitution of the United States that the President “shall take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed” (commonly known as the “Take Care Clause”).

(b) **WAIVER AND APPEAL.**—Subsection (a) may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under subsection (a).

SA 122. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title IV, add the following:

SEC. 4. POINT OF ORDER AGAINST CONSIDERATION OF RECONCILIATION LEGISLATION UNTIL THE CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE CERTIFIES THAT HEALTH, EDUCATION, RESEARCH, LAW ENFORCEMENT, AND FOREIGN AID FUNDING AUTHORIZED BY CONGRESS IS NOT SUBJECT TO PROGRAMMATIC FUNDING DELAYS, DEFERRALS, OR RESCIS-SIONS.

(a) **POINT OF ORDER.**—On and after the first day of a fiscal year, it shall not be in order in the Senate to consider a reconciliation bill or a reconciliation resolution pursuant to section 310 of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 644), or an amendment to, conference report on, or amendment between the Houses in relation to such a bill or resolution, unless the Director of the Congressional Budget Office has submitted to Congress a certification indicating that amounts appropriated for health, education, research, law enforcement, and foreign aid for such fiscal year are not being subject to programmatic funding delays, deferrals, or rescissions.

(b) **WAIVER AND APPEAL.**—Subsection (a) may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under subsection (a).

SA 123. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by

him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title IV, add the following:

SEC. 4. POINT OF ORDER AGAINST RECONCILIATION LEGISLATION THAT WOULD INCREASE THE COST OF CHILD CARE FOR UNITED STATES FAMILIES.

(a) POINT OF ORDER.—It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider a reconciliation bill or a reconciliation resolution pursuant to section 310 of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 644), or an amendment to, conference report on, or amendment between the Houses in relation to such a bill or resolution, that would increase the cost of child care for United States families.

(b) WAIVER AND APPEAL.—Subsection (a) may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under subsection (a).

SA 124. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO ENSURING THAT EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION, AND ELEMENTS OF THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY ARE NOT SUBJECT TO RETALIATION AND FIRING DUE TO POLITICAL PREFERENCES OF ANY PRESIDENTIAL ADMINISTRATION.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to ensuring that employees of the Department of Justice, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and elements of the intelligence community are not subject to retaliation and firing due to political preferences of any Presidential administration by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2029 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

SA 125. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034;

which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO PROVIDING AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE FOR AMERICAN FAMILIES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to providing affordable health care for American families, which may include making permanent the extended and expanded advance premium tax credits, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2029 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

SA 126. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO PRESERVING FUNDING AND CURRENT STAFFING LEVELS AT THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to preserving funding and current staffing levels, as of the date of adoption of this resolution, at the Department of Education, which may include supporting the Department's mission of supporting elementary and secondary education and higher education, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2029 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

SA 127. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title IV, insert the following:

SEC. 4. POINT OF ORDER AGAINST RECONCILIATION LEGISLATION THAT WOULD INCREASE MONTHLY STUDENT LOAN COSTS FOR FEDERAL STUDENT LOAN BORROWERS.

(a) POINT OF ORDER.—It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider any bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, amendment between the Houses, or con-

ference report reported pursuant to section 2002, or an amendment to, conference report on, or amendment between the Houses in relation to such a bill or joint resolution, that would increase monthly student loan costs for borrowers of Federal student loans.

(b) WAIVER AND APPEAL.—Subsection (a) may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under subsection (a).

SA 128. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title IV, add the following:

SEC. 4. POINT OF ORDER AGAINST RECONCILIATION LEGISLATION IF CERTAIN FEDERAL CIVIL SERVICE LAWS ARE BEING VIOLATED.

(a) POINT OF ORDER.—It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider a reconciliation bill or a reconciliation resolution pursuant to section 310 of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 644), or an amendment to, conference report on, or amendment between the Houses in relation to such a bill or resolution, if there is an ongoing violation of section 1341 of title 31, United States Code, as determined by the Comptroller General, or if there are any employees being paid in violation of section 3103 of title 5, United States Code, which requires civil service employees to be paid "only for services actually rendered in connection with and for the purposes of the appropriation for which" the employee is paid.

(b) WAIVER AND APPEAL.—Subsection (a) may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under subsection (a).

SA 129. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO PROVIDING BENEFITS TO SURVIVORS OF MINERS WHO DIED DUE TO PNEUMOCOCONIOSIS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to providing benefits to survivors of miners who died due to pneumoconiosis by the amounts provided in such

legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

SA 130. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title IV, add the following:

SEC. 4 _____. POINT OF ORDER AGAINST ANY RECONCILIATION BILL THAT WOULD NOT DECREASE THE COST OF HOUSING FOR AMERICAN FAMILIES.

(a) POINT OF ORDER.—It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider a reconciliation bill or a reconciliation resolution pursuant to section 310 of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 644), or an amendment to, conference report on, or amendment between the Houses in relation to such a bill or resolution, that would not decrease the cost of housing for American families.

(b) WAIVER AND APPEAL.—Subsection (a) may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under subsection (a).

SA 131. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3 _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO PROTECTING THE AMERICAN PEOPLE FROM THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA, RUSSIA, IRAN, NORTH KOREA, TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME, AND TERRORISM BY PROHIBITING THE MASS TERMINATION OF CRITICAL EMPLOYEES IN THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to protecting the American people from the People's Republic of China, Russia, Iran, North Korea, transnational organized crime, and terrorism by prohibiting the mass termination of critical employees in the intelligence community by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

SA 132. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congress-

sional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3 _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO PREVENTING DEATHS FROM OVERDOSE OR SUICIDE.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to preventing deaths from overdose or suicide, which may include efforts to train, recruit, or license social workers, counselors, peer support specialists, and other behavioral health providers, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

SA 133. Ms. HIRONO (for herself and Mr. PETERS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title IV, add the following:

SEC. 4 _____. POINT OF ORDER AGAINST LEGISLATION THAT WOULD REDUCE FEDERAL FUNDING FOR LOW-INCOME SCHOOLS.

(a) POINT OF ORDER.—It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider any bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, amendment between the Houses, or conference report that reduces Federal funding for schools eligible to receive funding under part A of title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

(b) WAIVER AND APPEAL.—Subsection (a) may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under subsection (a).

SA 134. Ms. HIRONO (for herself and Mr. PETERS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title IV, add the following:

SEC. 4 _____. POINT OF ORDER AGAINST LEGISLATION THAT WOULD REDUCE FEDERAL FUNDING FOR PROGRAMS THAT SERVE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES.

(a) POINT OF ORDER.—It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider any bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, amendment between the Houses, or con-

ference report that reduces Federal funding under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act for programs that serve students with disabilities.

(b) WAIVER AND APPEAL.—Subsection (a) may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under subsection (a).

SA 135. Ms. HIRONO (for herself and Mr. PETERS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title IV, add the following:

SEC. 4 _____. POINT OF ORDER AGAINST LEGISLATION THAT WOULD REDUCE FEDERAL FUNDING FOR BEFORE-SCHOOL, AFTER-SCHOOL, OR SUMMER PROGRAMS.

(a) POINT OF ORDER.—It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider any bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, amendment between the Houses, or conference report that reduces Federal funding under part B of title IV of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

(b) WAIVER AND APPEAL.—Subsection (a) may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under subsection (a).

SA 136. Ms. HIRONO (for herself and Mr. PETERS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title IV, add the following:

SEC. 4 _____. POINT OF ORDER AGAINST LEGISLATION THAT WOULD REDUCE FEDERAL FUNDING FOR OR PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAMS.

(a) POINT OF ORDER.—It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider any bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, amendment between the Houses, or conference report that reduces Federal funding or participation in school meal programs authorized by the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.) or the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1771 et seq.).

(b) WAIVER AND APPEAL.—Subsection (a) may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under subsection (a).

SA 137. Ms. HIRONO (for herself and Mr. PETERS) submitted an amendment

intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title IV, add the following:

SEC. _____. POINT OF ORDER AGAINST LEGISLATION THAT WOULD INCREASE CHILD CARE COSTS FOR PARENTS.

(a) POINT OF ORDER.—It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider any bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, amendment between the Houses, or conference report that increases child care costs for parents.

(b) WAIVER AND APPEAL.—Subsection (a) may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under subsection (a).

SA 138. Ms. HIRONO (for herself and Mr. PETERS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title IV, add the following:

SEC. _____. POINT OF ORDER AGAINST LEGISLATION THAT WOULD REDUCE FEDERAL FUNDING FOR PROGRAMS THAT SERVE STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS.

(a) POINT OF ORDER.—It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider any bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, amendment between the Houses, or conference report that reduces Federal funding under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11301 et seq.) for students experiencing homelessness.

(b) WAIVER AND APPEAL.—Subsection (a) may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under subsection (a).

SA 139. Ms. HIRONO (for herself and Mr. PETERS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title IV, add the following:

SEC. _____. POINT OF ORDER AGAINST LEGISLATION THAT WOULD REDUCE FUNDING FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID.

(a) POINT OF ORDER.—It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider any bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, amendment between the Houses, or conference report that restricts eligibility, or

reduces funding, for Federal student aid, such as Federal Pell Grants or Federal student loan programs.

(b) WAIVER AND APPEAL.—Subsection (a) may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under subsection (a).

SA 140. Ms. HIRONO (for herself and Mr. PETERS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO PELL GRANTS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to bolstering the Federal Pell Grant program, which may include changes to increase the Federal Pell Grant maximum award, index the Federal Pell Grant maximum award for inflation, or expand Federal Pell Grant program eligibility, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

SA 141. Ms. HIRONO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title IV, add the following:

SEC. 4 _____. POINT OF ORDER AGAINST LEGISLATION THAT REDUCES FUNDING FOR AVIATION PERSONNEL WHO PERFORM CRITICAL SAFETY FUNCTIONS OR NATIONAL SECURITY FUNCTIONS.

(a) POINT OF ORDER.—It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider any bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, amendment between the Houses, or conference report that reduces funding for personnel who perform critical safety functions or national security functions within the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), or support FAA's National Airspace System Defense Programs, early warning radar systems, or related programs.

(b) WAIVER AND APPEAL.—Subsection (a) may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under subsection (a).

SA 142. Mr. REED submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by

him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3 _____. RESERVE FUND RELATING TO STRENGTHENING LOCAL SHIPYARD CAPABILITY AND CAPACITY.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to strengthening local industrial shipbuilding and repairing capability and capacity of the United States, which may include investing in the Small Shipyard Grant Program, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes.

SA 143. Mr. REED submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title IV, add the following:

SEC. 4 _____. POINT OF ORDER AGAINST PRIVATIZATION OF THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE.

(a) POINT OF ORDER.—It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider any bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, amendment between the Houses, or conference report that would privatize or commercialize the National Weather Service.

(b) WAIVER AND APPEAL.—Subsection (a) may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under subsection (a).

SA 144. Mr. REED submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3 _____. RESERVE FUND RELATING TO OCEANIC RESEARCH AND EXPLORATION.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to oceanic research and exploration supported by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which may include investments in vessels, shoreside facilities, laboratories, personnel, or research

partnerships, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes.

SA 145. Mr. REED submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title IV, add the following:

SEC. 4. POINT OF ORDER AGAINST LEGISLATION THAT WOULD RESTRICT FUTURE INCREASES TO NUTRITION ASSISTANCE BENEFITS.

(a) POINT OF ORDER.—It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider any bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, amendment between the Houses, or conference report that would restrict future increases to nutrition assistance benefit amounts based on increased grocery costs, such as by limiting future thrifty food plan updates.

(b) WAIVER AND APPEAL.—Subsection (a) may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under subsection (a).

SA 146. Mr. REED submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3. RESERVE FUND RELATING TO TRAINING AND HIRING ADDITIONAL AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to improving the safety of the aviation system, which may include the training and hiring of additional Air Traffic Controllers, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes.

SA 147. Mr. REED submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO MAKING COLLEGE MORE AFFORDABLE.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this

resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to making college more affordable, which may include doubling the Federal Pell Grant under section 401 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070a), by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

SA 148. Mr. REED submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO MODERNIZING PUBLIC SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to modernizing public school infrastructure, which may include direct grants to States or tax credit bonds, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

SA 149. Mr. REED submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title IV, add the following:

SEC. 4. POINT OF ORDER AGAINST LEGISLATION THAT WOULD OBSTRUCT EFFORTS TO COMBAT AVIAN INFLUENZA AND LOWER EGG PRICES.

(a) POINT OF ORDER.—It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider any bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, amendment between the Houses, or conference report that would obstruct Federal resources from addressing the current avian influenza outbreak and protecting the egg supply in the United States from shortages and price spikes.

(b) WAIVER AND APPEAL.—Subsection (a) may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under subsection (a).

SA 150. Mr. REED submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States

Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3. RESERVE FUND RELATING TO INCREASED INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT COSTS RELATED TO THE DELAY OR WITHHOLDING OF PREVIOUSLY AWARDED GRANT FUNDING.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to paying for the increased costs for infrastructure projects resulting from the delay or withholding of previously awarded grant funds by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes.

SA 151. Mr. REED submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO SPECIAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to requiring each special Government employee to devote the full time and attention of the special Government employee to Government service during the period in which the individual serves as a special Government employee, which may include a prohibition on serving as an employee, officer, or director of a for-profit entity during the period in which the individual serves as a special Government employee, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

SA 152. Mr. REED submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO REVERSING THE DECLINE IN LITERACY SKILLS FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS OF THE UNITED STATES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the

pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to reversing the decline in literacy skills for children and adults of the United States, which may include increasing funding for adult education or evidence-based literacy instruction in public schools, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

SA 153. Ms. HIRONO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title IV, add the following:

SEC. 4. POINT OF ORDER AGAINST DECREASING FUNDING RELATING TO THE ISSUES CONTEMPLATED UNDER THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT OF 1994.

(a) **POINT OF ORDER.**—It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider any bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, amendment between the Houses, or conference report that would decrease funding relating to issues contemplated under the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (34 U.S.C. 10101 et seq.).

(b) **WAIVER AND APPEAL.**—Subsection (a) may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under subsection (a).

SA 154. Ms. HIRONO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO PROMOTING EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IN FEDERAL APPOINTMENTS AND REMOVALS AND OTHER FEDERAL PERSONNEL ACTIONS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to promoting equal opportunity in Federal appointments and removals and other Federal personnel actions, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

SA 155. Ms. HIRONO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by

her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO STAFFING AT FEDERAL PUBLIC LANDS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to protecting natural resources and human safety, which may include ensuring that Federal public lands are adequately staffed at the National Park Service, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, or the Forest Service, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

SA 156. Ms. HIRONO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO OFFSETTING LOST REVENUE DUE TO A FEDERAL MORATORIUM ON RENEWABLE POWER LEASING ON PUBLIC LANDS AND OFFSHORE WATERS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to offsetting lost revenue due to a Federal moratorium on renewable power leasing on public lands and offshore waters, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

SA 157. Ms. HIRONO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO ENSURING HOMELESS VETERANS ARE NOT NEGATIVELY IMPACTED BY ANY CHANGES TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION POLICIES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the alloca-

tions of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to enhancing veterans services, including legislation that would ensure services and support provided through the Department of Veterans Affairs Grant and Per Diem, Supportive Services for Veteran Families, HUD-VASH, Health Care for Homeless Veterans, or other homelessness programs are not impacted, reduced, or restricted due to policies terminating diversity, equity, and inclusion policies related to hiring, funding, contracting, compliance, education, and provision of services, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

SA 158. Ms. HIRONO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO ENSURING ROBUST FUNDING AND FOOD SUPPLY FOR FOOD BANKS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to ensuring robust funding for Federal food programs, which may include ensuring robust funding for food banks or protecting funding used to purchase commodities for distribution to food banks, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

SA 159. Ms. HIRONO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title III, add the following:

SEC. 3. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO PROTECTING SENIORS' ACCESS TO IMMUNIZATIONS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution, and make adjustments to the pay-as-you-go ledger, for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to protecting seniors' access to immunizations, which may include no-cost coverage of adult vaccines recommended by Federal advisory committees, such as the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices under Medicare, by the

amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2025 through 2034.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I have eight 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, February 19, 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, February 19, 2025, at 10:15 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

The Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 19, 2025, at 10:15 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

The Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 19, 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, February 19, 2025, at 10:15 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

The Committee on Veterans' Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 19, 2025, at 9:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing on a nomination.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 19, 2025, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a closed business meeting immediately followed by a closed briefing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AIRLAND

The Subcommittee on Airland of the Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 19, 2025, at 4:15 p.m., to conduct a closed session.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2025

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 10 a.m. on Thursday, February 20; 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, morning business be closed, and the Senate resume consideration of Calendar No. 13, S. Con. Res. 7; further, that all time during adjournment count equally towards Calendar No. 13, S. Con. Res. 7; and 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 OF BUSINESS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, for the information of all Senators, Senators should expect a cloture vote on the Patel nomination at 11 a.m. tomorrow, followed by a confirmation vote at approximately 1:45 p.m.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before 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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

BUDGET RECONCILIATION

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise in opposition to our Republican colleagues' budget proposal. This plan is all about giving tax cuts to billionaires and then finding the money to pay for it. Let's make that really clear.

This week, they are moving forward in both the House and the Senate with their plans. While the plans are different, the destination is the same. The results of this—when you look at the details of the House bill, of the Senate bill; when you look at the undermining of the Affordable Care Act, which has given healthcare to so many people, and you look at the undermining in the House proposal of the prescription drug negotiations for Medicare, which is so key; when you look at what would happen to rural hospitals, what would happen with nutrition for kids and veterans; infrastructure projects, our subject right now—all to find this over \$2 trillion for tax cuts for the wealthy.

It is no wonder that two-thirds of Americans—and this is in a number of public polls—think the President isn't focused enough on lowering costs, and

no wonder they believe by a 13-point margin that these policies will actually increase inflation.

Costs are high. Americans are struggling to make ends meet. They actually thought that this administration would come in and do something about it. And my concern, which you will hear from me and from many of my colleagues, is that this budget proposal will only make things worse.

Over the last few years, our workers and businesses have created millions of good-paying jobs. Just a few years ago, we came together to pass the bipartisan infrastructure law, which has made historic investments in our roads, ports, bridges, high-speed internet, and more. I remember how proud we were, those of us who worked on this legislation, that we had such strong bipartisan support for this bill.

But, unfortunately, these proposals from the Senate and the House would undo this progress, particularly when it comes to broadband. In 2025, we can't talk about infrastructure without talking about broadband. High-speed internet is necessary for everything from education to healthcare, to finding jobs, not to mention keeping in touch with family members.

I have a number of small businesses that, when they don't have high-speed broadband, they actually have to go into town to a McDonald's parking lot to contact their customers because, in this modern day, you cannot do business even in the smallest of towns without having high-speed internet. Right now, more than 20 million Americans are left out because they still don't have a reliable internet connection at home.

As cochair of the bipartisan Senate Broadband Caucus and the author of the original bill that got included in the bipartisan infrastructure law, I have always believed that if they can have high-speed internet in a country like Iceland, a country with active volcanoes that are spewing lava, maybe—just maybe—we can get it in every corner in our own country.

That is why we fought to make sure the bipartisan infrastructure law included historic funding to deliver high-speed internet. That funding is there. It is going out. It has been going out. It will go out in the future. I would love if it had just all happened in 1 year, but that funding is going out. But that progress is going to be ground to a halt if this money instead goes to tax cuts for the wealthy.

Slashing funding for infrastructure and high-speed internet is only the beginning. The budget also threatens healthcare for over 8 million seniors and more than 31 million kids. On top of that, it would force rural hospitals to shut their doors, and it would threaten the future of Medicare drug price negotiations, which I noted earlier.

Even the first 10 drugs under our bill, the first 10 drugs alone—and no one has disputed this—because of the 60-percent decrease after the negotiations

with the pharma companies, 70-percent decrease, on those 10 drugs would save seniors, in out-of-pocket, \$1.5 billion in just 10 years. Pharma got a sweetheart deal 20-some years ago. I wasn't here when that happened, but it is time to change it. We did. The first 10 drugs came out. Now this administration has been handed the torch to handle the 15 drugs that need to be next negotiated. After that, they pick 15 more, and hopefully these are all blockbuster drugs.

But if this is undermined, as happened in the House bill, in a sop to pharmaceutical companies—if this is undermined, so much money will be left on the table and go to the rich people instead of the consumers who need those less expensive drugs.

We should not be paying twice as much as other industrialized nations for pharmaceuticals in this country where so much taxpayer money already went into research and development.

Unfortunately, under our budget that we are getting proposed here by Republicans in the Senate and the House, seniors won't be the only ones forced to rely on food banks. Republicans are planning to make sweeping cuts to programs that millions of Americans rely on for nutritious food.

Addressing hunger shouldn't be a red issue or a blue issue; it should be an American issue. In fact, this body has often worked across the aisle to improve nutrition programs. While grocery prices continue to increase, seniors, children, and veterans should not be left hungry to pay for tax cuts for billionaires. This is making it harder and harder for Americans to put dinner on the table.

In fact, we found out that due to Elon Musk's activities, I guess, several avian flu experts—people working on the frontline—were accidentally fired. While the prices of eggs have been going up sky-high, these people were removed from their jobs. They are now fast-tracking a rehiring of these employees, saying that it was an accidental mistake.

We really can't afford accidental mistakes for watching the nuclear stockpile or trying to solve this problem of avian flu anymore. We have to actually help people instead of increasing their costs or their risk when it comes to safety.

The budget slashes funding that Americans across the country rely on to pay their mortgages and makes it harder—the House bill—for them to afford flood insurance. This will make life harder, not to mention more expensive, for the Minnesotans whose homes were flooded over the summer, for people in Kentucky who are facing deadly flooding as we speak, and countless other Americans.

These proposals—cuts to housing, healthcare, infrastructure—have one important thing in common: None of it is going to lower the costs for the American people. It is going to increase their costs—all to give trillions of dollars of tax cuts to the wealthy.

I have no problem bringing the costs down for people making under \$400,000 a year, which is the vast majority of my constituents. I have no problem with keeping those tax cuts in place. But that is not what we are talking about when we look at this major, major overreach and expansion.

I don't remember Republicans campaigning on higher costs and higher debt, but that is exactly what is going to happen if these budgets pass.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. SLOTKIN. Mr. President, I rise today in opposition to the budget resolution we have been discussing here tonight.

I am a new Senator from the great State of Michigan. I am a former CIA officer and Pentagon official. I did three tours in Iraq alongside the military, and I have worked very proudly for both Democratic and Republican administrations. So I come to this job thinking about security quite a bit.

I really understand my job as one where I am meant to protect the physical security of my constituents and the economic security of my constituents. What I mean by that, when I think about that, is, first on physical security, you can't do anything if you are not safe—in your home, in your neighborhoods, in your country. Then your economic security, No. 2, is being able to live the American dream that all of us grew up on that you could work 40 hours a week, one job with good benefits, and you could do well, and your kids could do better. But I rise today to defend that security because I think it is under threat.

We know that the majority is crawling all over the Federal Government looking for \$6 trillion in cuts, right. They have been open about that. That is not a hidden thing. They are looking for \$6 trillion in every couch cushion they can find because they are preparing a major tax bill with all kinds of tax giveaways to the wealthiest Americans. In that process, they have put us on a dangerous path with this budget resolution. It adds billions to our national debt. So let's dispense with the idea that the Republicans are deeply concerned about our national debt. You cannot say that and in the same breath, support this proposal.

Then, in addition, it guts programs that we all rely on—again, for our physical and economic security—with no regard for those two things.

Of course, this does nothing to get at the things that President Trump said he was running on, right. He ran very loudly on lowering costs for the average Americans, making things easier to manage. There is no connection between the search for \$6 trillion and lower prices for the average person.

Now, there are a lot of things that are at risk of being cut that are deeply connected to Michiganders' well-being.

Let me start off by saying thanks—very sort of parochial—to the Great

Lakes, and that is the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, something called the GLRI.

Michiganders understand that our national heritage, our State heritage, is our Great Lakes, our waters, and our water. The GLRI is the big fund that both Democrats and Republicans have supported year after year, championed by the woman I am replacing, Senator Debbie Stabenow, to keep our water clean, our water safe, and support, again, Michigan's economy, our tourism, our economic security.

Three out of the 4 years that Donald Trump was in the White House previously, he cut the entirety of the GLRI—so all the money for invasive species, all the money to keep out our algae blooms, all the money to keep our drinking water safe, to help deal with transportation in the Soo Locks in Michigan—and every year, we pushed that back.

You better believe that in their search and hunt for that \$6 trillion, they are going to again target the very thing that keeps our Great Lakes safe and secure.

The Gordie Howe Bridge. We are about to open up the largest commercial border bridge in the history of our country. It is named after Gordie Howe, who was a Canadian hockey player who played for the Red Wings. The Canadians have paid for this bridge. It is set to open in September because our current bridges and tunnels cannot handle the sheer volume of traffic going across the bridges and tunnels every day.

How are we going to staff that if we are sending Federal workers home? How are we going to support that bridge, which will allow you to drive from Montreal to Miami without stopping for a single streetlight, if we can't support hiring of new Federal workers and we are sending our Federal workers home? Border security is obviously a priority, especially for a border State, but how do we do that without throwing the baby out with the bathwater?

Then we have things that have been affecting Michigan now for the past year-plus. Bird flu, right? Avian flu. We have got geese now showing up dead all over the State of Michigan. We see the bird flu transiting between species. That is never a good sign. That means it is mutating; it is changing; it is getting stronger. Egg prices, as a consequence, are the highest ever in American history. But instead of dealing with that problem head-on, as a responsible administration would, they are cutting people who are working on avian flu, monitoring, who are helping to understand how we prevent the spread of yet another biohazard. The people who are doing that are getting pink slips.

The administration has now terminated people just, again, to rehire them. Can you imagine the morale of our Federal workers who are supposed to be keeping us safe right now?

Then we have our primary industry in Michigan, which is the auto industry. The automotive industry is our heritage as well. It is fundamental to our State economy, and my priority, my job as a Senator in this State, is to make sure that the auto industry, the tier 1 and tier 2 suppliers, that that continues to be the basis for a strong middle class, the foundation for a strong middle class in Michigan.

What deeply worries me right now is we have got unelected billionaires who are monkeying around with our industry, our principal industry in the State of Michigan. Mr. Musk, it has to be said, runs a competitor to the Michigan-based auto industry, and he is right now actively welcoming and championing Chinese interests into our supply chains. Just recently, he has made clear that he is deeply interested in moving all his operations, all the things he has got going on in Shanghai, to Mexico. He wants to create an easier backdoor for those Chinese companies to supply him, to supply other autos, to build those cheap vehicles, and then use NAFTA to bring them into the United States easily.

His interests and the interests of everyone who works for an American auto company do not align. He is interested in enriching himself and strengthening his own supply chain. He does not care about the threat to our national security, and he certainly doesn't care about a threat to economic security in the State of Michigan.

I think this is an important thing to highlight as we think about this budget resolution that has been presented to us. This budget resolution is an attempt to get President Trump what he wants so that he can do, unfettered and hidden away from the American people, whatever he wants with our physical security and our economic security. And it is something that I think many of us feel is being jammed through.

Now, it is hard to understand what is happening. There is chaos among the Republicans. The President says he wants one bill. The House says they want one bill. The Republicans here say they want two bills. It is unclear exactly what is happening. They are trying to figure it out. But in the meantime, all we can do here is defend our economic and physical security. That is our job.

My fear is that past is prologue: The administration's approach is going to be reflected in this budget, and American citizens are going to find out months later about the cuts to programs they care about, to things that Michiganders depend on, and I believe that is the wrong approach.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. KELLY. Mr. President, the folks in my State are working hard but finding it tough to get ahead.

Now, let's just look at the price of eggs. The Hickman's Family Farms is

one of the top egg producers in the country, and they are the biggest in our State. They have millions of birds producing millions and millions of eggs that feed the State of Arizona and the country. Like so many of the other egg producers, they are getting decimated by bird flu. They have had to put down a lot of their hens—more than a million—because of this disease. The story is the same with egg producers across the country, and this is having a serious impact on family budgets.

The Safeway down the road from my house in Tucson is now charging \$9.49 a dozen for eggs, and I can't remember ever seeing it this high. Some grocery stores are rationing eggs, only allowing customers to buy one or two cartons at a time. If you go to the Waffle House, you are paying a surcharge for each egg that you buy. Now, who has ever heard of such a thing?

Now, what I want to know is, where are Donald Trump and Elon Musk? Well, a few days ago, they accidentally fired a bunch of people at the Department of Agriculture whose job it is to stop this outbreak. The next question you may ask is: Why? Why would they do this? Why are Elon Musk and Donald Trump slashing and cutting so recklessly that they would fire the people working to stop bird flu?

Well, Mr. President, it is because of what is in front of us here in the Senate this week. They want to take the next steps toward a big tax giveaway for rich people, but they have to find some ways to pay for it. It is wrapped up in all this budget bureaucracy stuff, but here is the crux of it: making health coverage and food more expensive for working families—that is what is going to happen. Slashing essential government functions and services that keep Americans safe, cutting investments in high-speed internet and energy manufacturing that creates jobs, and at the same time, exploding our national debt—all of this is so that the richest people and corporations in America can pay less taxes.

Now, I am all for finding efficiencies in our budget and cutting bureaucracy. That is a smart thing to do. We need to get rid of the waste. We need to call out abuse. We need to root out fraud. We need a tax system that is fair and that makes sense, one that gives hard-working people a chance to get ahead, that spurs innovation. But that is not what this is. This is a handout for rich people paid for by you, the American taxpayer—paid for by your families and your children.

The richest of the rich billionaires, Elon Musk, is gutting the everyday programs that he doesn't agree with, and he is keeping the ones that cut checks to his businesses through big government contracts—all of this to pay for the tax cuts for him, for his companies, and for his billionaire friends.

We know this because we have seen this before. Last time around, in 2017, President Trump signed a similar tax

giveaway. He made the corporate tax rate so low that it is now lower than the rate for a married couple making about \$100,000 a year. Does that seem fair? It doesn't to me. And that is before you count the tax loopholes that corporations get and that your families do not.

Did those corporate CEOs pass those savings along to their workers? Of course, they didn't. They used it to enrich themselves and their shareholders, and it was all to benefit the richest people, people who didn't actually need any help.

But, Mr. President, don't take my word for this. Here is the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. This is a quote:

As this debate unfolds, policymakers and the public should understand that the 2017 Trump tax law was skewed to the rich.

I go on:

Households with incomes in the top 1 percent will receive an average tax cut of more than \$60,000 in 2025, compared to an average tax cut of less than \$500 for households in the bottom 60 percent, according to the Tax Policy Center.

As a share of after-tax income, tax cuts at the top—for both households in the top 1 percent and the top 5 percent—are more than triple—

Three times—three times—

the total value of the tax cuts received for people with incomes in the bottom 60 percent.

Trump administration officials claimed their centerpiece corporate tax rate cut would "very conservatively" lead to a \$4,000 boost in household income. [However,] new research shows that workers who earned less than \$114,000 on average in 2016 saw "no change in earnings" from the corporate tax rate cut, while top executive salaries increased sharply.

What this means, Mr. President, is that the rich got richer, and everybody else, they got left behind. That is just wrong. It also made it even tougher for hard-working families to get ahead.

Now, President Trump wants to do this all over again. Here is what an analyst from the same center, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, testified to Congress about his new plan:

Permanently extending the tax cuts would benefit households in the top 1 percent more than twice as much as those in the bottom 60 percent as a share of their incomes—providing a roughly \$41,000 annual tax cut for the top 1 percent compared to \$500 for households in the bottom 60 percent, on average—at a cost of around \$300 billion per year.

Again, if you are in the top 1 percent, you are going to get \$4,000, and all those people in the bottom 60 percent, what are they going to get? 500 bucks. That is it. Extend tax cuts for rich people and create new loopholes, and do it all by going after the kind of things that create great-paying jobs, that help working families, and that move our economy into the future.

We all understand that our economy is changing fast. We need the industries of the future to be based here in the United States, creating great-paying jobs that you can actually raise a family on, reducing our reliance on

supply chains that cross an ocean. We have seen the benefit of that in Arizona, where we are a hub for everything from microchips to batteries.

I have spoken to workers who were stuck, who didn't know how to jumpstart their career, who didn't know how to find that next job. They found opportunities, in some cases to enter an apprenticeship or skills program and get a good-paying job, the kind of job that you could actually raise a family on that does not require a 4-year degree.

Mr. President, I know in West Virginia there are so many folks that are looking for these opportunities. They are in my State. I know they are in yours. These are the folks that make things like solar panels and batteries and microchips that power our country, that power our economy. And these folks that get these jobs, they have pride that they are building these things here in the United States of America.

I will never forget about speaking to one woman whom I met on a Zoom call about jobs and about opportunity. She had trouble finding a job for over a year. She had three kids. She was having so much trouble supporting her kids, and then she found an email in her spam folder, of all places, and it encouraged her to apply for this thing called the Quick Start program at Estrella Mountain Community College. And in this program, she was going to learn how to be a microchip, semiconductor manufacturing technician.

Now, it was in her spam folder. So she was a little hesitant. But she called the phone number. She took a chance. She applied to this program, and she got in.

It was a 2-week program, and, at the end of it, she had a guarantee that she would get an interview with a semiconductor manufacturer.

Well, she did that interview. She got the job at Intel, and this job has changed not only her life but the life of her kids.

Now, Mr. President, that is a story that is being repeated over and over again in my State, in the semiconductor industry, and I am sure in West Virginia, where people are benefiting from these opportunities that we have created, not just in one industry but in multiple industries.

Mr. President, this could all come to a screeching halt if Elon Musk and Donald Trump use it to pay for their tax cuts for rich people. Just today, President Trump slashed staff that are making the CHIPS programs a success, and that is going to slow us down, and it is going to give China a chance to catch up.

We don't want that to happen. This is a national security issue for this country. We want to see the next generation of microchips developed, tested, and produced here in America, not in China.

Trump and Musk's actions make that harder. And they have set their sights

on the very incentives that are making this happen, especially when it comes to clean energy manufacturing.

And what is that going to do, Mr. President? Well, here is what it is going to do. It is going to ship these jobs back overseas to other countries.

China and other countries are more than happy to fill this vacuum, and they will flood the market with cheap solar panels and cheap batteries.

Mr. President, who does that hurt? It hurts working Americans who depend on these jobs to support their families. And that is not just in Arizona or in blue States or blue cities. This will hurt communities in every corner of our country.

For example, listen to this. This is about Oklahoma. This is an article from this morning, and it is about something the Governor—Governor Stitt—said about his State. In the article it says:

[Governor Stitt] has spearheaded a clean energy manufacturing boom in his State that has complimented Oklahoma's large oil and gas industry and a growing wind power sector that provides 40 percent of its electricity. But some of Trump's moves could undermine that progress, including his halt on leasing, permitting and approvals of wind projects, along with his effort to claw back funds from the Inflation Reduction Act and the bipartisan infrastructure [bill].

[Governor] Stitt also said he doesn't—

He does not—

support Trump's call to repeal IRA clean energy tax credits that have drawn investments to GOP-led States like Oklahoma since companies have based their investments on these incentives. He said he plans to discuss Trump's wind and IRA policies in conversations this week with Interior Secretary Doug Burgum, who is expected to attend the Republican governors meeting.

This article went on. It continued and it said:

That was a deal that was cut.

This is what Stitt said. Governor Stitt said that of the IRA tax credits. He said:

Congress has got to opine on this, but a deal is a deal, and you can't back out of some of those things.

So here you have a Republican Governor in the State of Oklahoma who is worried about clean energy jobs in his State being slashed—all of this so that President Trump can pay for tax cuts for rich people. It is that simple, and it is not going to end here. We are talking about trillions of dollars in tax cuts—trillions.

We have seen, over the past few weeks, that Elon Musk and Donald Trump are ready to put a halt to infrastructure projects. Here is how that has played out on the Hopi Nation in Arizona. This is reporting from just last week:

Timothy Nuvangyaoma, [he is] the chair of the Hopi Tribe in Arizona. [They] had applied for and received some \$90 million in Federal funding for solar power projects, battery installations and microgrids, [that he] hoped [would] support . . . finally bringing power to the 30 percent of homes on the Hopi Nation that are not served by a local utility.

This is from the article:

He predicted on-site clean power would end blackouts in some areas that led to food spoiling and medical equipment blinking offline.

Now, President Donald Trump's broad funding freeze covering some of the Biden administration's clean energy spending has thrown tribal projects into limbo. As of Thursday morning, funding for the Hopi Tribe that had been approved remains suspended. Two awards—\$4 million for a solar powered microgrid to run wells and pump water and \$4 million for a battery project—had not been finalized before Trump's inauguration, meaning it's possible that they could be rescinded.

Also from this article, Mr. President, it says:

"We have real lives at stake. The funding freeze is truly having an impact on living, breathing individuals," [the Chairman] said in an interview.

And he said—and this is a quote:

I can't even think of a strong enough word, this is so important for us. We had part of a solution come our way, and now it's [been] taken away.

The chairman said—he went on, and he said, "We have real lives at stake," but to Elon Musk and President Trump, that pales in comparison to cutting taxes for rich people.

Mr. President, we have always had highway projects in Arizona face uncertainty. But this week, they fired a tenth of the Forest Service workforce and froze hiring just ahead of what might be another devastating fire season. Firefighters—wildfire firefighters—got laid off.

And there are Colorado River water conservation projects that have had their funding frozen right now. And this is no small thing.

The Colorado River is a crucial water source for the American Southwest, supporting millions of people, vast agricultural lands, and industries across seven States.

But the impact is even broader than that. If you eat lettuce in the winter, chances are it came from Yuma, AZ, from a farm that uses water from the Colorado River.

We have been facing a severe long-term drought that has drained reservoirs along the river, with Lake Mead and Lake Powell falling to dangerously low levels. So there has been a series of agreements to keep more water in the reservoirs; that is going to buy us some time.

And during that time, Tribes, cities, farmers can invest in infrastructure that makes them more water efficient. But after Elon Musk and Donald Trump froze these programs, there is incredible uncertainty.

This is a system that depends on trust, and they just pulled the rug out from Arizona farmers, from Arizona businesses, from Arizona Tribes, from Arizona communities. It is a rug pull, and that puts the entire river system at risk. And for what? To pay for tax giveaways for rich people.

What else will they set their sights on? Well, Elon Musk and President Trump also froze funding for high-speed internet expansion. This is a bipartisan investment to bring internet

access to every corner of our country. An internet connection is essential to nearly everything today from taking a class to booking a doctor's appointment to staying in touch with the news or your family. And you shouldn't need to live in a big city or in a suburb to have reliable internet, and expanding broadband creates great-paying local jobs.

Gutting American manufacturing and infrastructure to pay for tax giveaways for rich people and big corporations, it does not make our country better off. It just helps rich people get richer. It is pretty simple math. But it also kills jobs for hard-working Americans in the industries of the future, like clean energy.

And it also invites China to take those jobs back, take jobs from Americans who are just trying to get by. It doesn't help American families pay their grocery bills.

What the President is doing, what Elon Musk is doing, it is just wrong. We should be focused on the things that matter, lowering prices for people and solving real problems. Helping rich people get richer, that is not a real problem.

When I am at home in Arizona, you know what folks want us to be working on here? Cost of groceries, cost of healthcare, better-paying jobs, safer communities, better schools.

What you did not hear on that list was making sure rich people have more money in their pockets. I doubt a single person in my State would tell me that cutting taxes for the wealthy and big corporations should be at the top of the list. It should not be on the top of the Senate's list either.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Ms. BALDWIN. I rise today to speak about the importance of Medicaid for families in Wisconsin and across the Nation. I will be joined by my colleagues tonight to shine a light on what Republicans in the House and the Senate are up to. They are moving forward with their plans to literally rip away healthcare from millions of Americans in order to pay for tax cuts for the wealthiest and large corporations.

I am going to start with some facts: Medicaid provides healthcare to over 70 million Americans, including over 30 million children and 8 million seniors. Medicaid provides essential care for about 10 million adults with disabilities.

Medicaid helps almost two-thirds of all nursing home residents have a safe roof over their heads. Medicaid is a lifeline that helps rural hospitals keep their doors open. It is also the single largest payer for treatment of opioid and other substance-use disorders, and it covers care for other serious mental illnesses.

Now, in my home State of Wisconsin, more than 1.2 million people are enrolled in Medicaid. One out of three

children get their healthcare through Medicaid, as well as one in three people with disabilities.

Four in seven nursing home residents rely on Medicaid, and more than one-third of all births that happen in Wisconsin are covered by Medicaid. But at the end of the day, this is about the people behind those numbers. It is about the grandmother living in a nursing home. It is about the pregnant woman planning to give birth at a rural hospital.

It is about the child who grows up in a low-income home who otherwise would not have access to healthcare. It is about a hard-working mother trying to keep herself and her kids healthy. It is people like Lynn from Northeast Wisconsin. She is a mom to a 23-year-old son named Henry. Henry has cerebral palsy and autism. Lynn wrote to me a couple weeks ago after learning about the Republican budget.

Lynn wrote:

Henry's needs are significant, and he requires full assistance in all aspects of his life. While we have private insurance through my husband's job, Medicaid has funded a great deal of care throughout Henry's life, from private and school-based therapies, to medications, to orthopedic surgery, to incontinence products, to transportation to and from school, to the day program he is currently in. I am not sure what his life looks like without Medicaid.

Renee, a 60-year-old cancer patient from Milwaukee also wrote to me. Renee has stage 4 metastatic breast cancer. It is incurable, and she relies on Medicaid for the treatment that is keeping her alive. Renee shared with me:

Without Medicaid, I would be forced to ration or forego cancer treatment, hastening my death, or send me and my husband into bankruptcy trying to keep me alive.

That would be an impossible choice. I can tell you after hearing from my constituents who are learning about these Republican plans to gut Medicaid, people are scared. They are scared about what their lives are going to look like without healthcare. I am hearing from doctors; I am hearing from nursing homes, clinics; I am hearing from hospitals; I am hearing from Native American Tribes and Tribal organizations. They will all have impossible choices to make that impact the healthcare of millions of Americans if Republicans are successful in pushing through their cuts to Medicaid.

This isn't a red or a blue State issue. Cuts to Medicaid hurt people in all States, and when people find that their healthcare is ripped away, Republicans are going to have to explain why they decided to give their billionaire friends a tax cut and pay for it by taking away healthcare from seniors and children.

To them, that is the whole ball game: to fight every which way to make room in their budget to give big corporations and the wealthiest a tax break.

You will hear this evening from several of my colleagues about why Medicaid is so vitally important, and I am sure they are going to tell you stories from their home States.

Our colleagues on the other side of the aisle need to understand the consequences of their proposals and make a decision: Are billionaires really more important to you than the seniors and children and people with disabilities that you represent?

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise today to join my colleagues, and particularly Senator BALDWIN, in expressing my strong opposition to the Republican budget resolution and deep concern over the future of the Medicaid program.

This resolution has one main priority: gutting programs like Medicaid and food stamps to pay for a \$4.5 trillion—that is right—trillion-dollar tax cut for the wealthiest Americans.

Donald Trump calls this “one big, beautiful bill,” but it is a bill that average Americans and the most vulnerable will be paying for years to come.

Among the most egregious and cynical cuts are the proposed cuts to Medicaid. These are expected to be at least \$880 billion under the budget that President Trump favors. Cuts of this magnitude would be devastating to the 80 million Americans who rely on Medicaid and the related Children's Health Insurance Program, CHIP. We are talking about essential healthcare coverage for children, seniors in nursing homes, people with disabilities, among other vulnerable populations.

In my home State of Rhode Island, Medicaid provides crucial healthcare and peace of mind for over 300,000 of my constituents, about one-third of the State. If you think Medicaid is some program far removed from your life, I can tell you, you are wrong.

So many of our friends, families, and neighbors are served by the Medicaid program. It is not a program for poor people alone. It is a program that is accessed by many different people, and it will touch every family one way or the other in Rhode Island if it is defunded as proposed in this resolution.

Nationally, about half of all children will get healthcare through Medicaid—half of all children. Roughly 40 percent of all births are paid for by the Medicaid program. Medicaid also provides essential coverage for pregnant women. If we are concerned about supporting families and making sure kids get a healthy start in life, Medicaid is crucial to this effort. So who will suffer? Children. Who will benefit from this resolution? The wealthiest corporations and the wealthiest Americans.

Medicaid is also critical for seniors getting nursing home care. They make up a small percentage of the Medicaid population but account for roughly half of Medicaid spending. In Rhode Island, roughly 22 percent of the Medicaid population are seniors and people with disabilities, but that accounts for half of Rhode Island's Medicaid spending. And many, many, many of these seniors come from working families.

They have spent their whole life trying to improve themselves, give their children a better chance in life, support their community, serve their Nation—all of these things. And now at a time of great medical need, we have to be there for them. And this proposal shuts the door effectively on it.

To put a finer point on it, with respect to nursing home patients, 60 percent of these residents get their healthcare through Medicaid, and this proposal will not only harm the recipients, it will effectively put most nursing homes out of business. So where will these people go, these seniors go?

And it will also put so much pressure on our other healthcare systems—like emergency rooms and hospitals—that they, too, will start to falter and fail. The second- and third-order consequences of these cuts are just as bad as the initial cuts to Medicaid.

And if you cut this access to nursing homes, it will reverberate throughout our entire healthcare system. And if there is no Medicaid, then the burden falls on the families. So families in America will be facing another great obstacle.

They are looking at inflation today, which is going up, not coming down. They are looking at an affordable housing crisis, which is raising their rents. And now they will be looking at the need to care for their elderly parents, elderly relatives, and that will be crushing to many families.

Now, many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have talked about adding work requirements to the Medicaid Program in particular. They claim that enabling the most vulnerable people to get access to healthcare discourages them from working. But after hearing about those who are served by the Medicaid Program, I am not sure whom it is they are looking to go back to work. The millions of children who are covered by Medicaid, should they be forced to work? We can repeal the child labor laws. Or the seniors in nursing homes? Well, put them out. They are seniors that worked all their lives and put them back to work.

And even when you drill down to the working population, the nondisabled Medicaid population, 92 percent are working full or part time or are unable to work due to caregiving responsibilities, illness, or school attendance—92 percent. These people work hard, and they deserve access to healthcare.

The so-called able-bodied adults who are not working because they get free healthcare through Medicaid is more a myth than anything else. In fact, access to healthcare keeps people healthy and able to work. Taking away healthcare keeps people sick and unable to work. That is something that I hope we all realize.

Now, I would also like to talk for a minute about the unique structure of the Medicaid Program. It is a State-Federal partnership. By and large, States design their programs so they can best serve the needs of their State.

This is the ultimate example of giving power back to States to determine what is best for their residents. States put up money and then the Federal Government puts in their share to help the States provide such healthcare.

Medicaid is also flexible and able to contract and expand as needed. For example, during the economic downturns and recessions, if more people are unemployed and lose health coverage with their job, Medicaid is able to step in and provide coverage. That is especially important in making sure that kids don't lose coverage when a parent is laid off.

In 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, when so many people lost work through no fault of their own, Medicaid was a critical lifeline in providing care. Can you imagine how terrifying it would have been to have suddenly lost your job and your health insurance in the middle of a pandemic? It was a new disease that we knew so little about, sending otherwise healthy people to the hospital unable to breathe. The last thing you want to be thinking about in that circumstance is whether or not you can afford to go to the hospital because you just lost your health insurance. Medicaid stepped forward and eased that fear.

Now, certainly, we always should be open to have discussions about how we can make improvements to Federal programs to better serve our constituents and be more cost-effective, but what my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are engaging in this week is not a substantive debate about the Medicaid Program. There has been no cost-benefit analysis done on Medicaid because I would argue that the benefits far outweigh the costs: healthy children that can learn, mature, and go on to be effective members of our economy and our society, seniors who have worked their whole lives and deserve a respectful and effective care when they are ill.

In fact, we haven't really been talking about Medicaid at all. Again, without any analysis, this is just to find money for tax cuts. So what they have been looking at is not cost and benefits, just costs. Give me money, and I will give it away and not to those who are in the working class but those who are very, very wealthy.

Last night, President Trump said:

Medicare, Medicaid—none of that stuff is going to be touched.

I will say it again. Last night, President Trump promised the American people:

Medicare, Medicaid—none of that stuff is going to be touched.

Well, of course, like he frequently does, he has changed his position in less than 24 hours. He is endorsing a House bill that would severely cut Medicaid.

I would hope that my Republican colleagues will join myself and others in voting for our amendments to protect these vital programs. You will have that choice, and I hope you do it for the people you represent.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, really delighted to be here with my colleagues: the Senator from Wisconsin, the Senator from Rhode Island, and the Senator from New Hampshire.

There are a couple things that just need to be faced directly. One is that the President of the United States is not leveling with us, and he is not leveling with the American people. You can't say that you love Medicaid, and it is not going to be touched and in the next breath say you endorse the House bill that cuts a trillion dollars from Medicaid. And it is a responsibility that each of us has to assess the credibility of the President's assertion here.

And we can pretend that we don't know the House bill that is about a tax cut requires a trillion dollars out of the Medicaid budget or we can face the truth and then have a debate about whether we should or should not cut Medicaid.

But the President won't level with the American people or with Congress. And it is tougher on the Republican side of the aisle because he is a Republican President, but the truth here is inescapable. The only way the House bill can get passed and the tax cut that is a goal of many on the Republican side of the aisle can be passed and paid for is to take away healthcare, and Medicaid is the big target.

And my colleagues have talked about the importance of Medicaid, and that is true, so true. In Vermont, in every single State, it is healthcare. And it is healthcare for kids. It is healthcare for seniors. Two out of the three nursing home beds in Vermont are covered by Medicaid. We have these cuts; those people get kicked out of the nursing homes. We cut Medicaid; kids who are totally dependent on Medicaid for access to the healthcare they need lose their care.

It is really, really a problem everywhere. But I think in rural communities, it is even more severe because we have got rural hospitals and we have got rural community health centers that play a major role in rural life. They are all on thin ice financially. They have overworked staff but who are committed to the people in that community. And the only reimbursement they get is through Medicaid. And as we all know, the Medicaid reimbursement is much lower than Medicare and certainly way lower than private insurance. But they pull it together and somehow keep the lights on, keep the doors open, and provide the healthcare that the folks in that community need.

You know, another point I want to make—and, Mr. President, I know you served as Governor of West Virginia, and we have got the former Governor of New Hampshire here. You had to deal with really tough budgets. You have got to balance your budget. And I know in West Virginia, West Virginia

expanded Medicaid when that became an option. And God bless West Virginia. I mean, God bless “West by God Virginia.” But I have been there, went down into the coal mine. Those are wonderful people. They work so hard. But in order to be eligible for Medicaid in West Virginia, your income as an adult can’t be a dollar over \$20,782. That is 10 bucks an hour, \$10.39 an hour.

And, you know, when I met West Virginians and went in the coal mines, it so reminded me of the hard-working Vermont farmers. That is tough work to do and people show up and they do it. It is like our farmers in Vermont. It is really hard work. They show up, and they do it. But a lot of folks making \$20,782—there is no way—no way—they can afford healthcare. There is no way.

And that is another absolute requirement that each of us level with one another. Let’s not pretend that there is some fictional healthcare out there that a person who is working 40 hours a week making 10.39 an hour can pay for healthcare. It doesn’t exist. And the major responsibility that we have is to make certain that we have a healthcare system where people who work hard, who love their kids, who have an elderly parent, can have some security that the healthcare they need, they will get.

So the President says he is not going to touch the big beautiful healthcare bill and Medicaid, when his action is he is taking a sledgehammer to it. And he is taking a sledgehammer that is cutting off folks in West Virginia, folks in Vermont who are working hard, who struggle every week to pay their bills, and who could get some peace of mind that the child that they love, that the grandparent that they are caring for, can have decency and access to healthcare or a nursing home. It is an absolute disgrace that there is any discussion—that there is any discussion—that we would be taking that away.

Shame on Trump. Shame on Trump.

The other thing I want to talk about is this question of waste, fraud, and abuse. Who of the 100 U.S. Senators is in favor of waste, fraud, and abuse? Not a single one of us. But that is not what is going on here. That is not what is going on here.

You as a Governor, Senator HASSAN, former Governor—you are on that. If there are some rip-offs going on in the Medicaid Program in your State, you are on it. You want those people prosecuted and put in jail.

Waste, fraud, and abuse is just being used as a curtain to conceal what the real agenda is, and that is saving money on Medicaid by dumping people off of Medicaid. The savings program here is about taking away the access to healthcare that people have, folks—like in West Virginia—who make \$21,000 or so a year.

If we want to talk about the rip-offs, if we want to talk about taking the waste out of the healthcare system—and by the way, I do—let’s go after

these pharmacy benefit manufacturers adding billions of dollars to the cost of healthcare, driving out of business our community pharmacies that know the people in their communities and want to take care of them.

By the way, we had a bipartisan bill to get rid of the pharmacy benefit manager rip-offs, and do you know who blocked it? A guy named Elon Musk—the guy who wants to “save big beautiful Medicaid.” Rip-off. And he is accomplice No. 1 in allowing the pharmacy benefit managers to continue to stick it to our pharmacists, to our taxpayers.

If we wanted to go after where the rip-off is in healthcare, what about what United Healthcare did with the Medicare Advantage Program, where they literally paid doctors to over-diagnose so they could boost what they charged, and then when people on Medicare Advantage in their program got sick, they dumped them. And we tolerate that. We tolerate that. Billions—hundreds of billions of dollars.

So, yes, the biggest threat to access to healthcare for the people you represent and that I represent is the rip-off in the healthcare industry, with higher than anywhere else in the world prescription drug prices, with rip-offs systemically used in the Medicare Advantage Program, with the gaming of pharmaceuticals by the pharmacy benefit managers.

I want to save money, but I want to save money by stopping the rip-offs. I don’t want to save money by dumping people who make \$21,000 a year off of the healthcare they absolutely need. And that is what Musk is doing. That is what Trump is doing. That is wrong, and we have to stop it.

We have to stand up for the hard-working people of West Virginia, the hard-working people of New Hampshire, the hard-working people of Wisconsin, and the hard-working people of Vermont.

We have to say no and acknowledge the rip-offs that Donald Trump is trying to inflict on hard-working people in our States so that he can pay for the tax cuts for his billionaire friends.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I want to thank my colleague from Vermont for his eloquent words just now, for his passion for his constituents and for all Americans and his understanding of the importance of healthcare to the people we all represent.

I rise to join my colleagues in opposing the attempts by the President and congressional Republicans to pay for more tax breaks for billionaires by ending Medicaid as we know it, cutting healthcare for children, seniors in nursing homes, adults with developmental disabilities, and hard-working families.

At a time when American families are struggling to keep up with high costs, I can imagine few ideas more ill-

advised, more counterproductive, more outrageous, and more devastating than to make lifesaving healthcare unaffordable for millions of our fellow Americans.

Millions of people depend on Medicaid every day. For families who are struggling to make ends meet, Medicaid gives them the ability to get care, whether that means routine checkups, preventive care, or treatment for serious illnesses or disease.

Medicaid also provides long-term care to many seniors and to people with disabilities, including children with autism, Down syndrome, or cerebral palsy. They all depend on Medicaid for medical care and support services.

Congress created and expanded and strengthened Medicaid for two main reasons—first, because we understood that in a country as great as ours, we can’t turn our backs on our neighbors. There is nothing American about leaving seniors or families with children with disabilities to fend for themselves. A great country treats its people with great dignity.

But we also passed Medicaid because we know that it is in all of our economic interests to have more healthy people. When more people are healthy and able to work, they can get ahead and stay ahead, provide a better life for their family, join the workforce, contribute their talents, and in so doing, make our economy stronger.

Our country is not better off or made more prosperous when more of our fellow citizens fall ill to preventable diseases or are held back by chronic illnesses or when people with disabilities can’t get the support they need to get jobs or participate in our communities.

But even as families try to keep up with high costs, the Trump administration and congressional Republicans decided that now is the time to raise healthcare costs and make healthcare more unaffordable for tens of millions of Americans. The proposed Republican budget will require major cuts to Medicaid, slashing hundreds of billions of dollars from this critical health program simply to pay for more tax breaks for billionaires.

Now, some of my colleagues defending the President may point out that during an interview last night, the President insisted that he had no plans to cut Medicaid. However, as the Sun rose this morning, the President came out in full support of the Republican budget proposal—a budget that would eviscerate Medicaid. Look, if the President doesn’t want to cut Medicaid, then he shouldn’t endorse a budget that ends Medicaid as we know it.

Let’s take a moment and discuss what slashing Medicaid by hundreds of billions of dollars will actually do because we can’t forget that in the Senate, when we are debating dollars, we are really talking about people. We are talking about our constituents.

We are talking about Michelle, a Granite Stater from Manchester who

was diagnosed with a rare cancer and was only able to get treatment and get healthy enough so she could go back to work because of Medicaid.

We are talking about Jim, a Granite Stater who was born with cerebral palsy but was able to go to college, get a job, get married, and raise a daughter because he got the care and support he needed—yes, through Medicaid.

We are talking about Ashley, a Granite Stater who struggled with addiction to opioids and lost her husband to an overdose. Ashley was able to get her life back on track and now works to help others recover from addiction just like she did because of treatments she received through Medicaid.

These are just a few of the people that my office has heard from who benefit from Medicaid. And it is not just them. In New Hampshire, there are 180,000 people on Medicaid—that is over 10 percent of our State's population—including more than 90,000 children, more than 1,500 pregnant women, more than 15,000 people with disabilities, nearly 10,000 seniors, nearly 10,000 Granite Staters who are struggling with addiction who depend on Medicaid for medication-assisted treatment, the gold standard of addiction care. So make no mistake, when the President and his allies in Congress talk about decimating Medicaid, these are the people whose lives they are playing with.

So before the President and some of my colleagues proceed, the American people deserve some answers. Would our country be better off if any of the people whose experiences I discussed didn't receive care? Would our country be better off if we left people like Michelle, Christine, Jim, and Ashley to fend for themselves? Is America—our economy, our workforce—better off with more people sick?

Who do these cuts serve? The millions of Americans who would lose their care—what wrong did they commit? What did they do to deserve losing their healthcare? If the President and his allies in Congress end Medicaid as we know it, I don't know what any of the millions of people on Medicaid, the Granite Staters I have heard from—I don't know what they are going to do, and to be blunt, neither does the President or my Republican colleagues. But they are apparently all in on taking away Medicaid without any plan to help my constituents or theirs preserve access to high-quality healthcare and the peace of mind that comes with it.

Of course, what is remarkable about the President's attempt to gut Medicaid is how painfully out of step he is with the country. And I think he knows it. The American people are clamoring for prices to come down. They want us to work together to bring down costs. You can search all across our country, from New Hampshire to the Pacific Northwest, to a thousand towns in between, and you will not find anyone who is asking for their healthcare to become even less afford-

able. No, the only people who think that are Washington Republicans.

It doesn't have to be this way. In New Hampshire, when I was Governor, we expanded Medicaid and balanced the budget, and we did both on a bipartisan basis.

Now, there is wasteful spending that we need to cut, to be sure, but if the President and my colleagues listen to the American people, if they talked to families in New Hampshire, they would know that only in Washington, DC, is money used to help a child with autism go to school and reach their full potential regarded as a waste.

So before my colleagues try to pass this budget, the American people deserve to know why support for a child with asthma or treatment for someone struggling with addiction should be sacrificed to pay for another tax break for a billionaire. The American people deserve to know at what point the President decided that the health of their families was expendable. The American people deserve to know why the President is not interested in lowering costs but has instead decided to weaken our economy, hamper our workforce, and make life less affordable for more Americans.

I urge my colleagues to reverse course and work across the aisle on a bipartisan basis to protect Medicaid and lower costs for our families.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, tonight, you have heard from me and my colleagues about the importance of Medicaid and what this critical program means for our constituents, those we represent here in the Senate. You have heard about parents concerned about what their child's life would look like without Medicaid. You have heard about people concerned for their elderly parents. You have heard about cancer patients who would face bankruptcy or an early death if they lost Medicaid.

The stories that have been told tonight are just a few examples of the monumental impact that Medicaid has had on communities across this great country. Medicaid is a lifeline for children, for seniors, for rural communities. It helps keep hospitals and community health centers and nursing homes open. Cutting Medicaid is, quite simply, an attack on the health and well-being of families. It is an attack on children and seniors. It is an attack on our neighbors, our friends, and our families. It is an attack on our most vulnerable.

These cuts will be falsely framed. They will be falsely framed as reforms or minor alterations to a program in the guise of saving money. These cuts will falsely be framed as tackling waste, fraud, and abuse. But make no mistake, stripping away healthcare from a low-income kid or nursing home funding for our parents and grandparents is not a reform for getting rid of fraud.

If my colleagues really wanted to go after waste in Medicaid, they would support and empower the inspector general, whose very job it is to root out waste, to root out fraud, to root out abuse, not sit idly by while Trump fires her. Yes, that is right—President Trump fired her. And the money that would be so-called saved will just be going to line billionaires' pockets even further, not to lower costs like Republicans have promised or to help hard-working Americans. These cuts go against the wishes of 70 percent of the American public, who want to see Medicaid protected.

My colleagues and I have made it clear that cuts to Medicaid are damaging to the entire country, and I hope that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will take that to heart when they are thinking about taking Medicaid away from our constituents.

I know you have heard a lot of stories tonight, but I want to close with just one more.

Taylor from Appleton, WI, wrote to me about her son Oliver. Oliver is almost 2 years old, and Oliver has a rare disease that impacts his kidneys, his eyes, and other organs. Oliver relies on Medicaid for lifesaving medications, therapies, and treatments. Without Medicaid, the cost of medication that slows the progression of the disease and his specialized care would be absolutely unaffordable.

Taylor said:

Medicaid is not just a program—it is a lifeline for children like Oliver. Without it, families would be forced to go without life-saving care or face crippling medical debt. The burden of his treatments, therapies, and future kidney transplants would be impossible to bear without Medicaid's support. I urge you to protect Medicaid funding and ensure that children like Oliver have access to the care they need to survive and thrive. The future of children with complex medical needs [absolutely] depends [upon] it.

Listen to people like Taylor, and think about children like Oliver. Stripping away healthcare from Americans—all to pay for tax breaks for big corporations and billionaires—is not what the American people want. It is not what the American people need.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:49 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, February 20, 2025, at 10 a.m.

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate February 19, 2025:

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

KELLY LOEFFLER, OF GEORGIA, TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION.

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, February 20, 2025 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

FEBRUARY 25

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the nomination of Stephen Feinberg, of New York, to be Deputy Secretary of Defense.

SD-G50

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Troy Edgar, of California, to be Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security, and James Bishop, of North Carolina, to be Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

SD-342

10 a.m.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Michael Kratsios, of South Carolina, to be Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, and Mark Meador, of Virginia, to be a Federal Trade Commissioner.

SR-253

Committee on Veterans' Affairs

To hold joint hearings with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to ex-

amine the legislative presentation of Disabled American Veterans and multi VSOs: AMVETS, Vietnam Veterans of America, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Blinded Veterans Association, Veterans Education Success, Gold Star Wives of America, Inc., and Reserve Organization of America.

390-CHOB

2 p.m.

Committee on Rules and Administration

Business meeting to consider an original resolution authorizing expenditures by the Committee, an original resolution entitled, "Omnibus Committee Funding Resolution", and adoption of committee rules of procedure for the 119th Congress.

S-219

4 p.m.

Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on Cybersecurity

To receive a closed briefing on Department of Defense cyber operations.

SVC-217

FEBRUARY 26

10 a.m.

Committee on Environment and Public Works

To hold hearings to examine Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act implementation and case studies.

SD-406

Committee on Veterans' Affairs

To hold joint hearings with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to examine the legislative presentation of The American Legion and multi VSOs: Minority Veterans of America, Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A., National Association of County Veterans Services Officers, Military Officers Association of America, National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs, D'Aniello Institute for Veterans and Military Families, and Wounded Warrior Project.

390-CHOB

10:15 a.m.

Committee on the Judiciary

To hold hearings to examine pending nominations.

SD-226

10:30 a.m.

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

To hold hearings to examine perspectives from the field, focusing on farmer and rancher views on the agricultural economy.

SH-216

11 a.m.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

To hold hearings to examine interdicting illicit drug trafficking, focusing on a view from the front lines.

SR-253

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

Subcommittee on Digital Assets

To hold hearings to examine bipartisan legislative frameworks for digital assets.

SD-538

Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship

To hold hearings to examine managing risk for the long-term in the 7(a) loan program, focusing on hearing from lenders.

SR-428A

3:30 p.m.

Special Committee on Aging

To hold hearings to examine combating the opioid epidemic.

SD-106

FEBRUARY 27

9 a.m.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

Business meeting to consider the nominations of Troy Edgar, of California, to be Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security, and James Bishop, of North Carolina, to be Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

SD-342

11:45 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on Strategic Forces

To receive a closed briefing on global nuclear and missile threats.

SVC-217

MARCH 4

10 a.m.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs

To hold joint hearings with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to examine the legislative presentation of The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. and multi VSOs: Paralyzed Veterans of America, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, Student Veterans of America, Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, The Elizabeth Dole Foundation, and National Coalition for Homeless Veterans.

SD-G50

● 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 Kelly Loeffler, of Georgia, to be Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S1015–S1060

Measures Introduced: Seventeen bills and four resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 626–642, and S. Res. 82–85. **Page S1040**

Measures Reported:

S. Res. 82, authorizing expenditures by the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. **Page S1040**

Measures Passed:

Iwo Jima 80th Anniversary: Committee on Foreign Relations was discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 53, recognizing the 80th anniversary of the amphibious landing on the Japanese island of Iwo Jima during World War II and the raisings of the flag of the United States on Mount Suribachi, and the resolution was then agreed to. **Page S1037**

Providing for a Joint Session of Congress: Senate agreed to H. Con. Res. 11, providing for a joint session of Congress to receive a message from the President. **Page S1038**

Congratulating the Philadelphia Eagles: Senate agreed to S. Res. 84, congratulating the Philadelphia Eagles on their victory in Super Bowl LIX in the successful 105th season of the National Football League. **Page S1038**

Congratulating the Jackson State University Tigers: Senate agreed to S. Res. 85, congratulating the Jackson State University Tigers for winning the 2024 Celebration Bowl. **Page S1038**

Measures Considered:

Budget Resolution—Agreement: Senate continued consideration of S. Con. Res. 7, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2025 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2026 through 2034. **Pages S1015–19**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the concurrent resolution at approximately 10 a.m., on Thursday, February 20, 2025; and that all time during adjournment count equally towards the concurrent resolution. **Page S1053**

Nomination Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nomination:

By 52 yeas to 46 nays (Vote No. EX. 59), Kelly Loeffler, of Georgia, to be Administrator of the Small Business Administration. **Pages S1019, S1060**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S1040–41**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S1041–43**

Additional Statements: **Pages S1039–40**

Amendments Submitted: **Pages S1043–53**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Page S1053**

Record Votes: One record vote was taken today. (Total—59) **Page S1019**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 7:49 p.m., until 10 a.m. on Thursday, February 20, 2025. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S1053.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

F–15E U.S. CENTRAL COMMAND

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Airland received a closed briefing on the F–15E United States Central Command Operations from Major General Akshai M. Gandhi, USAF, Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations, Headquarters United States Air Force, Major General Benjamin R. Maitre, USAF, Director, Legislative Liaison, Office of the Secretary of the Air Force, Lieutenant Colonel Kevin

Murphy, USAF, Commander, 335th Fighter Squadron, Mission Flight Lead, Lieutenant Colonel Brian Leitzke, USAF, Director of Operations, 335th Fighter Squadron, Mission Wingman, and Major George Welton, USAF, Weapons Officer, 335th Fighter Squadron, Deputy Mission Commander and Mission Planning Cell Chief, all of the Department of Defense.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Committee ordered favorably reported an original resolution (S. Res. 82) authorizing expenditures by the committee for the 119th Congress.

SPECTRUM AUCTION DELAYS

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Committee concluded a hearing to examine spectrum auction delays, after receiving testimony from Thomas Hazlett, Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina; Charles P. Baylis, Baylor University, Waco, Texas; and Matthew Pearl, Center for Strategic and International Studies, and Bryan Clark, Hudson Institute, both of Washington, D.C.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND PERMITTING PROCESSES

Committee on Environment and Public Works: Committee concluded a hearing to examine improving the Federal environmental review and permitting processes, after receiving testimony from Jeremy Harrell, ClearPath, Inc., and Brent Booker, Laborers' International Union of North America, both of Washington, D.C.; Leah Pilconis, The Associated General Contractors of America, Arlington, Virginia; Carl Harris, National Association of Home Builders, Wichita, Kansas; and Nicole Pavia, Clean Air Task Force, Boston, Massachusetts.

NOMINATION

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nomination of Lori Chavez-DeRemer, of Oregon, to be Secretary of Labor, after the nominee, who was introduced by Senator Mullin, testified and answered questions in her own behalf.

CHILDREN'S SAFETY IN THE DIGITAL ERA

Committee on the Judiciary: Committee concluded a hearing to examine children's safety in the digital era, focusing on strengthening protections and addressing legal gaps, after receiving testimony from South Carolina Representative Brandon Guffey, Rock Hill; Carrie Goldberg, C.A. Goldberg, PLLC, New York, New York; Mary Graw Leary, Catholic University of America Columbus School of Law, and Stephen Balkam, Family Online Safety Institute, both of Washington, D.C.; and John Pizzuro, Raven, Irving, Texas.

NOMINATION

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nomination of Paul Lawrence, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs, after the nominee testified and answered questions in his own behalf.

BUSINESS MEETING

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee met in closed session to consider pending intelligence matters.

Committee recessed subject to the call.

INTELLIGENCE

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee met in closed session to receive a briefing on certain intelligence matters from officials of the intelligence community.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

The House was not in session today. The House will meet in Pro Forma session at 3:30 pm on Friday, February 21, 2025.

Committee Meetings

No hearings were held.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

**COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THURSDAY,
FEBRUARY 20, 2025**

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Armed Services: to receive a closed briefing on the USS *Gravely* and operations in the Red Sea, 9:30 a.m., SVC-217.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: to hold hearings to examine the nomination of Steven Bradbury, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of Transportation, 9:30 a.m., SR-253.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: to hold hearings to examine research security risks posed by foreign nationals from countries of risk working at the Depart-

ment of Energy's National Laboratories and necessary mitigation steps, 10 a.m., SD-366.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: business meeting to consider the nomination of Linda McMahon, of Connecticut, to be Secretary of Education, and other pending calendar business, 10 a.m., SD-562.

Committee on the Judiciary: business meeting to consider S. 331, to amend the Controlled Substances Act with respect to the scheduling of fentanyl-related substances, and the nominations of Todd Blanche, of Florida, to be Deputy Attorney General, and Abigail Slater, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Attorney General, both of the Department of Justice, 10:15 a.m., SH-216.

House

No hearings are scheduled.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

10 a.m., Thursday, February 20

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

3:30 p.m., Friday, February 21

Senate Chamber

Program for Thursday: Senate will continue consideration of S. Con. Res. 7, Budget Resolution.

At 11 a.m., Senators should expect a vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Kashyap Patel, of Nevada, to be Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; followed by a vote on confirmation of the nomination at approximately 1:45 p.m.

Additional roll call votes are possible during Thursday's session.

House Chamber

Program for Friday: House will meet in Pro Forma session at 3:30 p.m.



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